

Creamos Interim Report

February, 2022

Organization Name: Creamos

Project Title: Domestic Violence (DV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Gender-based Violence Treatment Program for 140 women in the Guatemala City garbage dump community

Grant Amount: \$25,020

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Anticipated Project Outcomes:

Creamos received funding from Together Women Rise to implement a therapeutic and psychoeducational IPV and GBV treatment program for 140 women living in the slum settlements surrounding the GCGD in an effort to decrease the instances of violence within the community. The project was designed to provide women with basic knowledge about the characteristics of IPV and GBV; help them identify violence in their own lives and in the lives of women in their community; develop safety plans to ensure an exit option for themselves and their children; increase exposure to life-saving services and resources in the community; and increase their understanding of women's rights and Guatemalan gender based violence laws.

Has funding changed for this project? For example, have you received unexpected funding from another source?

As the pandemic surged throughout the duration of our grant, Creamos received funding from a variety of stakeholders to mitigate the impact of the virus within the community. As COVID spread throughout the squatter settlements, water shortages prohibited effective hygiene measures and small homes with many inhabitants made social distancing an impossibility. Several private foundations and individual donors provided food and hygiene products in an attempt to ameliorate these challenges, which were used as supplementary support for the participants of the Together Women Rise grant.

Is your organization or project situation different than presented in the approved proposal?

Since receiving funding from Together Women Rise through our fiscal sponsor (Safe Passage), Creamos has filed for its own 501c3 status. The application was submitted in January, 2022 and we are expecting to receive approval by the end of the 2022 calendar year. As such, the organization gathered a small Board of Directors required for both filing and governance within US nonprofit law. Alongside this legal Board, Creamos has implemented a Community Advisory

Council (alluded to in our original application) which is composed of elected participants who work alongside program staff to develop target outcomes and guide programmatic development and evaluation. This Council is a reflection of Creamos' belief that organizational sustainability must be derived from participant leadership.

Have the number of beneficiaries changed?

Creamos anticipated directly serving 140 women through the proposed project, while indirectly supporting an additional 420 of their children. Throughout the grant term, Creamos successfully implemented a direct program for 138 women, providing ancillary support for their roughly 560 children.

What challenges are you facing as you move forward with this project? How are you approaching these challenges?

Of course, the pandemic has complicated the implementation of the project, primarily due to government-mandated caps on the number of people who may gather at one time. Guatemala operates on a traffic light system based on the rate of covid infections per capita. Throughout the grant term, Guatemala City has fluctuated back and forth between red and orange levels, which both carry relatively restrictive gathering limits. This caused delays in the group elements of the project, as group numbers had to be decreased. For example, the 6-week financial literacy course was meant to be implemented in four groups of 20 participants each. However, government mandates currently limit group gatherings to 8 people, so we have had to transition to ten groups of 8 people each. This challenge extends to the group therapy and psychoeducation elements of the project, as well. However, despite logistical challenges and with a new found appreciation for flexibility, we've managed to implement a high-quality program for 138 women.

Have you revised your original objectives since the project began? If so, why? What are your new objectives?

No.

What progress have you made toward achieving your objectives? Please address each stated objective.

Creamos' primary objective with the TWR project was to decrease instances of domestic and intimate partner violence within the target community. This was to be achieved through a multi-faceted approach incorporating both psycho-educational and therapeutic elements designed to equip participants with basic knowledge about the characteristics of IPV and GBV; help them identify violence in their own lives and in the lives of women in their community; develop safety plans to ensure an exit option for themselves and their children; increase exposure to life-saving services and resources in the community; and increase their understanding of women's rights and Guatemalan gender based violence laws. Below, please find an outline of current progress:

Activity 1 - COMPLETED. At the beginning of the grant term. Creamos successfully conducted a focus group to inform areas of needed services to enhance the organization's understanding of specific psychoeducational curiosities amongst participants; and ensure the proposed project is implemented in alignment with community feedback.

Activity 2 - COMPLETED: Upon the conclusion of the grant term, Creamos's Social Worker compiled a community asset map outlining the credible external services that participants identified throughout their time in DV/IPV therapy.

