



Final Report

Submitted to: Together Women Rise (RISE)

Reporting Period: March, 2021 – May, 2022

Report Date: June 13, 2022

This is our Final Report on funding received from Together Women Rise in order to partner with Speak Up for the Poor to provide health and safety education to more than 1,650 girls and young women in our Girls Education Program in Bangladesh.

10. Project Profile

a. Organization Name	Speak Up for the Poor
b. Project Title	Girls Education Program: Girls Health and Safety Training
c. Grant Amount	\$26,189
d. Contact Person	Mr. David Palmer Director of Development dpalmer@speakupforthe poor.org (909) 589-9065
e. Organization Mailing Address, and Website Address	3714 Beechglenn Dr. Glendale, CA 91214 www.speakupforthe poor.org

11. Brief Recap of Outcomes the Project was Designed to Achieve

The main goal of the Girls Health and Safety Training Project, as stated in our grant application, was to provide girls and women in our Girls Education Program (GEP) with the information and resources they need for optimal health, safety, and well-being in their context.

The project was designed to achieve the following outcomes for every GEP girl participating in our Girls Health and Safety Training:

1. How to properly wash her hands, and teach family members to do the same.
2. An age-appropriate understanding of feminine hygiene issues, how to access products for feminine hygiene, who to talk to about it, and how to receive help.
3. An understanding of the basics of infections and skin diseases, how to avoid them, and how to address them.
4. Both a medical evaluation and a self-evaluation to assess personal health.
5. An understanding the basics of water hygiene for bathing, cleaning, and cooking, and a self-evaluation of one's living environment to identify potential water hygiene issues.
6. Participation in a village youth club to consider how to solve local health and safety problems, such as lighting, pathways, latrines, or obtaining needed supplies. Learning to problem-solve and think creatively.
7. An understanding of everyone's right to bodily autonomy, the right to make the decisions that affect one's own body and life, and who to talk to about unwanted touching or abuse.
8. An understanding of local laws regarding child abuse, child marriage, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and spousal rape, and who to talk to if they are at risk of, or experience, any of these.
9. Growth in self-confidence, determination to reach personal goals, using one's voice, and teaching others about health and safety.

12. What was accomplished in connection with this project? Address each stated objective. If any project objectives were changed, please explain the circumstances leading to the modification.

1. How to properly wash her hands, and teach family members to do the same: Especially because of the COVID pandemic, this is something that we have repeatedly emphasized throughout 2021 and 2022 in various events and meetings. All beneficiaries have received training on this simple concept, and multiple times throughout the duration of this project they have received soap, hand sanitizer, and other sanitation items to aid them in their hand washing and personal health. As basic as it sounds, this simple procedure can be overlooked but is very important in the Bangladeshi context. And providing soap and sanitizer is a great benefit to poor families.
2. An age-appropriate understanding of feminine hygiene issues, how to access products for feminine hygiene, who to talk to about it, and how to receive help: This is an issue regularly discussed and taught about in various GEP settings. In 2021, because of COVID restrictions, we were unable to implement the full extent of this training at larger training events, so our staff provided this instruction in smaller groups of girls and young women. Since December 2021 and throughout 2022 we have been able to conduct 15 larger training events, as originally planned, and have provided this education as a component of them. In Bangladesh these issues can easily be overlooked or considered shameful, so it has been important to discuss these issues openly in a culturally sensitive way.
3. An understanding of the basics of infections and skin diseases, how to avoid them, and how to address them: Since December of 2021, as COVID restrictions have lifted, we have been able to provide this education to GEP girls and women of all grade levels at the 15 larger training events we have conducted. Many girls suffer from skin issues from water problems and other environmental factors, so these discussions have been very fruitful.
4. Both a medical evaluation and a self-evaluation to assess personal health: Nurses who have graduated from nursing school through the GEP, as well as other medical professionals, have

held trainings for our beneficiaries, with medical evaluations for many girls and young women. We have provided all the girls and young women in the GEP with personal health and medical information packets, as shown in some of the pictures included below in this report.

