



Dining for Women

Program Fact Sheet: November 2007

Featured Program: Women for Women International

Although WFWI is larger than most programs DFW supports, WFWI was our very first program in January 2003 and continues to be a frequent recipient. Every year we channel our contributions to a specific country. This year we are supporting WFWI programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For the month of November, WFWI is extending their matching gift so that our donations will qualify. Our donation will be matched dollar for dollar, doubling our impact.

There is a wealth of program specific information on the WFWI Web site, which can be found at womenforwomen.org/bosniaandherzegovina.htm.

Web Site: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/index.htm>

Mission: Women for Women International mobilizes women to change their lives by bringing a holistic approach to addressing the unique needs of women in conflict and post-conflict environments.

Women for Women International (WFWI) provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency, thereby promoting viable civil societies.

History: The organization was founded in 1993 by a wife and husband, Zainab Salbi and Amjad Atallah, who were motivated to act after learning of the plight of women in rape camps in the former Yugoslavia and the slow response of the international community. WFWI launched its activities by creating "sister-to-sister" connections between sponsors in the U.S. and women survivors of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In its first year, WFWI worked with eight women, distributing about \$9,000 in direct aid. They realized that financial assistance alone was not enough to create deeper change in lives of women who had lost everything. WFWI developed marketable skills, cultivated an understanding of women's rights and potential and helped secure ways to earn an income for years to come. By doing this, women gradually build the strength and stature they need to survive the horrors of war and become active community members.

Since 1993, WFWI has expanded its operations to serve 120,000 women survivors of war and distributed \$33 million in direct and micro credit loans.

In 2006, WFWI received the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, an award presented annually to an organization that significantly alleviates human suffering.

Where They Work: WFWI serves women in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sudan and builds one-to-one connections with more than 23,000 sponsors in all 50 states of the U.S. and 55 other countries.

This year, Dining for Women is specifically supporting programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From 1992 to 1995 Slobodan Milosevic and the leader of the Bosnia Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, led an ethnic cleansing war by terrorizing and forcibly displacing all non-Serbs in Bosnia. The country was ravaged and is now struggling to rebuild. More than 200,000 people out of a population of 4.4 million were killed. Another 200,000 were injured, 50,000 of them were children. And 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped as part of the ethnic cleansing campaign.

How They Work: WFWI helps women in war-torn regions rebuild their lives by giving them financial and emotional support, job skills training, rights education, access to capital and assistance for small business development. They mobilize women to change their lives by bringing a holistic approach to addressing the unique needs of women in conflict and post-conflict environments.

WFWI works with women participating in a one-year program launching them on a journey from victim to survivor to active citizen. As women go through the program they assume leadership positions in their villages, actively participating in community reconstruction, building civil societies, starting businesses, training other women and serving as role models.

Women being in the *Sponsorship Program* where direct financial aid from a sponsor helps them deal with effects of war such as lack of food, water and medicine. Exchanging letters with sponsors provides women with an emotional lifeline. As their situations begin to stabilize, women begin building a foundation for their lives as survivors. The sponsor provides \$27 per month for financial aid and training. Today there are more than 19,000 sponsors in all 50 states as well as in 53 other countries. Last year, WFWI facilitated the exchange of 47,000 letters.

While continuing to receive sponsorship support, women then participate in the *Renewing Women's Life Skills (RenewLS) Program* that provides them with rights awareness, leadership education, vocational and technical skills training and the opportunity to engage in community-based income-generating projects.

To help women transform their new skills into financial independence, job skills training strengthens women's existing skills and new skills are introduced so they can access future employment opportunities. A comprehensive business service helps women start and manage their own micro-enterprises. WFWI gives the women access to capital and micro credit programs as well as access to markets by facilitating product sales through outside retailers and an online Virtual Bazaar. They provide expertise in product design, production assistance and business development workshops. They also help women form micro-enterprises such as production facilities and cooperative stores to sell the goods women produce.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are 87 members (all Bosnian) on the WFWI program staff. To date, WFWI has distributed 26,368 loans totaling \$25,443,507. In February 2004, they launched the women's human rights and leadership training project to help women leaders in rural areas take active roles in their communities. Current job skills trainings include knitting, embroidery, jewelry making, home design, carpentry and agriculture. They also offer services to women in a human trafficking shelter in Sarajevo.

In 2007, WFWI has served 2,964 women in their core program.

How They Measure Their Success: WFWI measures their success through notable achievements:

- * Linked more than 120,000 women survivors of war with sponsors worldwide.
- * Facilitated the translation and exchange for thousands of letters of support between sponsors and sponsored women.
- * Enrolled and graduated more than 93,000 women in Renewing Life Skills for Women.
- * Helped thousands secure employment and establish their own income-generating businesses.
- * Distributed more than \$33 million in direct aid and micro credit loans, maintaining a 98% repayment rate.
- * Facilitated hundreds of group therapy sessions for war survivors by providing a venue for women to share their experienced and build bridges between women survivors of different ethnic backgrounds.

Fiscal Efficiency: While the overall 2006 WFWI program expenses were \$15,206,312, the 2006 Bosnia and Herzegovina budget, excluding micro credit, was \$910,044. WFWI reports 80% of contributions are directed to programs. For three years in a row, WFWI has received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, the highest possible ranking given.

DFW Giving History with Program:

2003	\$ 600
2005	\$ 840
2006	\$6,023