



FOLLOW UP REPORT

Name of Organization: **Longitude, Ghana**

Website: www.golongitude.org

Mission: Longitude connects visionary leaders with the resources they need to affect change in their communities. Working in resource poor countries, Longitude provides volunteers, funding and programmatic support to move each of its partner organizations closer to self-sufficiency.

When Featured: **May 2010**

DFW Donation: **\$24,667**

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Longitude received funding from Dining for Women (DFW) to build the capacity of their partner program, PROFESA. As an academy for disadvantaged girls, PROFESA had many goals it hoped to achieve with support from DFW. **Specific goals and objectives from the grant are listed below with details of their progress over the past eleven months since receiving the DFW grant:**

Goal 1: Provide scholarships and programming that will allow PROFESA to expand and accommodate 50 students a year over the next three years.

- Objective I: Provide free or reduced tuition to 50 women who cannot afford an educational opportunity as a result of their economic disadvantage each year for the next three years.

PROFESA reach its goal for the first year by providing scholarship programming to more than 50 women since July of 2010. PROFESA has enrolled close to 100 students since the beginning of 2010, maintaining an average of 65 students at any given time.

This not only displays the incredible need for free and reduced tuition in this community, but also shows the quality education that PROFESA is able to provide when given the resources to do so.

Beyond reaching the numerical goal of retaining 50 students in the first year, PROFESA has increased the diversity of its student body to include students from different regions of Ghana, neighboring countries, and with a range of socioeconomic levels. The school is geared towards women, but PROFESA will not

turn away students, and now serves an average of 5-10 men at any given time. None of DFW's scholarships were given to the men who attend the school.

We are confident that PROFESA will be able to meet objective one and continue to offer free and reduced scholarship to at least 50 young women for the remaining two years, as it that was designed in the initial grant.

- Objective II: Educate students in areas of English, typing, stenography, office procedures, computer literacy, data base management, and foundational accounting so that 80% of these students will pass the required government examinations prior to graduation.

PROFESA students continued to excel in their core curriculum in 2010 even as the school expanded its course offerings. PROFESA students also took courses in business and entrepreneurial practices, which PROFESA hopes will aid in students' abilities to be successful in the business sector.

PROFESA was proactive in researching the market and realizing that the certification exams the students had taken prior to 2010 were not leading to jobs in Ghana's sluggish economy (no new government hires in 2010 or 2011). The teachers and administration decided to change the school from focusing on government exams in secretaryship to a school offering degrees in computers and entrepreneurial business.

PROFESA received national accreditation in September 2010, allowing them to offer government sanctioned degrees and making it much more practical and desirable for students looking to get a job or enter one of Ghana's universities.

This new degree certification program will increase the students' likelihood for employment in more fields (see below).

This June the last group of PROFESA students to take the original government certificate exams will be graduating from the school, and Longitude will report their exam results to DFW once they are available at the end of 2011.

- Objective III: Create pathways to employment by supporting each student in their job search process.

With the achievement of PROFESA'S national accreditation, the school focused its resources on curriculum and staffing in order to expand its students' knowledge of business, entrepreneurial practices, and computer skills.

Research shows an increase in the rate of computer and Internet usage amongst Ghanaians (up 4.2% from 2009) and an emergence in web-based companies in Ghana. This has lead PROFESA to become a more specialized training program in this growing field.

Instead of supporting student job searches through the designated tool that Longitude proposed in its initial DFW grant, Longitude and PROFESA pursued

further development of a computer curriculum by shipping 4 new computers, 4 donated computers, and purchasing 5 used computers in Ghana.

In addition, Longitude used DFW funds to acquire faster high-speed Internet for the school, and to hire a computer teacher to teach Microsoft Office, networking and computer repair. By providing more specialized and market-driven training, PROFESA students will be more likely to leave the school with the skills necessary to earn an income in Ghana's growing computer market.

