



Dining for Women: Final Progress Report

1. Please provide the following information:

Organization Name: Women's Justice Initiative (WJI)

Project Title: Community Advocates: Training Women Leaders to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and Increase Access to Justice in Rural Guatemala

Grant Amount: \$45,000.00

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2. Recap briefly what outcomes the project was designed to achieve.

This project aimed to increase access to justice for Maya women living in 24 rural communities in Patzún, Chimaltenango by developing a network of Community Advocates who promote women's rights at the local level.

Maya women and girls who received training, information, and accompaniment from Community Advocates would have greater knowledge of their rights, would be committed to ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) in their communities, and would have increased access to legal services to protect their rights, including their right to live free from violence. Ensuring that indigenous women understand their legal rights and have access to free, bilingual services is critical to preventing VAWG, supporting survivors, and promoting greater gender equality in rural communities. Moreover, this project created a more supportive environment for indigenous women and girls to assert their rights by transforming community attitudes about the right of women and girls to live free from violence and improving the institutional response to cases of VAWG. Specifically, community leaders have a better understanding of their responsibility in violence prevention and collaborated with the Community Advocates to develop community action plans. Police and judicial officials improved their response to cases of violence following capacity-building workshops and demonstrated increased understanding and application of national legislation to protect survivors.

3. 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).

This project empowered Maya-Kaqchikel women to promote women's rights in their communities and link vulnerable women and girls to legal services through the execution of the following project objectives:

Train 29 Community Advocates in human rights, VAWG prevention, and leadership development.

WJI trained 29 women between ages 18 and 50 to become Community Advocates. During the reporting period, the Advocates participated in intensive leadership and human rights trainings where they developed into leaders, women's rights educators, and mentors to their peers. The Advocates multiplied WJI's impact by facilitating workshops in their communities and providing accompaniment to women seeking legal services from WJI. Advocates worked in pairs, met every month with WJI to define their work plans, and received weekly check-ins from our team. The Advocates' work at the community level was critical to increasing access to justice in the communities because they provided a vital link to vulnerable girls and women in their communities, supported them in accessing legal services, and offered strategies based on their experiences as rural, indigenous women to achieve a broader transformation in attitudes and practices regarding VAWG.



To increase knowledge among 455 women and girls about their rights, including the right to live free from violence.

887 women and girls participated in legal empowerment programs, supported by the Community Advocates, where they were educated on asserting their rights, living free from violence, and delaying early marriage.

Fourteen Community Advocates were facilitating and supporting Adolescent Girls Program workshops in nine communities, educating 320 girls on their rights and the importance of delaying marriage during the reporting period. The workshops taught girls to delay early marriage and achieve their personal goals through a yearlong empowerment, rights, and leadership course, while also engaging their mothers and community leaders in child marriage prevention. 98% of girls who participated in the program remained unmarried and there was a 40% increase in girls who plan to get married after 21 years of age.

All 29 Advocates facilitated workshops with their peers or supported logistics of the Women's Rights Education Program. The Women's Rights Education Program is a 6-month legal literacy course that empowers women to assert their rights and links them to WJI's legal services so that they can protect their rights. During the project, 567 women participated in Women's Rights Education workshops, increasing their knowledge of their rights and improving their ability to access justice. There was a 71% decrease in the number of women who agreed that it is justified for a husband to abuse his wife. There was a 73% increase in the number of women who could identify two or more places to seek help for cases of VAWG and a 79% increase in the number of women who could identify three or more women's rights after graduating from the program. In interviews, WJI participants described how over time they began to recognize they were suffering from violence and learned the steps they could take to protect themselves and their families. They describe gaining the courage over the six-month course to seek help from WJI's legal team and escape the violence they were enduring.

To increase access to justice for 705 women and girls, including those participating in Advocate led workshops and 250 who receive legal services

To date, 1,361 women and girls have experienced increased access to justice because of their participation in WJI's programs. Women's Rights Education Program and Adolescent Girls Program participants are experiencing greater access to legal services due to the interventions provided by WJI's Legal Services Program and Community Advocates. In addition to regular community visits, WJI's legal team provided legal services to women and girls at its central Patzun office. During the project, 474 women and girls received legal services through WJI's Legal Services Program.

To secure economic rights for 150 women

Through outreach in communities and legal counseling provided at the WJI office, WJI's legal team provided legal services to 293 women and girls related to economic rights, including property and inheritance rights, child support, alimony, and paternity. The project promoted self-sufficiency for women and girls by enabling them to secure their economic rights and by extension, their ability to control and maintain their financial independence from the perpetrators of VAWG.

To secure land titling for 25 women

Since May 2018, 25 women have secured a land title through WJI's legal services and three children received land titles from their parents with legal assistance from WJI.

