

Final Progress Reporting Guidelines

Grantee Name: **Common Threads Project**

Report Due: May 2023

Your Final Progress Report is due when the grant has been expended and activities completed. Please submit the progress report, photos, and other supporting documentation by loading them to the Dropbox folder assigned to you. We request that reports be attached as MS Word files. Please send an email to grants@diningforwomen.org to confirm these files have been uploaded.

Grant completion requirements include the following to be submitted:

- The final budget with detailed financial accounting of all grant funds.
- Five to six-page narrative addressing the questions listed below.
- 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.
- Include several stories, experiences and quotes from women/girls, preferably in their own words, whose lives were altered by the funded project.
- 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.

Please Note: Your report should address each of the items below. Answers need not be lengthy; five to six pages for the report is often adequate.

All content must be in English and US Dollars.

Final Report Content

10. Please provide the following information:

- a. Organization Name: Common Threads Project
- b. Project Title: Sajha Dhago
- c. Grant Amount: \$49,368
- d. Contact Person: Rachel Cohen
- e. Address: cohen@commonthreadsproject.org

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

The project's main goal is twofold:

- To **provide transformative trauma therapy to girls and women in Nepal** who survive sexual violence, trafficking, conflict and displacement. To **develop the capacities of local clinicians and organizations to provide transformative trauma therapy** to girls and women and to establish local structures for providing trauma therapy and clinical training in the future.

Expected outcomes:

- **Reduction in mental health symptoms decrease in stigma, shame, guilt and self-blame** related to SGBV. **improved self-esteem, self-compassion, confidence** as well as orientation to the future and ability to engage in relationships, work and community. Most group members will opt to continue **as a self-organized informal support network of participants**. Local therapists will gain competence in trauma therapy and using story cloths therapeutically. They will effectively facilitate Sajha Dhago healing circles. Half the facilitators will attain a level of proficiency to supervise and train others in the future. We will further develop a **self-sufficient Center of Excellence of Common Threads methodology in Nepal that will keep training and supervising clinicians in the region**.
- The transformative recovery of participants in our program has positive effects on their families and communities
- Eight trained counselors will have the capacity to conduct the Sajha Dhago recovery program for approximately 400 girls and women in subsequent years.

12. 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).

Participants recognized themselves, their needs, and a way out of trauma. They learned how to manage time. They learned the value of being physically and emotionally healthy and improved



their self-esteem and confidence while reducing shame and self-blame. This has a positive effect on the improvement of their relationships and functioning.

Our partner organization Sajha Dhago successfully registered as a Nepali NGO and will continue providing trauma healing in their region. Sajha Dhago is now a Center of Excellence for Common Threads Project methodology. They will be able to reach hundreds more survivors and train and supervise additional therapists and expand their program independently of CTP.

Participants report positive changes in their relationships and an increase in ability to engage in work and in activism for social change.

They frequently refer other survivors to the program and opt to join new healing circles as assistants to facilitators. The program aided each local community by developing emotional self-regulation skills in community members who've survived SGBV. The participants are committed to continuing with the project and have expressed a desire to further build community and solidarity. They also established a group on social media where they've continued to communicate.



The program has reached the level of trust in the community to the point where our facilitators were approached by a queer community with a request to form a healing circle for them as well.

Below are the statements by participants of the program that document these positive outcomes.

Quotes from Participants of Healing Circles

“Thank you Sajha Dhago for giving me this opportunity to heal my pain and hurt. For my future life, I have learned how to manage my time and take care of myself.” **Participant from the Community Women group, Chandragiri Municipality**

“Sometimes I feel my life is a burden and I go under severe stress. I have faced

many problems. I didn't know how to tackle those problems before, how to let go of things, how to live life to the fullest and be happy. But after joining these sessions, Sajha Dhago taught me to live my life.” **Participant from the Community Women group, Chandragiri Municipality**

“I also want to make a positive impact, thoughts, and peace on the people who are connected with me, my friends, family, and the society.” **Participant from the Chandragiri Ktm group**

“All parts of the body felt light.” “There was lots of pain in the past. I have taken out all my pain through story cloth.” **Participant from the Saathi Shelter Home, Lalitpur**

“I find that embroidery on story cloth helps me to concentrate, clear my mind and improve focus. The repetitive motions and patterns promote mindfulness, which can help me to focus on my studies.” **LGBTQI+ group participant**

“As I hold,
This story of mine
Flagging that,
I have my own timeline,
Years to tell
Years to question
Years to cry

And
Years to share it
ON MY OWN
Until then
Here I hold
The story on the
Storyboard”
LGBTQI+ group participant

Facilitators testimonials

“Participants have learned to take initiative in decision-making, and started to feel independent. They learned the skills of emotional regulation and learned to value their own life. They reported that they felt empowered, lighter and more grounded than before.”

