

# COLORS OF CONNECTION

## TOGETHER WOMEN RISE – INTERIM REPORT



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|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>1. Organization name</b> | Colors of Connection                              |
| <b>Grant amount</b>         | \$47,250  |
| <b>Contact</b>              | Christina Mallie, Executive Director & Co-Founder |
| <b>Address</b>              | PO Box 50371, Brooklyn, NY 11205                  |

### 2. Outcomes the project was designed to achieve

Girl Awakening is a year-round sustainable project supporting girls and young women at the margins in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo with protection from violence and opportunities for their growth and development through life skills, creative activities and public artmaking.

**Goal:** To empower girls in Goma, DRC to effect positive change for themselves and their community in the pursuit of equality and freedom from violence.

**Outcome 1:** 80 adolescent girls aged 10-12 will demonstrate increased autonomy, well-being, and an increased ability to protect themselves from GBV.

**Outcome 2:** Community leaders and community members from the neighborhood of Bujovu and other neighborhoods in Goma will have increased participation and leadership in ensuring the safety and well-being of young women and adolescent girls. 40 community stakeholders (local government and other positions of leadership in the community such as in churches), and 160 community members will be reached through forums, and 30,000 community members through public art.

**Outcome 3:** Our local partner will have enhanced capacity to effectively reach the most marginalized adolescent girls and provide art-based life skills and GBV prevention programming.

### 3. Has funding changed for this project?

**Fundraising shortfalls for 2022:** We raised \$77,250 for the project, \$53,000 less than our goal of \$130,000. Because this was a potential scenario we had planned for, we successfully adapted the program and made it work on a reduced scale. Our implementation over the 12-month grant period with adaptations noted: May – June 2022 program development; July – October weekly sessions; November- December activities paused to adapt to budget; January – current running sessions every other week instead of once a week with participants to adapt to budget. We will implement through May.

**Fundraising opportunities for 2023:** With funding from Together Women Rise we were able to prototype this program and are now prepared to take the next step of a 1<sup>st</sup> generation scale-out. Together Women Rise support has been instrumental in attracting other funders, enabling us to demonstrate program successes and make a strong case for support. We were invited to apply for funding from the Obama Foundation’s Girls Opportunity Alliance (application is under review). The USAID Mission in DRC has expressed interest, and we are currently developing a multi-year proposal for them.

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

**Change in local NGO partner:** We made a change in our local partner in March 2022. We were partnering with an organization called les Étoiles Messagères (EM) at the time of our application in 2021 and changed to another local women’s organization Tulizo Elle Space (TES). This was mentioned to Veena and Jenny in March when we received news of the award. This change was made because we had concerns about EM’s capacity to work together as a cohesive group and the motivation and availability of some members. We are very happy with the outcomes so far of working with our current partner TES and believe the partnership is stronger and more viable in the long term. We feel more confident that working with TES will help us more successfully achieve objective #3 - Our local partner will have enhanced capacity to effectively reach the most marginalized adolescent girls and provide art-based life skills and gender-based violence prevention programming.

### 5. Have the number of beneficiaries changed?

We more than tripled our original target of reaching 80 girls, instead reaching 305 girls without needing to change the staff and mentor structure. This was possible because the staff and mentors had

sufficient experience to be able to work with more participants (they had already worked with groups of girls over a 3-month period).

We grew our beneficiaries to include 157 parents (145 female and 13 male) of girls. They engaged in 7 life skills sessions to learn about adolescent development and girls' rights. We added this component because we learned that working with parents is an important and complementary piece to the sessions with girls. It helps parents better understand and support the program objectives.

The following beneficiaries were below target: we reached 72 instead of the original 160 community members targeted for community forums. This was because we reduced the number of community forums from 8 to 4 as it during a period of higher insecurity in Goma. We also reached 35 instead of 40 community stakeholders through meetings. This was due to some absences.

Other beneficiary numbers remained that same: 8 Young women mentors, and 15,000 girls and women in the community engaging with the public art.