Longitude and PROFESA made the decision to abandon the original plan of creating an employment pathway process in order to use DFW funds to create a stronger computer program, which has both increased student confidence around searching for their own jobs as well as student enrollment and retention at the school.

Goal II: Incorporate health information programming in the academy's curriculum.

- Objectives I-III: Increase students' knowledge related to HIV/AIDS and other diseases common to the region, nutrition and healthy lifestyle habits, students' awareness of health resources in the neighboring communities.

During the past 12 months, several health professionals have visited PROFESA to engage in health talks with the students. During the fall of 2010, an herbalist from Accra came to the school to talk about the presence of HIV and AIDS in Ghana as well as the increasing black market for drugs in the country. She stressed the importance of practicing safe sex and taking only drugs prescribed by a doctor in order to prevent the spread of AIDS and HIV.

More recently, an American medical student went to PROFESA to teach health education. Topics covered included safe sex, condom usage, birth control, the biological basis of HIV infection, red blood cells, white blood cells, and the benefits of hygienic practices such as hand washing. Students were very receptive to the information and had many questions regarding the biological basis of HIV as well as the transmission of HIV and AIDS. HIV/AIDS pre-tests and post-tests were given to determine the amount of knowledge gained from the health presentations. The average scores increased from 2.05 to 2.95 out of 5, indicating an 18% increase in the average score. A copy to the test has been attached as an appendix.

Luna Pads, or reusable menstruation pads, were given to PROFESA students in February 2010. Since many of the students cannot afford feminine napkins, they had to miss school and work during menstruation. Longitude and PROFESA hope the donated Luna Pads will allow the students to stay involved during this time in their cycle. We have begun taking data on student attendance as of February 2010.

Concerning the goal to provide health education, we had hoped to see greater improvements in the students' test results. PROFESA staff proved to be overwhelmed and undereducated around these topics so it was essential for

Longitude and PROFESA to look to outside sources to fulfill the goals listed above.

Much more education is needed, and the school is currently looking for ways to partner with local health professionals who can offer more consistent health education seminars for the women at the school. Longitude will continue to update DFW on the progress of students.

PROJECT DETAILS

The expense report below lists program expenses for PROFESA in 2010. Longitude received DFW funds in July 2010, half way through its fiscal year. Therefore, only 6 months of expenses using DFW funds are integrated into the financial statement below. Longitude is happy to report out to DFW as our 2011 expenses are confirmed and will provide detailed information on program expenses at that time.

Project Expenses	PROFESA 2010
Administrator Salary	\$6,600
English Teacher	\$4,800
New Computer Teacher	\$8,400
Computer Repair/Maintenance	\$2,000
4 Acer Desktop Computers	\$0.00
High-speed Wireless Internet	\$1,425
Building Expenses	\$3,000
Utilities	\$960
Volunteer Expenses (paid by volunteers through Longitude's acct)	\$10,489
PROFESA Graduation Ceremony	\$1,000
Total Expenses	\$38,674
Money Invested by DFW	\$24,700
Money Invested by Longitude	\$13,974

**Volunteer expenses were added to the above budget to reflect Longitude's actual spending as stated in its 990. These expenses were paid by volunteers alone, and not by DFW funds. Fees are wired through Longitude's bank account, and therefore should be reported for purposes of transparency.*

DFW funds were a huge asset to the PROFESA program. Below are several examples of the use of DFW grant money and the outcomes of that funding:

- DFW funds supplied 87% of the budget, with \$24,667 in granted funds. The budget was spent as intended by the initial grant, covering teacher salaries, technical materials, building expenses,

and utilities which all contribute to the education of the PROFESA students.