Bhimsenthan, Ward 20, Kathmandu Metropolitan City

“We could see changes in participants, changes in their behavior. They learned to manage time. They started taking self-care which was their biggest achievement. This circle became a community counseling group, a community healing circle.” **Community Women group, Chandragiri Municipality “**

“The participants who were feeling weak, isolated, stigmatized and traumatized have joined the workforce after their therapy to become financially independent. Two of them started the entrepreneurship and awareness campaign through their sewing skills.” **Queer Circle, BDS, Kapan**



13. 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.



Sajha Dhago will launch six new recovery circles (providing 128 hours of clinical treatment for each of the 90 girls and women). We will provide intensive training to eight skilled Nepali female mental health counselors. Four of the facilitators will become skilled enough to train additional clinicians to expand services in the future.

We trained 14 new therapists, and provided advanced training to another 12 who were already facilitators. Four of the advanced facilitators have begun to train and supervise others.

Out of 118 participants in healing circles, 98 completed the full therapy cycle. We provided a total of 420 hours of group therapy sessions and 49 hours of training of healing circle facilitators.

The social impact of this program goes beyond the individuals who took part in the healing circles, making the indirect impact difficult to quantify. Ripple effects spread to their families and communities. We hear reports of changing attitudes about gender roles, and empowerment of participants and facilitators in their places of work and at home. In another example, a Sajha Dhago facilitator was elected to the city council, advocating for empowerment of women and girls. In this way, trauma healing reaches beyond individual and group healing and influences the sphere of SGBV prevention and public policy.

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

- It took longer than originally scheduled because of festivals and the third wave of COVID-19 in Nepal. Some circles began later than anticipated. Lessons were learned for reducing attrition in future circles.
- An in-depth clinical evaluation of the program has not been fully conducted due to lack of resources. Instead, facilitators collected feedback from the participants at the end of the program. A more systematic evaluation of the program will be undertaken when sufficient funding is accessed.
- We did not anticipate the extent to which community groups would be costly and time consuming for facilitators. Nonetheless, all the activities were held as per plan. In the future, we should take this challenge into account in our planning.

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, or other significant changes?

Common Threads Project: Vesna Golic is now Deputy Director of Common Threads Project; Caroline Donnelly Moran is now an administrative officer. We have three new board members: Mary Luke, Alex Aleinikoff and Cynthia Pacutho.



Sajha Dhago:

Sajha Dhago was established as a non-profit company on 29th March, 2022.

Local government has expressed interest and willingness to work in collaboration with Sajha Dhago in the coming years.

In addition to the approved project, Sajha Dhago held a successful story cloth's exhibition and closing ceremony with the financial support of CTP.

16. What were the most important lessons learned?

- One session needs to be held outside in the middle of the intervention to help participants get to know one another in a different safe environment.
- Members of the same community or family should not be in the same circle.
- More somatic activation and self-regulation activities are required.
- Mandatory clinical supervision should be held after two sessions.

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

Because of funding from Together Women Rise, our partner organization Sajha Dhago was able to grow in its capacity. It nearly doubled its clinical staff and significantly advanced the expertise. These were enormous leaps that will enable more survivors to receive even more effective healing services in the future.

In addition, this project raised awareness in the region about the possibility for effective trauma healing for survivors of SGBV. The community came to value our work and this has increased demand for our services. For example, Ms. Sunita Dangol, Deputy Mayor of Kathmandu, presided over a completion ceremony and exhibition featuring the work of Sajha Dhago. She pledged to incorporate this type of mental health intervention in her plans for the city, and expressed a desire to partner with Sajha Dhago in the near future.



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

Three participants of previous healing circles were empowered to the point that they joined the training for facilitators and have now become part of the Sajha Dhago facilitator's team. The empowerment of women in the organization now defies the caste system as well, integrating women from all castes in equality and solidarity– a rare occurrence in Nepal.

