

**OneVillage Partners Interim Progress Report**  
Together Women Rise  
May, 2022

**Please provide the following information:**

- a) Organization Name: OneVillage Partners
- b) Project Title: Nurturing Opportunities for Women
- c) Grant Amount: \$30,000
- d) Contact Person: Jill LaLonde
- e) Address: PO Box 26055, Minneapolis, MN 55426

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

The purpose of the NOW Program is to equip women with the life skills and community development tools to take control of their financial position in the household, open a business, and engage in civic life. In the first phase of the program, NOW: Strengthening Household Finances, participants learn to plan and manage finances throughout the year to reach their goals and inform household financial decision making. The second phase of the program, NOW: Business Skills, builds on previous learning and focuses training on developing and expanding a business. NOW: Business Skills was formed at the request of graduates who completed NOW: Strengthening Household Finances.

By the end of NOW: Strengthening Household Finances, participants are empowered with several financial skills, including financial planning, decision-making, and public speaking. Women participants have been trained in basic financial principles, learned tools for saving and tracking their resources, and practiced communication skills with spouses and male family members to achieve personal financial goals and to shift behaviors about gender roles in the home and in the community.

Women who participate in NOW: Business Skills have built upon these skills and also have been trained to successfully run a profitable business. Specific skills learned include problem solving, acquiring the tools necessary to develop a business plan, effectively increase profit, and confidently communicate their business ideas. Upon completion of the program, participants know how to record and track income and expenses, assess risk, and calculate profit.

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

No, the funding for this project has remained consistent. Together Women Rise provided \$30,000, and we used unrestricted donations to meet the full project budget of \$117,945.

**4. 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?**

We are excited to have hired Cheryl Acheamong as our Women’s Empowerment Program Manager in February, 2022, a new position created to continue our strong leadership of the program. We have no other significant changes to report.

**5. 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 population Indirectly Impacted.**

The number of direct and indirect participants in the project has changed.

Proposal:

Year 1- Direct: 240	Indirect: 5,000
Year 2- Direct: 240	Indirect: 5,000

Actual:

Year 1- Direct: 213	Indirect: 9,681
Year 2- Direct: 240	Indirect: 10,335

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

- **Limited Participation in Inclusive Decision Making:** The most pertinent challenges are cultural stereotypes and patriarchy which have fueled a gender restriction in some of our project implemented areas/communities, as they believe that only men have the absolute right and power to make most of the major decisions (Financial, land ownership) in the home and community. This has hindered an enabling environment for trust and respect where women can have the freedom to self-actualize and have the confidence that they are able and entitled to hold a leadership position and be part of community decision-making. In bridging this decision-making gap, OneVillage Partners uses the family session in educating husbands on the importance of wives’ inclusion in household decisions making. Furthermore, we continue to engage community stakeholders on the inclusiveness of women in community decision making and participatory approach for sustainable community development. Also, in one-on-one discussions with participants throughout, we provide a safe space for women to open up on these issues with our trained staff.

- **Inflation:** There are steep increases in the price of all goods, especially food and agricultural products, which affects women’s capacity to properly budget for their financial goals. To mitigate this, OneVillage Partners staff advise the participants to budget higher than the current actual cost. Participants are aware of the fluctuating prices of basic foods and have unique individual experiences with that. OneVillage Partners staff, in sessions, encourages participants to share these stories with their fellow participants in the NOW program to learn better coping strategies together.
- **Pandemic:** During the COVID 19 pandemic there were minor delays in the project implementation due to restrictions on movement. During this period, OneVillage Partners restructured its project implementation timeline and also supported NOW women by incorporating COVID 19 sensitization, prevention and mitigation strategies. This was done through the support of the government’s District Health Team.

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

There has been no change in the original objective since the project began.

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

In our proposal to Together Women Rise, we outlined the following metrics for success:

<b>Proposed Metric</b>	<b>Progress Updates as of 2021</b>
90% of NOW participants meet their financial goal and can demonstrate tracked savings	94% of participants achieved their primary financial goal such as paying for children’s school, improving on an existing business or starting a new business. Participants can demonstrate tracked savings
75% of NOW participants can produce a monthly budget	94% of NOW: Strengthening Household Finances participants successfully demonstrated their ability to create a budget for the subsequent month
80% of NOW participants report self-sufficient coping strategies related to insufficient income	72% NOW: Strengthening Household Finances participants report self-sufficient coping strategies related to insufficient income
20%-point decrease in NOW: Strengthening Household Finance participant’s husbands that agree with the statement “If a woman has power in the household, it means she is taking power away from her husband”	95%-point decrease in NOW: Strengthening Household Finances husbands/male relatives that agreed with the statement “If a woman has power in the household, it means she is taking power away from her husband”
40% of speakers at town hall meetings are women	51% of speakers at OneVillage Partners community meetings were women

70% of NOW: Strengthening Household Finances participants report sharing the learning with other women in the community	78% of NOW: Strengthening Household Finances participants report sharing NOW learning with someone outside the program
85% of NOW participants can describe when common agricultural products can make the most profit	98% of participants can describe when common agricultural products can make the most profit

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

No, we do not anticipate difficulties in completing the project by the end of our two-year implementation period (December 2022).

Also include:

- *Several high-resolution JPG photographs of the project depicting the women/girls who have benefited from the grant funds should be posted to your assigned Dropbox. Photos should be submitted with the right to use in all forms and media in Together Women Rise documents and website. Include confirmation of grantee’s right and consent to use photos/videos as per local law.*

Please see photos on Dropbox. OneVillage Partners confirm our right to use and consent to use the photographs provided.

- *Any message you would like us to convey to our membership and donors about the impact our grant is having on those being served and/or your organization and its mission.*

Thanks to the Together Women Rise community, OneVillage Partners has been able to successfully partner with more than 200 women per year from rural Sierra Leone to increase their financial literacy and business management skills through the Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) program. We know that when women are invested in and supported, gender equity is achievable. For example, in 2021 we saw a 400% increase in women participating in public speaking across our community partners. We look forward to continuing to share the impressive and exciting impact of the NOW program with our friends and supporters from the Together Women Rise community.

- *Detailed list of all expenses incurred during the reporting period which have been paid for with the Together Women Rise grant.*

See Dropbox folder for expense reporting.