To develop 9 action plans to prevent VAWG in 9 communities

WJI partnered with local leaders to develop community action plans that established a community-based referral network and mechanisms that prevent and respond to VAWG and child marriage. 187 community leaders from 13 communities have participated in the development of community action plans during the reporting period. Through the community action planning process, community leaders significantly increased their knowledge of VAWG and their understanding of the role they can play in preventing and addressing VAWG and child marriage in their communities.

To increase the proportion of leaders who can identify at least two key tasks to respond to cases of violence, according to the legal framework, to 20%.

Through sensitivity workshops on VAWG and trainings on Guatemalan law and how to refer and accompany VAWG cases, WJI significantly increased leaders' knowledge of VAWG and how to support survivors in responding to cases of violence. In October 2018, WJI conducted end line surveys with the group of leaders it has worked with to measure their changes in knowledge and understanding of the role they play in addressing VAWG in their communities. After WJI's training, 95% of



leaders could identify at least two key tasks to respond to VAWG cases, an increase from 0% at baseline. 100% of leaders could identify the path for survivors of violence to file complaints, an increase from 79% at baseline. 95% of leaders could describe at least two forms of VAWG, an increase from 13% at baseline.

To sensitize 1,500 women to VAWG through the presentation of action plans

2,225 individuals were sensitized to VAWG and child marriage through the presentation of ten community action plans at community-wide assemblies and the plans' associated activities. Three communities that began the development of action plans in 2019 have not yet presented their plans to the community, which will impact an estimated additional 450 individuals. Some examples of activities that were implemented to raise awareness about women's rights and VAWG in local communities included running races and athletic events for women, community art projects on VAWG prevention, and talks with middle school students about child marriage and girl's rights

To improve the institutional response to cases of VAWG through 150 case referrals from the JP, PNC, and OMM

During the project period, WJI trained 59 service providers to improve the municipal response in cases of VAWG. WJI partnered extensively with the municipal government and public-sector actors including judicial officials, the police, health workers, the Municipal Youth Office and the Municipal Women's Office to expand the provision of legal services in indigenous communities and strengthen the institutional response to VAWG. Specifically, WJI trained 14 municipal service providers on VAWG prevention, increased their understanding and application of national legislation to protect survivors, and coordinated the referral process among the organizations to provide free services to survivors of violence. Additionally, WJI conducted a training with 22 local health care providers on delaying child marriage and legal protections and reporting requirements in cases of VAWG. Finally, WJI held sensitivity workshops with 22 police officers and trained them on improving their responses to survivors of violence and avoiding revictimization.

WJI has received 86 referrals during the reporting period and continues to receive referrals from the Justice of the Peace (JP), National Civilian Police (PNC), Municipal Health Center, Municipal Maternal Health Center, the Municipal Women's Office (OMM), and community leaders. Although 86 referrals falls below the original objective of 150, there has still been considerable increase in case referrals received by WJI. From 2016 to 2018, case referrals from service providers increased by 192%. WJI also is in the midst of improving its reporting system for referrals as we believe that not all referrals from service providers were correctly documented in the Legal Services Program during the project. The recent hire of a legal assistant will support us in streamlining and updating our reporting protocols.

4. 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.

In the grant proposal, the project proposed directly impacting 2,383 Maya-Kaqchikel women, girls, and men in Patzún. After project execution, the direct beneficiaries have increased to 4,087 individuals, including: 29 women Community Advocates, 474 women and girls receiving legal services, 887 women and girls participating in legal empowerment workshops, 226 mothers participating in workshops about delaying marriage for their daughters, 187 community leaders, 36 public-sector service providers, 23 police officers, and 2,225 individuals learning about the community action plans and participating in action plan activities.

The indirect beneficiaries have increased to 12,261 Maya-Kaqchikel women, girls, and male community members who are sensitized to women's rights or VAWG through a family member, through an improved institutional response, or through the enactment of community action plans. In the project proposal, indirect beneficiaries were estimated to be 8,381. 65% of the indirect beneficiaries are estimated to be women and girls.

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

The recent rapid growth of WJI's Legal Services Program has led to some challenges for the legal team. Namely, the considerable increase in legal cases has meant that it was more difficult for legal staff to conduct monthly legal outreach trips to communities where WJI was implementing its Women's Rights Education Program workshops. These community visits required either WJI's lawyer or paralegal to be out of the office for eight afternoons each month, which became challenging with their larger caseloads.



Despite these challenges, WJI recognizes the importance of its legal outreach to provide access to services to those women who are most marginalized and cannot travel to our office to seek help. In response to this challenge, WJI is beginning to pilot the use of tablets to provide video consultations to women in rural communities. With the assistance of WJI's field staff and Community Advocates, the legal team can provide legal counseling through video calling, allowing them to continue to attend cases in the office and to save time by not traveling to communities. WJI began piloting the video consults in four communities in 2018 and is expanding to an additional eight communities in 2019 to test the viability of using technology to provide legal outreach in conjunction with women's rights education and the accompaniment by Community Advocates in rural communities.