- DFW funds were used to aid the PROFESA program from July 2010-June 2011. Longitude used the funds in totality in order to make significant changes to impact the future programming at PROFESA for many years to come:
- DFW funds also helped to:
 - Hire a more highly qualified computer teacher to build on the students' computer skills, including Microsoft Office, Windows, repair, and networking.
 - Expand course offerings with business english and entrepreneurial business courses.
 - Pay for 40 of the young women's national certification exams in December of 2010.
 - Supply the school with much needed high-speed Internet.
 - Make significant progress in its efforts to move towards financial self-sufficiency. In 2010, PROFESA was able to cover 17% of its own annual budget; totaling \$6,575. Revenue was collected from full and discounted tuition rates.

Attached, as an appendix, is the original budget sheet provided in the initial grant listing how DFW money would be spent. There is one major difference in the spending that deserves further explanation.

\$10 per student was to be spent on a job placement coordinator, along with \$2 per student on job placement materials. Instead, PROFESA determined that providing more training for the students in computer skills and web design and asserting the school as a degree program would help the students develop careers in this emerging field.

Noted changes in the Ghanaian business sector led PROFESA to believe that providing students specialization in computer skills and web design would be more beneficial to them than training and supporting a job search coordinator.

Longitude will be conducting extensive research in Ghana starting in June to test web design markets to get a better sense of what skills PROFESA students will need to truly be prepared for Ghana's growing computer based economy. Longitude is interested in integrating such changes to benefit PROFESA and its students.

IMPACT

Extrapolating the impact of PROFESA's work is essential to understand the influence that DFW money had on the community of Abeka, Ghana.

Direct impact should be measured with the understanding that individuals in this category had immediate contact with the academy in some way.

Over the past 12 months, the funds provided by DFW directly impacted 80 individuals connected to PROFESA:

- 65 students, 9 staff members, 6 service and maintenance workers.
- 40 students graduating in July with degrees in Information Communications Technology.
- Graduates now hold the potential to generate an income stream through employment because of their training at PROFESA.
- Due to access provided through PROFESA, students are connected to international volunteers for professional networking.
- Students have access to computers and the Internet 12 hours/day to expand their knowledge, networks, and skills.
- Students are now able to attend school and work more consistently during menstruation due to Luna Pads.
- Improvements in the students' HIV testing scores through education should lead to less HIV contraction among PROFESA students.

Calculating indirect community impact is challenging, but necessary in order to grasp the scope of the work:

- Each one of our 65 students has a family that they contribute to, either financially or domestically. So the students' family members are benefiting from their opportunity to attend PROFESA and receive a formal education.
- The student will be able to provide more to their family through a better job and encourage other family and friends to receive an education as well.
- Our students will be mothers and fathers with their own families in the future, hopefully sending their children to school and encouraging learning for the next generation.
- The women's presence in the workforce will positively impact the opportunities available to women in the future in education and employment.

PROFESA has done much more than educate 65 students over the past year; it has provided hope to a community. PROFESA's computer and secretarial training has provided an education to many disadvantaged young women who would otherwise never have the opportunity to enter Ghana's workforce.

As a proponent of PROFESA and its work, Longitude looks forward to continued expansion and impact from PROFESA, while promoting self-sufficiency as an organization.

Lastly, we would like to thank Dining for Women and its members for their support of PROFESA and its mission.

STUDENT STORIES:

PROFESA has collected a few anonymous interviews with current students regarding why they attend the PROFESA Academy, their experience with the school, and how it has impacted their life:

- **Obstacles you had to overcome in order to receive an education:**

Student 1 - "I come from a divorced home, so I've lived with my grandmother almost all my life. My grandmother was not educated and also had no money to help me to go to school, so I thought of selling water on the streets at the age of 12 years to save money to further my education. I completed my Junior High and was able to continue to the Senior High, but had to drop out because of the financial burden. I received very little financial support from my father and was not able to meet all my educational needs. Unfortunately, I got pregnant. But the zeal to further my education was still alive after eight years of staying at home. I finally got admission at PROFESA where the fee is very low. In 2009, we paid 15.00 Ghana Cedis/month as fees and that was very cheap. The most exciting is that I will be graduating in July 2011."