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

**Civil unrest and security concerns:** Since July 2022 there have been several violent anti-UN protests in Goma that disrupted our activities as it is dangerous to operate when protests are happening. However, it hasn't significantly changed our implementation as we've only needed to delay activities by a few days.

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

No.

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

**Outcome 1:** 80 adolescent girls aged 10-12 will demonstrate increased autonomy, well-being, and an increased ability to protect themselves from GBV.

**305 girls have received an average of 20 art and life skills sessions.** They acquired essential 'assets' - skillsets, knowledge, and resources that protect them and enable them to thrive including: Knowing how to safely and hygienically manage menstruation, knowing how to manage their sexual and reproductive health and contraception methods, knowing where to access safety and health services including gender-based violence support, having trusted peers and older female mentors, and knowing how to self-soothe/regulate emotions.

**62 girl participants received scholarships** so that they could attend school for the 2022-2023 school year including - Tuition fees: registration, exam fees, and (2) School supplies: including uniforms, backpacks, notebooks.

**Quotes from participants, parents and staff about impact:**

*"If someone in my family makes a decision that is bad for me, I know that I can go to a person I trust for advise." - Participant speaking about how she learned to deal with family issues, including knowing the qualities of a trustworthy person.*

- Girl participant

*"These teachings have opened our minds, I was ashamed to tell my daughters certain things clearly (the parts of the genitals, and how pregnancy happens...). Thanks to this program I have learned to be frank with my family. It is how I can prevent harm to my children that can happen from lack of information."*

- Mother of a participant

*Girls are now coming forward and disclosing abuse and rape to their mentors. This shows that trust is being built and helps us protect girls.*

- Staff member



Clockwise from top left: (1) group mandala exercise creating art from found materials, (2) mentors teaching girls about sexual and reproductive health, (3) girls at school, (4) girls coloring in a resource and risk map of their community. Photo credit: Pamela Tulizo 2022.

**Outcome 2:** Community leaders and community members from the neighborhood of Bujovu and other neighborhoods in Goma will have increased participation and leadership in ensuring the safety and well-being of young women and adolescent girls. 35 community stakeholders (local government and other positions of leadership in the community such as in churches), and 72 community members will be reached through forums, and 30,000 community members through public art.

Community leadership and members (35) have engaged on issues of girls' rights and girls' access to resources and services in the community through meetings to discuss girls' needs, and public forums in which girls presented on their rights. A community agreement was signed by the neighborhood chef committing to work with us to protect girls' rights and increase girls' access to resources and services.

Three murals reaching approximately 30,000 residents were created that express 14 core human rights regularly violated in girls' daily lives. The girls created their own Bill of Rights, that reflects rights enshrined in several international and regional legal instruments ratified by the DRC. More about it on our blog: <https://www.colorsofconnection.org/blog/14-human-rights-identified-by-girl-awakening> Girls presented at 4 public forums to 72 community members (37 women, and 35 men).

*"This program has advocated for equality. While it is believed that it is boys who have more value than girls we have learned that they all have the same ability."*

- Participant at community forum, November 2022.



From left to right: Mural on girls' rights created by girls of the program on the outside of a school, second mural on girls' rights in process of being created. Photo credit: Pamela Tulizo 2022.

We made significant strides in supporting our local partner Tulizo Elle Space (TES) in program delivery, as well as supporting their development and operations as a young organization. We provided knowledge sharing and capacity building to TES delivered through intensive trainings, as well as the daily mentorship while running the program. TES gain capabilities in the following areas: fundraising, program management, financial management, and girl-centered programming.

*“Working with Colors of Connection as a local partner, has been and remains for a great experience, very interesting in the cultural sector. We have realized an extraordinary project in my community with the girls and the mentors. We have learned a lot from the staff of Colors of Connection especially in capacity building with our team and for me personally on the side of fundraising research and networking.”*

- Pamela Tulizo,  
Coordinator, TES

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

No.