



**Dining for Women Interim Progress Report
September 2018**



Organization	Limitless Horizons Ixil
Project Title	Indigenous Women's Empowerment through Education and Economic Opportunity
Grant Amount	\$50,000 over two years
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Progress: July 2017-June 2018

Outcomes

Limitless Horizons Ixil (LHI) provides educational and professional opportunities to Maya Ixil in the remote Guatemalan village of Chajul. With support from Dining for Women, our programs are filling a crucial gap between government services and the needs of women and girls. Our Indigenous Women's Empowerment through Education and Economic Opportunity project seeks to increase female graduation rates and opportunities, leading to girls and women's educational and economic empowerment. Our measurable objectives for the two-year grant period include:



- 110 girls and women will participate in our Youth Development Program (YDP) or Artisan Program.
- Over 85% of Youth Development Program (YDP) girls in middle school and high school will graduate.
- At least 60% of high school graduates and 75% of interns will attend university or obtain employment within one year of graduation.
- At least 60% of scholars' mothers will participate in our Artisan Program and create artisan products at least once per month.
- Women in our Artisan Program will have the opportunity to work 15-80 hours per month.
- 3-9 female alumni will participate in our Internship & Training Initiative each year.
- 100 parents will participate in capacity-building workshops.
- 165 family members of YDP girls in 2017 and 190 in 2018 will benefit indirectly from our services.

Funding

Funding for this project has not significantly changed, and we have not received unexpected funding from other sources.

Changes

While our existing programs and this project have not changed significantly over the past year, Limitless Horizons Ixil has continued to expand our services to better support scholars and alumnae. One new addition was hiring a professional psychologist to

contract part-time and provide individual and group therapy to scholars and their families in need of extra support dealing with personal challenges that would otherwise influence their ability to concentrate on their studies.

We are also excited to share that we have built upon and expanded our existing YDP with the creation of a new Emerging Leaders Workforce Development Program to continue supporting our alumnae after graduation. Despite having already far surpassed the community's standard educational achievement levels by graduating high school – a huge success given that less than 5% of women graduate high school – our alumnae often struggle to enter either university or the workforce. Without LHI's services, they would receive little support during this transition period. While their parents may have the desire to help, they often lack the skills, resources or networks to help guide their children during this difficult transition period. In late 2017, we hired a new local assistant director who is responsible for providing continued support to our growing alumnae network. She aids youth in applying to universities and university scholarships, entrepreneurship programs, or vocational trainings. Youth also benefit from career counseling, mentorship, professional development workshops and trainings, and a supportive peer network. This program will better equip scholars and alumni with the skills needed to successfully pursue higher education or professional careers.

At Limitless Horizons Ixil we pride ourselves on offering youth and their families nurturing and caring support. Unfortunately, in order to meet this goal, we regrettably had to let former YDP Program Coordinator Edilma go as her abilities were no longer an appropriate fit for the needs of our scholars. We promoted Marina, who had been working with us in our library and had demonstrated strong skills working with youth there, to replace her as our new Program Coordinator. We have been impressed by how quickly she learned her new responsibilities and built strong relationships and trust among our scholars and families!

Number of Beneficiaries

LHI has met and exceeded the number of beneficiaries outlined in our proposal. In the first year, 50 girls joined our YDP as planned. Our Artisan Program served 38 mothers and 12 alumnae in 2017 and 41 mothers and 20 alumnae in 2018, exceeding our target of 30-35 mothers and 10 alumnae each year. In 2017 and 2018 respectively, 3 and 5 alumnae participated in our Internship & Training Initiative, which met our goal of serving 3-9 female interns. We estimate that 165 family members of female YDP scholars also indirectly benefited in 2017. Parent workshop attendance exceeded our goal of 100 and reached 120 parents in the second half of 2017 and 70 in the first half of 2018. Family members also benefited from family



counseling and the economic support provided by YDP graduates who have started working and now help finance their siblings' education.