5. An understanding the basics of water hygiene for bathing, cleaning, and cooking, and a self-evaluation of one's living environment to identify potential water hygiene issues: Especially because of the COVID pandemic, this is an objective that we have repeatedly emphasized throughout 2021 and 2022 in events and training meetings. All beneficiaries have received training on this concept, and have received sanitation items to aid them in their personal health. Our staff have provided training to help girls understand water hygiene issues both at large group training events, and smaller gatherings in villages. Beneficiaries also completed a self-evaluation of their own living environment, in the first months of 2022.
6. Participation in a village youth club to consider how to solve local health and safety problems, such as lighting, pathways, latrines, or obtaining needed supplies. Learning to problem-solve and think creatively: This originally-planned aspect of the training program was not completed due to the unexpected duration and severity of the COVID pandemic in Bangladesh. Most youth club meetings were disallowed throughout 2021, due to the prohibition on meeting in larger groups. Some village youth clubs have begun to resume in 2022, but it has been a slow process, and due to the backlog of items on their agendas this objective was not accomplished. We are less able to influence or control the content of local youth clubs than we are training events that we completely control and operate.
7. An understanding of everyone's right to bodily autonomy, the right to make the decisions that affect one's own body and life, and who to talk to about unwanted touching or abuse: Since December of 2021, as COVID restrictions have lifted, we have been able to provide this education to GEP girls and women of all grade levels at the 15 larger training events we have conducted.
8. An understanding of local laws regarding child abuse, child marriage, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and spousal rape, and who to talk to if they are at risk of, or experience, any of these: Since December of 2021, as COVID restrictions have lifted, we have been able to provide this education to GEP girls and women of all grade levels at the 15 larger training events we have conducted.
9. Growth in self-confidence, determination to reach personal goals, using one's voice, and teaching others about health and safety: This objective has been met, and is one of the ongoing strengths and focuses of our entire Girls Education Program. In every GEP meeting we talk about our core values – hard work, service, self-confidence – and encourage and equip girls and young women to grow in their personal vision and determination. This is an ongoing strength of the GEP and an element of all of our trainings through the Health and Safety Program, helping more than 1500 girls and young women in our GEP to gain confidence and skills in these crucial areas of development.

13. Have the number of beneficiaries changed?

No, the number of beneficiaries has not changed. As indicated in our grant proposal, the Girls Health and Safety Program directly benefited 1,665 girls and young women, and indirectly benefited at least 2,497 people (including the family members of the girls and young women in the GEP). These numbers were not substantially changed during the implementation of the Girls Health and Safety Training program. It can be difficult to estimate the exact number of beneficiaries because large crowds simply appear at our events, so beyond our officially registered beneficiaries there are many hundreds more girls who simply showed up to receive the training.

14. What challenges did you face in connection with this project? How did you address those challenges?

The restrictions placed on large group meetings by the Bangladeshi government due to the COVID pandemic were a significant challenge that significantly affected our training structures. We adapted to this challenge by holding hundreds of smaller training sessions, with girls and young women in groups of 8 – 10 members, rather than in larger groups, throughout 2021. Since December 2021, we have been able to conduct large – group meetings, and we held 15 of these large training meetings between December 2021 and May 2022.

A second challenge was that schools were closed in Bangladesh for nearly 18 months during the pandemic. This led to an unusually high percentage of girls under the age of 18 being forced into illegal child marriages in 2020 and 2021. This has given us the challenge of retaining girls in our GEP, as more have dropped out of school and been illegally married than in previous years. We adapted to this challenge by restructuring our staff team to create a new Advocacy Team to handle child marriage cases, enabling the rest of our GEP staff to focus more directly on the training and mentoring issues involved with this Girls Health and Safety Training.

Due to COVID the notoriously inefficient Bangladeshi government bureaucracy has been even slower than usual during the past two years. This affected our ability to get project funds into Bangladesh, and our ability to get project budgets and programs approved by the necessary authorities. We met these challenges by temporarily using a Reserve Fund of cash held in Bangladesh; meeting frequently with local and national leaders to speed along the delayed processes; and forming a partnership with a new local NGO that was more efficient and timely in its performance. All these strategies have allowed our Girls Health and Safety Training to continue on largely as expected, especially since December 2021, when we were able to resume large training meetings.

15. 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, etc.

There were two noteworthy changes in our project situation. First, Speak Up has an MOU with a new local NGO partner in Bangladesh through whom some of our Girls Education Program activities will be implemented. Through June 2021 we had been working in partnership with the local NGO “PROSES,” but starting on July 1, 2021, we began to implement many of our GEP components through another local NGO, “SHARE-Bangladesh.” This transition was for purely administrative reasons. Because we still have

the same GEP staff and beneficiaries, this transition has had no negative effect on the implementation of the Girls Health and Safety Training program.