6. Is your organization or project situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant project staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?

The organization and project situation remain the same as in the approved proposal.

7. What were the most important lessons learned?

WJI learned from the challenge of working with police officers to improve their response to cases of VAWG. Due to the rotation of officers every few months, the officers that receive sensitivity training from WJI are often only in the municipality for a short period of time. As a result, the local population may not benefit directly from the training the officers receive. Despite this challenge, WJI learned that the trainings are important and highly valuable in strengthening collaboration between WJI and the police station. Since implementing the trainings, WJI has experienced increased support and coordination from the station and police officers. The trainings have allowed for WJI to build a stronger rapport with the police chief and ensure improved responses when WJI seeks assistance from the police in cases related to VAWG. For this reason, WJI believes the sensitivity trainings are critical to strengthening our work in the municipality, despite the fact that the officers may not have the opportunity to apply what they have learned with the local population.

Additionally, WJI has encountered some resistance from community leaders with regard to developing community action plans related to VAWG. Some leaders are reluctant to play a role in addressing VAWG in their communities, as they still view VAWG as a private family issue. WJI worked to gain greater support from leaders by providing them with additional training related to needs the leaders identified and by increased involvement from Community Advocates. For instance, WJI provided additional training to leaders on legal issues that they frequently address in their communities, such as mediation of land disputes. WJI has learned that the success of community action plans depends heavily on the Community Advocates' involvement in the process. Since the majority of community leaders are male, the Advocates played an important role by providing a female voice and perspective during the development of action plans. One of the greatest challenges to ensuring the sustainability of the action plans is that community leaders change on an annual basis. Considering this turnover, WJI learned that Community Advocates are critical in providing continuity and ensuring the continued implementation of community action plans with new leaders.

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

The project demonstrated to WJI that the Community Advocates are key to ensuring successful implementation of its legal empowerment activities and the sustainability of its community responses. WJI is now prioritizing its work with Community Advocates as it expands its programming in another municipality. The Advocates' work was critical to increasing access to justice at the community level because Advocates provided a vital link to vulnerable girls and women in their communities, supported them in accessing legal services, and offered strategies based on their experiences as rural, indigenous women to achieve a broader transformation in attitudes and practices regarding VAWG. The Advocates were recognized as local sources of knowledge and supported the women and girls they mentored and taught in weekly legal empowerment workshops. Advocates played a critical role in overseeing the development and implementation of community action plans with community leaders. They ensured that leaders stayed on schedule with planned activities and reported on the process to WJI.

As WJI continues to grow and replicates its programming in other municipalities, it will plan and design its work with Community Advocates in a central programmatic role. In doing so, WJI will consider how to improve the Advocate selection



process, as well as the training and capacity-building for Advocates, to ensure they have the skills and ability to oversee community action planning and serve as key reference points for survivors of violence in their communities.

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

WJI did not expect that the combination of comprehensive rights education alongside mobile legal outreach would have led to such significant results and uptake of services. WJI believes that the execution of these two strategies concurrently with the direct support of Community Advocates was critical to achieving the project's results. In the communities where WJI implemented the project, few women know their rights and many do not recognize VAWG as a crime. Thus, in order to provide women with effective legal services and increase their access to justice, it is critical that women first know their rights and understand that they have value as individuals. Women who understand and know their rights and value themselves are more likely to exercise these rights and seek assistance from a lawyer. Conversely, offering rights education without access to legal services places women in a difficult and possibly dangerous situation when they have no way to seek redress for rights violations.

Through a combined approach of rights education, Advocate accompaniment, and legal outreach, WJI observed that women begin to recognize their legal needs through the Women's Rights Education Program and from there seek legal assistance to address these needs. 42% of Women's Rights Education Program participants sought legal assistance from WJI an increase from 4% of participants who reported at baseline having sought legal assistance in the past.

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

WJI faced obstacles with the level of education of some of the Community Advocates. From regular monitoring, WJI found that some Advocates' ability to facilitate workshops was not at a sufficient level to ensure that participants in the Adolescent Girls Program and Women's Rights Education Program were adequately learning the course material. WJI provided additional training and one-on-one meetings with Advocates who needed extra support in their facilitation. In future recruitment of Community Advocates, WJI will differentiate two separate profiles of Advocates - the mentor and the facilitator. The Advocate that acts as a mentor tends to be a mature woman in her community who, although she has received little formal education, is well-respected amongst her peers. Women and girls will privately seek out the mentor for support, advice, and accompaniment in the community. Advocates who fill the role of facilitator are generally younger women who have received additional years of formal education and are charismatic and confident communicators. She will lead workshops and will be more involved in project planning and execution. Both Advocate profiles work together as grassroots legal promoters to educate, empower, and accompany their peers.