Challenges

Our main challenge remains the low quality of education at local middle schools. To make up for some of the challenges of studying in overcrowded classrooms for just 4 hours per day, all YDP scholars received an additional 4 hours of tutoring per week in 2017 and 2018 along with other workshops and reinforcement classes. In January 2018, partner middle school San Gaspar also moved to a new location with larger classrooms, alleviating some of our earlier concerns. Additionally, LHI reached an agreement with San Gaspar's school director to hire two of LHI's tutors as teachers in 2018, which has significantly improved the quality instruction in their classes.

Revised Objectives

Based on our progress so far, we believe our original objectives and goals are realistic and achievable, with no need of revision.

Progress

We are pleased to report on our progress in creating opportunities for the indigenous girls and women of Chajul to develop the academic and professional skills needed to effect change in their lives and communities. In the first year, we met and exceeded our targets for all objectives as outlined in the table below.

Table 1: One-year Progress

Objectives	Status
110 girls and women will participate in either YDP or the Artisan Program.	So far, we have served 111 girls and women with this project . During 2017 and the first half of 2018, an average of 50 female scholars participated in our YDP. 59 and 61 women participated in our Artisan Program in 2017 and 2018 respectively.
Over 85% of YDP girls will graduate from middle school and 85% of girls in high school will graduate.	In 2017, 100% of female scholars in their final year of high school and middle school graduated. 28 girls also received awards for good grades, active participation, artwork, or excellent performance in computer classes. This year, we expect all 7 girls in their final year of high school and 9 girls in their final year of middle school to graduate as well. Despite these high graduation rates, we had two dropouts in 2017 as reported in our previous contact report, one due to extenuating family circumstances and another who left to start a family.

At least 60% of high school graduates and 75% of interns will attend university or obtain employment within one year of graduation.	Of our 2017 female high school graduates, 71% are working or studying. Of our 2017 interns, 100% are working or studying.
3-9 alumnae will participate in our Internship & Training Initiative each year.	In 2017, 3 YDP alumnae participated in our Internship and Training Initiative as our hardworking team of <i>practicantes</i> (<i>interns</i>). In 2018, 5 alumnae are interning with LHI. Interns gain work experience while serving in our Artisan Program, community library, and administration. Each week, they work an average of 20 hours and participate in 3 hours of professional development training.
At least 60% of scholars' mothers will participate in the Artisan Program and create artisan products at least once per month.	An average of 60% of scholars' mothers participated in our Artisan Program during the first year of the grant period, creating artisan products as least once per month.
Women in our Artisan Program will have the opportunity to work 15-80 hours per month.	Women in our artisan program worked an average of 59 hours per month in our Artisan Program, using their traditional weaving skills to earn a fair wage, gain financial independence, and contribute to their children's education.
100 parents will benefit from our workshops.	In addition to the 10 workshops from July to December 2017 with the participation of 120 scholars' parents, our workshops have served another 70 parents so far in 2018. LHI's new psychologist also started to provide support and life skills training to families, including workshops such around topics such as communication strategies for parents.
165 family members of YDP girls will indirectly benefit in 2017 and 190 in 2018.	We estimate that 165 family members of YDP girls indirectly benefited in 2017. With more women joining our Artisan Program, more parents attending our workshops, and more scholars graduating and earning an income, we estimate that even more family members will benefit in 2018.

Anticipated Difficulties

We do not anticipate any difficulties in completing the project in the timeframe outlined in our proposal. Our biggest anticipated challenge, as described above, is the poor quality of education in local schools. We will continue monitoring the situation, investing in partner school capacity building, and researching alternate solutions if our efforts do not lead to adequate levels of improvement.

Our Messages of Appreciation



LHI is grateful to Dining for Women for your continued support of the education of girls in Chajul. Together with your support, we are developing a new generation of educated and empowered Maya Ixil female leaders. In our staff and intern's own words:

“One needs more than just the desire to be able to study in Chajul - economic support is paramount.

Education has the power to transform lives and bring change.

Impact comes when young people are ready to face life's adversities. We are truly grateful for Dining for Women's big heart! You can rest assured that your resources are being well-invested in creating educational opportunities for Chajul's young people.” - Zuliana López, Guatemalan Assistant Director

“As LHI's Artisan intern, **I am one of the many lives that Dining for Women is helping to improve in Chajul and across the world.** I feel very grateful to be part of LHI and for all the many opportunities I am given here.” - Maria Ramirez, Artisan Intern