Secondly, because of the global COVID pandemic and the resulting restrictions enforced by the Bangladeshi government, we had to modify some of the components of the Girls Health and Safety Training program in 2021. Meetings of than 8-10 people were prohibited in Bangladesh through late 2021, and during that time we were unable to have large, grade-specific meetings of beneficiaries in the GEP. Instead we have held all of our trainings and meetings in smaller groups of girls in their homes or local areas. Beginning in December 2021, we were able to resume large group training meetings, and we held 15 of them between December 2021 and May 2022.

16. What were the most important lessons learned?

1. How to partner with local nurses and hospitals to provide effective training, learning what our staff could do on their own and what issues would need to be outsourced to medical professionals.
2. Sometimes it can be easy to overlook the simplest health issues, such as washing hands. So our staff team continued to learn the necessity of teaching and reminding girls of even the simplest subjects, and not assuming that “of course they already know and do that.”
3. Learning how to discuss feminine hygiene issues in a culturally appropriate way.
4. Learning the simple fact that girls are so hungry for this information, and they really are eager to learn about health issues. This translated into great enthusiasm in our seminars, and in a number of girls newly showing interest in becoming nurses.

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

Our GEP staff team has realized even more the great need girls have for health training in particular, so they are asking leadership to allow us to continue with these types of health training seminars across our working areas. As we have recently expanded our GEP into some slum areas in Khulna city, we now have hundreds more young women who could use this training. So this has changed our GEP in a way, as our staff team now sees the great need for health training.

Our nursing students and grads have also grown in confidence and teaching skills as they have led some of the training sessions. This is a great positive impact for them, and they were also able to earn a bit of extra money as honorariums for teaching at these events, helping them financially a great deal.

As explained below in response to question 18, we are seeing a surge in girls interested in becoming nurses.

Also, the women on our staff team have become more confident and direct in speaking with girls about women’s health issues, so we have taken some significant steps in reducing taboos about talking about menstrual issues and other women’s health issues and built a better atmosphere to discuss real issues.

And finally, starting soon we will probably hire another Area Coordinator (our mid-level staff designation) who will have 50% of her job be managing health training around the GEP, so these programs will become semi-permanent and ongoing.

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

The greatest unexpected benefit of the Girls Health and Safety Training is that many more girls than ever before now want to become nurses. For each large Training Seminar in the villages we had a nurse who we had helped through nursing school or a current nursing student in our GEP come to give part of the training, so almost every girl in the entire GEP was able to see a young woman (ages 20-24) from the exact same background as them teaching about health. This greatly inspired our young girls, many of whom are now talking about wanting to become nurses. So we expect a surge in the number of high school graduates in a few years who will try to become nurses. A most delightful outcome!

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

As discussed above, the main strategic change was made early on in the project. Because of COVID restrictions, we could not meet in large groups, so we did all of our training in smaller groups. Thankfully as these restrictions eased we were able to return to our prior strategy of having larger group trainings. We are experienced now in running meetings of all sizes on all relevant health topics, so we are prepared for the future regardless of what restrictions on group size and meeting places there may be in the future.

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

In 2021 and 2022, the Girls Health and Safety Program directly benefited 1,665 girls and young women, and indirectly benefited at least 2,497 people (including family members of the girls and young women in the GEP).

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

1. We kept attendance records at our large and small group training seminars with all GEP beneficiaries during the course of the Girls Health and Safety Program in 2021 - 2022.
2. The GEP girls and young women who receiving training through the Girls Health and Safety Program all signed for their health packets, which included feminine items, soap, cleaning supplies, etc.
3. The GEP girls and young women also each received and signed for their personalized health and medical information packets at the seminars that they attended, as shown in some of the pictures included in this Report, below.

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

We don't have a formal plan for this yet. But we did provide for at least \$15,000 in our budget for fiscal year July 2022 through June 2023 to continue with similar health seminars and hire a staff person to use 50% of her time on this role. Months before the fiscal year we have to provide a detailed budget to the local NGO Affairs Bureau, so we have allowed for \$15,000 for these seminars, but those funds are not raised as of today. We don't have dedicated funding for this yet, but we are looking for donors to provide this \$15,000 for the next fiscal year.

23. Provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle which have been paid for with the Dining for Women / Together Women Rise grant.

This spreadsheet provided below on the following page details the accounting of all Together Women Rise grant funds, totaling \$26,189, following the budget categories used in our grant proposal.

