

Dining for Women 2013 Mid-Year Report

Lotus Outreach's Consoling through Counseling Program

1 A brief description of what has been accomplished so far, including progress on the goals and objectives of the program DFW is funding. What impact has been made through DFW's funding?

In March of 2013, Dining for Women (DFW) provided a generous grant of \$15,000.00 to support Lotus Outreach's Consoling through Counseling program. This program is providing trauma counseling and reintegration assistance to victims of human trafficking, rape and domestic violence residing at a safe-shelter in the border region of Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia. Clients of the CTC program have participated in individual, small group, large group, and weekly counseling sessions. Some survivors have been reintegrated into their home villages, and new clients have been taken on. At the time of this midyear report, the program is serving 42 survivors of sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and 42 relatives of these victims through these services.

Since the time of DFW's grant, counselors at the LO's local partner organization the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC), provided a total of 151 sessions of individual counseling to 56 clients and documented clients' emotional state in each session. Counselors performed full character and emotional assessments of the clients individually and then engaged them in small group therapy sessions, encouraging them to express and explore their feelings about their trauma. The counselors provided 25 small group counseling sessions for 31 clients. Small group counseling participants shared their experiences, both good and bad, shared their hopelessness and their hope for starting new lives after their trauma. The counseling group uses games and art projects to build camaraderie.

Counselors also brought clients together for large group therapy sessions where the girls, now more accustomed to each other, shared their experiences in a big circle. Forty-two participants have taken part in 9 large group sessions during the reporting period.

Weekly meetings occur on Friday afternoons. The main purpose of these meetings is to maintain clients' friendships between each other. Clients participate in stress-relieving, fun activities; they tell jokes and short stories and sing songs. This helps build their confidence to take part in more serious group therapy activities at the shelter.

From March to August, 33 survivors and 33 family members completed counseling and were reintegrated into their home villages. In addition, follow-up visits occurred for 57 reintegrated survivors and 52 reintegrated relatives. In the months of July and August, 2 reintegrated survivors were given grants for small business startups.

2 Has anything changed in regard to the original program goals and objectives? If the budget has changed, please include the new program budget.

The project established four of five self-help groups in clients' home villages during this period, but could not facilitate any women's economic empowerment groups due to the remote and undeveloped locale. The reintegration team has been assessing the possibility for the established groups to have a

joint collective business and will continue to establish new self-help groups in the second half of the program year.

Secondly, one of two counselors, Miss. Pech Kimny resigned from her position effective July 1, 2013. It is a loss to the program not to have her skill and patience in serving our clients. A new replacement was hired in August.

The budget for the program remains the same, and spending from Dining for Women's grant will not be affected.

3 Have you experienced any significant challenges or obstacles in implementation? If so, how are you addressing them?

Other than the problems mentioned above, the program has not experienced any significant unforeseen challenges or obstacles.

4 Has the timeline for the program changed from the original funding application?

The timeline for the program remains the same.

5 Has funding changed for this program? For example, have you received unexpected funding from another source?

The generous grant from Dining for Women remains the sole source of grant funding for the CTC program, the rest is funded through Lotus Outreach's general ledger and donations. We are not currently planning to seek additional funding from other grantors.

6 How much of the original DFW restricted funds have been disbursed and how much remain?

Lotus Outreach is disbursing the grant to our local partner in two payments of \$7,500.00 –along with additional funds from our general fund– to fully fund the project. Exactly \$7,500.00 of DFW's grant has been expended as of August 31, 2013, and \$7,500.00 still remains. Our local partner maintains a budget coherent with the expenses approved for DFW's restricted funds and is not expending DFW funds on unapproved items. A full budget is available upon request.

7 Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant program staffing changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?

Since the proposal was approved, Lotus Outreach has seen changes in the domestic US staff, while field staff remains the same. LO now has a new Executive Director, Elise DeGrande. Elise, originally from Brazil, received her BA in English from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in 2008. She travelled in India and was apprentice to LO's chairman of the board, Khyentse Norbu Rinpoche. She was trained in project development, research, and long-term strategic planning, and she assumed the position of Executive Director in August of 2013. Our previous executive director, Erika Keaveney, is now working

on her Master's Degree in International Education Policy at Stanford University. Erika is continuing to assist LO as a part-time contractor.