Activity 3 - COMPLETED: Creamos' Social Worker engaged in the following professional development opportunities to strengthen the services provided internally at Creamos for hundreds of women in the future: *Neuroscience Based Treatment for Domestic Violence Cases*, which covered self management, self control and the Polyvagal Theory in DV cases, the neuroscience of learned helplessness for DV victims, neuroscience and the DV perpetrator, breaking interactional cycles, core ethical considerations for DV treatment. *Substance Abuse Disorders for Adults Training*, which covered motivational interviewing and working with substance involved patients with ambivalence, matching treatment with clients readiness to change, cognitive behavioral therapy and relapse prevention, an overview of 12 step mutual aid groups and medicated assisted therapy. *Dialectical Behavioral Therapy for Children, Youth, and Families Training*, which provided a certificate in DBT for children, youth and families and covered tangible strategies for working with clients on emotional regulation, stress management, mindfulness and distress tolerance for clients. *Psychosocial Assessment Training*, which covered how to conduct a culturally competent and comprehensive psychosocial assessment, taking a deeper look into treatment planning for marginalized clients and identifying useful screening tools for assessing presence of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, among others. *IFS (Internal Family Systems) Master Class: Experience IFS in Action with Complex Trauma and PTSD*, which highlighted the fundamentals of Internal Family Systems and how this modality can be used with clients experiencing complex trauma.

Activity 4 - COMPLETED: Creamos adapted and implemented pre-existing pre/post evaluation tools to ensure both cultural humility and accurate demonstration of the project's anticipated outcomes.

Activity 5 - COMPLETED: Creamos revamped its annual intake tool in order to conduct a more comprehensive screening process and increase organizational capacity to appropriately identify and address DV/IPV challenges. This process provided significant organizational learning, which has contributed important guidance in our strategic planning process.

Activity 6 - COMPLETED, BUT ALTERED: Creamos anticipated implementing psychoeducation in a group setting, but pandemic related restrictions limited gathering sizes. Therefore, the psychoeducational component of this project was transitioned into an individual modality. Throughout the grant term, Creamos' Emotional Support focused their efforts on cultivating relationships with external mental health service providers and deepening their

understanding of the ecosystem of support available for participants in this pandemic world. They incorporated this learning into individual sessions with the 138 beneficiaries of this project.

Activity 7 - COMPLETED: Creamos' Emotional Support Team engaged in informational sessions with Iniciativa Guatemala (teen mothers), Visibles (LGBTQIA2+), Circulo Restorative Practices, the Public Ministry's Violence Against Women and Girls Department, and a variety of other external service providers.

Activity 8 - COMPLETED: Despite altering group sizes which led to increased duration in completion of financial literacy training, Creamos successfully implemented the course for 40 women, and continues to instruct this course for the remaining 40 women in the proposal. .

Activity 9 - COMPLETED: Creamos implemented weekly individual psychotherapy sessions for 138 survivors, where they created safety plans and explored maladaptive thought patterns regarding domestic violence.

Activity 10 - ALTERED: Due to group limitations, Creamos decided that it was in the best interest of the participants to transition group therapy to individual sessions for 138 women.

Activity 11 - COMPLETED: The Emotional Support Team provided family therapy to 8 women and their families who have been impacted by IPV and/or GBV.

Do you anticipate any difficulties in completing your project in the timeframe outlined in your proposal?

The last lingering element of the project to be implemented is the financial literacy course for 40 women, which will take place over the coming 4 months.

Anything else?

When we first applied for funding from TWR, Creamos was a small grassroots team doing our best to provide an array of vital supportive services within an exceptionally under-resourced community. Today, we are confident in our ability to provide high-quality mental health treatment and prevention for some of Guatemala's most marginalized women. We are recognized regionally as a leader in accessible and effective domestic and intimate partner violence support, as our team of three psychologists receive referrals from all over the greater Guatemala City metropolitan area. Funding from Together Women Rise has been a catalyst in our growth, learning and innovation, and we are grateful for your belief in our mission.