We spent somewhat less than originally budgeted on these three categories:

1. Facilities Rental,
4. Media Production, and
5. Transportation.

Since we had fewer large-group meetings than originally planned, due to COVID restrictions, we spent less on these items than originally planned, and we did not need to rent a sound system, as originally planned. Also, because we had fewer large in-person meetings, student transportation costs were lower (because they had more meetings in their home villages and did not need to travel as often), but because we had many more small-group meetings during the pandemic, staff transportation costs to the villages were higher, since the village meetings to which our staff traveled were more frequent.

The savings in those three budget categories were offset by spending somewhat more than originally budgeted on these two categories:

2. Food, and
3. Training Supplies.

We had somewhat higher food costs because we had substantially more small-group meetings than originally planned during the COVID restrictions of 2021, when we were not allowed to meet in large groups. We also spent incrementally more on training supplies, and especially on sanitation supplies. Due to the COVID pandemic we increased our spending on sanitation supplies such as soaps, sanitizers, as well as on feminine hygiene products.

EXPENSES							
CATEGORY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	COST	#	FREQ.	TOTAL	TOTAL SPENT MARCH 2021 - MAY 2022
1. FACILITIES RENTAL	Facility Rental		\$ 50	1	36	\$ 1,800	745
	Chair - Table Rental		\$ 20	1	36	\$ 720	230
	Site Honorarium		\$ 10	1	36	\$ 360	850
	Cleanup Fees		\$ 20	1	36	\$ 720	285
	SUB-TOTAL					\$ 3,600	2,110
2. FOOD	6th Grade Meetings	Lunch and Snacks	\$ 1.75	150	6	\$ 1,575	1,755
	7th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.75	150	5	\$ 1,313	1,490
	8th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.75	150	5	\$ 1,313	1,505
	9th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.75	180	5	\$ 1,575	1,770
	10th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.75	180	5	\$ 1,575	1,770
	11th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.75	165	5	\$ 1,444	1,635
	12th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.75	155	5	\$ 1,356	1,565
	Staff Attendees	"	\$ 1.80	10	36	\$ 648	1,380
	SUB-TOTAL					\$ 10,798	12,870
3. TRAINING SUPPLIES	6th Grade Meetings	Pens, Notebooks, Handouts	\$ 1.00	150	1	\$ 150	185
	6th Grade Meetings	Sanitation Supplies	\$ 2.00	150	1	\$ 300	610
	7th Grade Meetings	Pens, Notebooks, Handouts	\$ 1.00	150	1	\$ 150	185
	7th Grade Meetings	Sanitation Supplies	\$ 2.00	150	1	\$ 300	610
	8th Grade Meetings	Pens, Notebooks, Handouts	\$ 1.00	150	1	\$ 150	185
	8th Grade Meetings	Sanitation Supplies	\$ 2.00	150	1	\$ 300	610
	9th Grade Meetings	Pens, Notebooks, Handouts	\$ 1.00	180	1	\$ 180	210
	9th Grade Meetings	Sanitation Supplies	\$ 2.00	180	1	\$ 360	685
	10th Grade Meetings	Pens, Notebooks, Handouts	\$ 1.00	180	1	\$ 180	210
	10th Grade Meetings	Sanitation Supplies	\$ 2.00	180	1	\$ 360	685
	11th Grade Meetings	Pens, Notebooks, Handouts	\$ 1.00	165	1	\$ 165	195
	11th Grade Meetings	Sanitation Supplies	\$ 2.00	165	1	\$ 330	645
	12th Grade Meetings	Training Handbook	\$ 4.35	155	1	\$ 674	675
	SUB-TOTAL					\$ 3,599	5,690
4. MEDIA PRODUCTION	Sound System Rental	For each meeting	\$ 20	1	36	\$ 720	0
	Media Handouts	For each meeting	\$ 5	1	36	\$ 180	0
	Materials	Whiteboard, demo materials	\$ 100	1	1	\$ 100	0
	SUB-TOTAL					\$ 1,000	0
5. TRANSPORTATION	6th Grade Meetings	Roundtrip Transport - Average cos	\$ 1.15	150	6	\$ 1,035	685
	7th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.15	150	5	\$ 863	570
	8th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.15	150	5	\$ 863	570
	9th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.15	180	5	\$ 1,035	715
	10th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.15	180	5	\$ 1,035	730
	11th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.15	165	5	\$ 949	660
	12th Grade Meetings	"	\$ 1.15	155	5	\$ 891	675
	Staff Attendees	"	\$ 1.45	10	36	\$ 522	915
	SUB-TOTAL					\$ 7,192	5,520
	GRAND TOTAL					\$ 26,189	26,190

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

We were able to build a better partnership with one local hospital and several experienced nurses who came regularly to do some of the teaching and training. These relationships will be ongoing, as we will invite the best of these teachers to continue presenting on health related topics over the coming years.

