



26 April 2015

Dining For Women
Attn: Beth Ellen Holimon
PO Box 25633
Greenville, SC 29616

Via Dropbox

Re: April 2015 Progress Report

1. Please provide the following information:
 - a. Organization Name: Rain for the Sahel & Sahara
 - b. Program Title: Learning and Earning Programs for Women & Girls in Five Agadez Communities
 - c. Grant Amount: \$18,331.00 in year 1.
 - d. Contact Person: Julia D'Orazio
 - e. Address: PO Box 1503, Portsmouth, NH 03802
2. Recap briefly what outcomes the program was designed to achieve
Our mentoring program – in which unlettered community women provide counseling and support to school girls to improve their school attendance and success -- will make significant progress toward durability by income generation from herding and savings & loan groups.
3. Has funding changed for the program? No.
4. Is your organization or program situation different from presented in the approved proposal?

We have upgraded our bookkeeping and management capabilities at our Niger headquarters office in Niamey. Salifou Kountche, Bookkeeper and Office Manager had risen, over 14 years, to the position of head of bookkeeping in Niger for World Vision. While the US office ultimately controls all expenditures, Salifou brings a high level of review and control to our Niger offices.

Halima Aboubacar, an education specialist in the Agadez area who was based at the Agadez Learning Center decided to return to her home city of Niamey for personal reasons. She was replaced in March by Alhassane Boubacar.

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

RAIN has a small and lean staff budget. Since Dining for Women does not fund staffing, we have not been able to hire a contract field agent. Our sole field agent in the Agadez region has been strained this year in following all of RAIN's programs there. We have, however, alleviated this issue by partnering with a local NGO to work with our established school market gardens, freeing our field agent to spend more time on the Dining for Women (DFW) grant programs. Djibrilla, our Agadez field agent, lives in Iferouane – the hub community for the DFW mentor programs. For the coming year, to assure his weekly availability for the five mentor programs supported by DFW, we plan to hire a field agent in another sector to allow to concentrate more fully on the DFW program in the next school year when four new savings & loan programs will be created.

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

We have not revised our original objectives. Our objectives have been validated this year with the success of our pilot program located in Iferouane and funded by this DFW grant since the fall. The twenty women in the Iferouane savings & loan program celebrated their first anniversary in January. Please see the attached report for photos and detailed results.

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

- A. Rural and nomadic girls will attend state-run schools more regularly and succeed. Result: We have supported and monitored the mentor programs in the five Agadez communities. Iferouane, is the site of our pilot Savings & Loan Program, which celebrated its first year anniversary in January. The year's results are reported in the attached report, as mentioned above. RAIN also supported Iferouane's 10 mentors and their 50 students. These women, as well as ten other community members, compose the twenty member Savings & Loan group.
- B. The programs in the four other communities, Soulefiet, Tchinfiniten, Tadek and Tchinteloust, consists of, in year one of the DFW grant, support for 25 mentors and their 125 assigned students. This support includes mentor stipends, payment for practical skills materials, extensive mentor training and weekly practical skills classes and counseling sessions by each mentor with their assigned group of girls. The most quantitative measure of success will be the rate of return to school in Fall 2016 for mentored girls compared to their classmates without mentors. We will also review products made in the practical skills classes. These four communities will initiate their Savings & Loan programs in June – July.
- C. Income generating activities for women mentors: herding. The mentor herding program has been delayed. There were drought conditions in the participating communities; conditions were not good for beginning new herds of animals. The rainy season will begin in June and we will purchase the goats and begin the program no later than September.

8. Do you anticipate any difficulties in completing your project in the timeframe outlined in your proposal.

As stated above, the herding aspect of the mentors income-generating activities has been postponed due to drought. We will purchase the animals and provide veterinary training to the mentors as conditions improve as a result of the 2015 rainy season which occurs from June to September.

We will provide a fall report when this, the production of Seiga artisan products, and the activities scheduled for after the rainy season are complete.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Iferouane Savings & Loan Group, Report of First Year Activities and Results;
- B. Photos of mentors and Savings & Loan Group;
- C. Mentor Interviews

Accounting of Funds Spent and Received as of 4/30/2015

Mentor Stipends	\$1,699
Mentor Training and Monitoring, S&L Training, Monitoring and Evaluation	<u>\$2,149</u>
	\$3,848

RAIN message to DFW donors:

The mentors that the DFW grant is supporting through training, stipends and the creation of income-generating goat herds and Savings & Loan Groups are the heart of RAIN. Our mission of bolstering grassroots energy to provide access to education and improved livelihoods is carried forward, in large part, by our mentors. With training and encouragement from RAIN, these women – nearly all of whom have never attended school – are having profound impacts on their communities. We are seeing the number of girls enrolled in primary schools increasing and, in some communities, the first girls ever are graduating from primary school.

We have attached mentor statements about the RAIN program and the girls they mentor. We feel that the best messages are those that come from the women speaking for themselves.

We encourage everyone interested in seeing the desert, its people and RAIN's mentors to view our video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kz0IRrZF1I>.

Please go to www.rain4sahara.org to see Niger, its people and the mentor program.