Lotus Outreach also has a new Grants Manager, Wesley Samms. Wesley has a background in grants management and program coordination and a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Kansas. He helped implement the first prisoner reentry program in the country to enroll former prisoners into the AmeriCorps program. He has traveled extensively, and his work has focused primarily on prisoners' rights, immigrants' services, and health issues. He began as grants manager in September of 2013. LO's previous grants manager, Sara Haq, is now pursuing a doctorate in Women's Studies at the University of Maryland.

Case Study: Van Kum Phet

Ms. Van Kun Phet lives in a tiny hut in the middle of nowhere about an hour's drive from Sisophon, Banteay Meanchey's provincial capital. It takes a 4-wheel drive vehicle just to be able to handle the deeply rutted, dirt roads leading to her home. Van is 23 years old, a single mother to her three year old daughter, and a caretaker to her father, now 53. Van's father lost his leg to a landmine at the young age of 14 when he was fighting as a child soldier against the Vietnamese.

Van herself became a victim of human trafficking when she accompanied her brother to do construction labor in Thailand. The manager of the construction project absconded without paying anyone for their labor. She explains, "I then went to work at a Japanese-owned factory making machine parts, and after a month they also refused to pay me. I was very despondent. I was cheated twice and absolutely broke. I walked three days and three nights until I reached the Cambodian border. Because I lacked the proper papers, I was immediately arrested by border police. They kept me overnight and deported me the following day.

"The whole experience was disappointing and painful. I went to Thailand in the hope of earning money, as we were facing dire poverty, and then in the end I didn't earn anything. I left the job at the Japanese factory without telling my brother, because I was hit in the face and head by the factory foreman many times and told I had to work harder. I couldn't stand the smell. The air inside made me feel sick, and I vomited often. Due to this they beat me and refused to pay me."

Van arrived at the Safe Shelter on February 14th, 2012, and graduated from the program in November 2012. She received training in tailoring and agriculture.

Nine years ago, Van and her father were granted a small plot of land by a generous landowner in exchange for maintaining the property. Her father gathers firewood in the nearby forest, and he traps fish and frogs to eat and sell to support the family. Before receiving a small economic development grant through Lotus Outreach's Consoling through Counseling program, these were Van family's only sources of income.

"After leaving the shelter I applied for the small grant and was successful. I received \$250 to start the chicken raising business as well as \$50 as new-business start-up assistance. My father and I designed and built the chicken coop ourselves, and we spent \$100 on chickens as livestock. First, I bought two roosters and 10 hens with eggs ready to hatch, as well as a supply of broken rice and rice dust to make

the feeding formula I learned about during the training. We were advised by the agro trainer to buy a certain type of chicken that likes to forage in addition to eating feed. We can even get better prices for them as healthy free-range chickens! We add locally procured leaves and ingredients to the feed which have a natural de-worming effect and lower our production costs.”

Van learned to keep a budget in her journal, and she has a very good understanding of returns on investment. “When the chickens reach 1.5 kg, I’ll be able to get \$3.00 per kg profit, and will sell some while keeping enough to increase my stock through breeding.” With a beaming smile Van tells us, “I feel very happy to have my own animal-raising business. I had always dreamed of raising chickens, and now I am doing it!”

Lotus Outreach is delighted to be supporting the efforts of Van and her family. They greeted us with kindness and enthusiasm as we arrived to make this report. It is truly wonderful to see someone given a chance after having been cheated and exploited so many times. She is finally getting her family on sound economic footing. She currently has 3 roosters, 11 large hens, 3 small hens, and 15 baby chicks.



A strong and determined Van inside her chicken coop, her family's ticket to not having to migrate.



Field staff from LO's partner the CWCC with Van and her 3 year old daughter.



Van shows us her special chicken breakfast mix! The mix uses locally gathered herbs to fortify the chicken's diet.



Van with LO's Cambodian coordinator Raksmei Var (center), and our director of field operations, Glenn Faucett (right).



Van Kun Phet's 3 year old daughter is helping out!



Van with her daughter and dad at the chicken coop.



Van's mom and dad. Her dad lost his right leg to a landmine when he was a child soldier at age 14.



Van and her family wave good-bye as LO's field staff depart.

Blog-Style Summary:

Being trafficked for labor or sex-work takes a tremendous toll on a person's psyche and self-worth. Lotus Outreach's Consoling through Counseling program is providing therapy for 42 women and their relatives

in Cambodia and connecting these women to dignified economic opportunities. Since March, 33 women were reintegrated into their home villages, and two were given start-up financing for new businesses.