Student 2 - "I was raised by a single parent who was not working. At age 12, I had to support my mother by selling peeled oranges on streets to help my mother get money to pay my school fees and buy other educational materials that I needed. I later went and stayed with my grandmother because my mother was facing housing problems.

After completing junior high, there was no money for me to continue my education in the senior high, so I decided to look for a job to save money to continue my education. So, I looked for a job in a restaurant and worked there for only six months because I was harassed by my boss.

I stopped the work and stayed home for one and a half years looking after my dad who was then seriously sick. Later on, I was fortunate to join PROFESA. My dad didn't have any money for me to start, but he called the director, Meshach Bondzie, and told him his problem. The director asked my dad to let me start PROFESA the following day without paying anything."

- **How has the project influenced your life?**

Student 3 - "The program has greatly influenced my life. I really felt guilty when I dropped out of school. I couldn't get closer to friends anymore. Because I felt I did not belong to their class. Now, I am happy. My educational path is clear. I will be graduating from a recognized school, I will be working very soon, I will be saving money to look after my daughter and myself, and save some to further my education at a university. The knowledge that I have gathered at PROFESA can help me become a responsible citizen of Ghana. My life is organized and my future is brightening up."

Student 4 - "The program has greatly influenced my life. I now have skills for jobs in IT Management. I know who I want to become and where I want to be in the future. I think I have a bright future. PROFESA has put a smile on my face and I am so excited."



American medical student Paras Minhas visits PROFESA to speak about AIDS



Paras spoke with the students on the causes of HIV/AIDS and preventative health practices



Meshach teaches about nutrition and healthy lifestyles



Meshach focuses on the importance of fresh foods to a healthy life



Meshach talks with PROFESA students on the balcony outside the school.



PROFESA computer teacher, David Agbo talks with a Longitude volunteer about web design in February.



PROFESA student building a PROFESA web page during independent work time at the school.

APPENDIX I

Project Budget

PROFESA's total budget for 2009 is \$15,000. Longitude raises \$10,000 per year through our Charter Member Program. We are requesting \$5,000 per year from Dining for Women in order to increase student scholarships and to provide a more robust job placement program. Longitude is requesting \$100 per year per student for the next three years in order to accomplish these goals.

The follow table breaks down how each student's \$100 will be spent by the PROFESA school per year.

Expenses	Dollar Amount
Teacher salaries	\$50
Job placement coordinator	\$10

Expenses	Dollar Amount
Health care professional or health training for Meshach	\$3
Rent, utilities, transportation, internet, and computer maintenance	\$27
Marketing and student recruitment	\$4
Supplies	\$1.50
Telephone	\$1
Job Placement Materials	\$2
Examination Fees	\$1.50
Total for each student per year	\$100

APPENDIX II

HIV Knowledge Pre-test and Post-test

Student ID # _____

1. HIV is spread from person to person by...

- a) shaking hands, kissing or hugging
- b) unprotected anal, oral or vaginal sexual contact
- c) sharing needles to inject recreational drugs
- d) answers b and c

2, HIV can infect which of the following groups....

- a) teens, the elderly, and newborns
- b) college professors, the homeless, men, women, and all ethnic groups
- c) bisexuals, homosexuals, and heterosexuals

d) all of the above

3. Which of the following increase your risk of HIV exposure...

- a) unprotected anal, oral, or vaginal sex
- b) sharing needles
- c) drug use
- d) infection with another sexually transmitted disease
- e) all of the above

4. The following people should be HIV tested

- a) heterosexual men & women
- b) drug users, teens, and those people over 50
- c) gay men and women
- d) pregnant women
- e) everyone should know their HIV status

5. The best way to prevent HIV infection is...

- a) not to have sexual contact with anyone
- b) stay away from those with HIV
- c) use latex condoms and don't share needles
- d) I don't have to worry because I'm not at risk