Furthermore, WJI will work to create an ongoing community among Advocates even after they have graduated from the Community Advocates Program. WJI is planning to have quarterly meet-ups with graduated Advocates and will look to create a mentorship initiative between graduates and new Advocates. WJI acknowledges the importance of maintaining strong ties between groups of Advocates and is brainstorming strategies on how to encourage ongoing collaboration and networking moving forward.

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

The project directly touched 4,087 individuals and indirectly touched 12,261 individuals.

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

WJI's conducted community mapping at the start of the project to capture baseline demographic data. It complements this data with surveys, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews with project participants to evaluate their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding VAWG, women's rights, and gender equality. WJI conducts baseline data collection and compares this information to end-line data to measure program impact. WJI tracks and monitors legal cases through a database that documents the quantity and types of cases, client information, referral information, previous participation with WJI, and additional details. It monitors complaints filed with the judiciary and police and tracks referrals and accompaniment of cases by municipal service providers and Community Advocates.



Measurable results from the project have included that after completing WJI's programs, 42% of participants sought legal aid from WJI, a 950% increase from baseline, where 4% of women reported having received legal aid in the past. In end line surveys, 97% of WJI participants could describe at least three of their rights, while 99% of participants could name at least two places to seek assistance for cases of violence. Furthermore, women's attitudes about violence are changing, only 6% of WJI participants agreed that it is justified for a husband to beat his wife, a 71% decrease from the start of WJI's work. 100% of women surveyed affirmed that they felt stronger and safer after going through WJI's program and 98% of women reported that WJI has improved their lives. Furthermore, 95% of women said that WJI's programs have supported them in preventing suffering from violence in their lives. WJI's work with key municipal service providers has improved the response to VAWG for rural Maya women. There was a 192% increase in WJI case referrals from 2016 to 2018, a result of the trainings WJI conducts with the police and service providers.

13. If the project is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.

The project ended in April 2019.

14. 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 Financial Report in the attached Excel spreadsheet

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

DFW increased WJI's visibility in the U.S. through the following events:

- In March 2018, Viviana Patal, WJI's Legal Director, and Kate Flatley, Executive Director, spoke on on a DFW panel, co-hosted by UNICEF USA, at the 2018 UN Commission on the Status of Women.
- In May 2018, Kate Flatley was invited to speak on the "Women's Rights are Human Rights" panel at DFW's conference in Washington, DC.
- For International Women's Day 2019, Elvia Raquec, WJI's Programs Director, spoke on DFW's panel "Women as Agents of Change."

Additionally, DFW's support has brought about the following benefits:

- Last month, Women Strong International (WSI) identified WJI as a potential partner through the DFW website. WSI invited WJI to submit a grant proposal to expand our Adolescent Girls Program.
- Namati invited WJI to include a case study in its 2019 publication of Legal Empowerment Experiences from Latin America. The case study documents the success of WJI's Community Advocates Program which was funded by this Dining for Women grant. WJI will share the case study with DFW when it is published.
- WJI is beginning to partner more closely with another DFW grantee MAIA (formerly known as Starfish) in Guatemala. WJI trains MAIA mentors on responding to cases of VAWG.

Thank You Message for Dining for Women

Grantee Name: Women's Justice Initiative

On behalf of the Women's Justice Initiative (WJI), we would like to thank Dining for Women for your support for our work to empower Maya women and girls to break the cycle of violence and inequality in rural Guatemala! WJI improves the lives of indigenous Guatemalan women and girls through education, access to legal services and gender-based violence prevention. DFW's grant has directly impacted over 3,000 women and girls by providing them with the tools to create change in their lives and the lives of their families. Through your support, WJI was able to provide intensive leadership and human rights training to its Community Advocates, local female women's rights defenders. Following the trainings, the Community Advocates began to lead women's rights and girls' empowerment groups in their communities, referring women and girls to WJI for legal aid, and conducting home visits to identify women and girls who need legal assistance. The Advocates' work

at the community level is critical to increasing access to justice in communities because they provide a vital link to vulnerable girls and women, support them in accessing legal services, and offer strategies based on their experiences as rural, indigenous women to achieve a broader transformation in attitudes and practices regarding women's rights. Thank YOU for your support for this critical work!

A woman from WJI's Women's Rights Education Program shared the impact that the project has had in her community: *"Before we didn't know our rights and we thought we had to live with violence, but now that we know our rights, things have changed. For example, in the communities there are now Community Advocates to provide support and to listen to women or to accompany them to seek help if they decide to."*

100% of women who have gone through WJI's programs say that they now feel stronger and more confident! WJI invites you to [watch this short impact video](#) for you to hear directly from these empowered women!



WJI's Community Advocates



Community Advocates and WJI staff conducting home visits

Thank you, Dining for Women!