The Sajha Dhago team was also trusted by a group of LGBTQI people, who formed a trauma recovery healing circle, another example of the profound impact of empowerment for social change that trauma healing brings to the community.

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

The session was completed by 92 of the 118 participants. Despite partners efforts to screen for appropriate participants, a few clients were placed in group who were not stable enough to tolerate this intervention well. In the future our own staff will need to conduct clinical screening to avoid this problem in the future.

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

This project has directly or indirectly benefited at least 500 people at this time. These individuals include not just women who have experienced trauma or gender-based violence, but also their families and communities. The project received acknowledgement and public endorsement by public personalities such as the Deputy Mayor, ward officials, and representatives from UNHCR, USAID, UNICEF, and the UMN. Other donors also attended the closing and exhibition event and expressed an interest in working with us to continue this project. The Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal, Teku, Kathmandu, advised that we become linked with them in order to pursue such projects in the future.

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.

Group facilitators collected data on attendance and attrition: we trained 26 facilitators in two locations in Common Threads Project trauma healing methodology. Out of the 26 trained facilitators 12 were trained at an advanced level. The facilitators conducted trauma therapy for 118 participants of 7 healing circles by the end of March 2023 and established 5 new healing circles for continuing work from March onwards.

Detailed observations of each session were recorded to track activities and responses of participants and staff. Facilitators kept clinical progress notes on clients and reviewed these with supervisors. They compiled reports at the end of each phase of the program.

Team meetings and clinical supervision meetings monitored the progress of clients as well as the competence of staff to deliver the intervention. A checklist was created to measure the success of this project. Changes in behavior and attitudes of the participants were noted through direct observation and reports from participants. Participants provided verbal feedback about the program in group discussions (the quotes in section 12 above are drawn from these documents).

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

All the groups that completed the program will continue meeting for another round of 14 sessions. The focus of these upcoming sessions will be on empowerment of participants through reducing stigma, guilt, and self-blame and building a community where they support each other.

Sajha Dhago will continue forming new groups for trauma healing. In collaboration, Sajha Dhago and Common Threads Project will continue training the trainers so that the Sajha Dhago team can train others in their region to facilitate trauma healing therapy circles for SGBV survivors.

Some of the participants are legally battling for justice. In the second phase of our project, we hope to empower vulnerable women so that they can fight for justice without fear. We hope they can recognize their needs and recover from their trauma.

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

Budget		Expenses	
Nepal implementation costs:		Nepal implementation costs:	
Sewing supplies	\$1,350.00	Sajha Dhago, implementation of healing circles	\$4,951.40
Lunch, Tea & Refreshment	\$3,780.00	Sajha Dhago, implementation of healing circles	\$15,557.88
Transportation (participants)	\$2,400.00	Sajha Dhago, implementation of healing circles	\$8,952
Transportation (facilitators)	\$3,360.00	Sajha Dhago, implementation of healing circles	\$2,951
Communication	\$45.00		

Venue	\$25.00		
Administrator stipends	\$2,160.00		
Facilitators stipends	\$18,000.00		
IMPLEMENTATION SUBTOTAL	\$31,120.00		\$32,412.28
Advanced Clinical Training:		Advanced Clinical Training:	
Transportation: RT airfare US-KTM	\$3,000.00	Transportation and accommodation	\$6,707.00
Accommodation and food	\$2,400.00	Training venue	\$1,345.00
Visas for Nepal	\$60.00	Bank fees, currency exchange	\$191.07
Consultation fee	\$8,000.00	Training of facilitators, consultation fee	\$8,000.00
Nepali-English interpreter	\$300.00	Printing of training materials	96.90
TRAINING SUBTOTAL	\$13,760.00		\$16,339.97
Subtotal	\$44,880.00		
Overhead (%10)	\$4,488.00	Overhead	\$616.00
Total	\$49,368.00		\$49,377.47

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

Yes, this grant and our association with Together Women Rise has definitely helped our partner Sajha Dhago receive additional funding and gain recognition. They obtained a one-year grant for the Trauma Recovery Initiative. They have succeeded in securing seed funding from the Oak Foundation (via Tides). In Nepal other organizations have made verbal commitments to support this project in the future.