There is no new public recognition that we received that we are aware of, other than local government units, particularly during the time of more serious COVID restrictions, expressing thanks to our staff for helping so many girls and families with learning how to deal with COVID intelligently.

25. A message to the RISE membership and donors about the impact the grant is having on those being served, and/or on Speak Up and its mission.

As the greatest potential change agents in the world, girls living in poverty are the world's best investment. So we have been thrilled to received RISE funding which has enabled us to help train and influence many girls in rural poverty in Bangladesh who would otherwise be more vulnerable to violence, various health and safety problems, and even sexual abuse. While this struggle continues and will continue for many years to come, progress is being made. RISE members can be proud that their generous funding has helped more than 1,600 girls and young women involved in the GEP to continue building their lives with dignity, purpose and joy. Thank you so much for your support!

26. Photos: Speak Up for the Poor confirms the right and gives consent to Together Women Rise to use all photos included in this report as per local law.

In addition to being included here in this report, below, these photos have also been copied to our shared Dropbox folder in full resolution.



GEP girls and young women learn from a nurse at a Medical and Health Awareness Seminar



A nurse demonstrating a blood pressure reading at a Medical and Health Awareness Seminar



A nurse teaches another Village Medical and Health Awareness Seminar



GEP girls and young women with personal health and medical information packets after a training



More GEP girls and young women with personal health and medical information packets after a training



More GEP girls and young women with personal health and medical information packets after a training

27. Stories, Experiences, and Quotes from Women and Girls whose lives were altered by the funded project, preferably in their own words:

“I was very happy to inform the GEP girls about how to be a nurse. I am very happy to be a GEP student, and at the same time a trainer for this seminar. I am also happy to receive an honorarium from the seminar; it is the first time I have ever received an honorarium in my life. This program is very helpful for GEP girls and I think that every month in every village we need these seminars for girls and mothers.”

-- **Tumpa**, a nursing student and trainer in the Health Seminars

“In the medical seminar I explained the importance of the nursing profession, and now many more girls are willing to study nursing. After participating in the medical seminar, many girls are also now able to take primary treatment at home. During their menstrual period they are now able to stay clean with the use of sanitary napkins.”

-- **Supriya**, a nursing student and trainer in the Health Seminars

“The girls listened to me with a lot of enthusiasm, and they were very interested. The girls have been informed about many health issues which they were not aware of before. I like it that now many girls want to be a nurse.”

-- **Dipti**, a nursing student and trainer in the Health Seminars

“We didn’t know about adolescent health before, but now we know and we are happy. I came to know how to measure blood pressure, and I came to know about primary health care and treatment. We hope that these seminars will continue to be organized monthly in every village, and we were happy to get health supplies and materials. We came to know everything in this program about health.”

-- **Shathi**, 11th grade student participant

“I came to know how to use a stethoscope. I now know about primary health care treatment, and how I can solve simple problems in my life. I came to know health tips and now I can solve problems by myself. I came to know many things from this program, so I hope it will be continued.”

-- **Momota**, 10th grade student

“I have changed my dreams and now I would like to be a nurse, from details I learned in this seminar. I came to know about adolescent health, and now I can solve these kinds of problems by myself. We also learned how to measure our BMI.”

-- **Pinki**, 9th grade student

“I am happy to know about primary health and treatment. I solve by myself my physical problems by the information I got from the health seminars. I came to know everything.”

-- **Rikta**, 8th grade student

“I came to know about physical changes in adolescence. Now I know a bit about menstruation and adolescent physical health, and I came to know about personal hygiene. I now know the details and issues of menstruation and know how to maintain things properly. I also came to know about dehydration and how to protect ourselves from it.”

-- **Hira**, 10th grade student

“Now I want to be a nurse. I learned many things from the health seminar about how to be a nurse, and this will help me to build my dream. I have some physical problems, and now I can solve these problems from what I learned at the health seminar. We hope these health seminars will be continued in the future. We would also like a MBBS doctor to come to the seminars. This program is also good for mothers.”

-- **Puja**, 10th grade student