

Grant Overview

Organization Name: The Unforgotten Fund
Program Title: Aid for the Unforgotten Mothers and Daughters Living in the Trash Dumps of Pune, India
Grant Amount: \$49,243
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Program Objectives

The Unforgotten Fund was given a grant by DFW in February 2014 to provide aid to 50 mothers and 100 daughters living in the trash-dumps of Pune, India. Grant funds were directed towards providing skills training and microloans to the mothers to start small businesses. Funds were also used to enroll the daughters in primary school and to provide them with extra tutoring. The goal is to free these families of the burden of selling and eating scraps found in the trash.

Program Accomplishments

We did accomplish what we set out to do; we did indeed improve the lives of wastepickers in Pune, India. We selected two wastepicker slums in Pune in which to work: Panmala Vasahat and Rajiv Gandhi Nagar. Both slums are inhabited by wastepicker mothers and their daughters. These slum areas were selected with the assistance of Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP). KKPKP is the wastepicker union in Pune – our charities work closely together.

We did provide education to 100 girls from wastepicking families. We actually reached 130. We enrolled them in school (Sane Guruji Primary School) and in tutoring classes (at Shri Ganesh) in the first year of the program. In the second year of the program, we opened a field office adjacent to the school, and provided tutoring with our own staff before and after school. With the program continuing to grow, and beginning our third year in the slum community, we've now begun classes in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar's new community hall, in



Figure 1. Tutoring classes at Rajiv Gandhi Nagar

the slum community itself. Other siblings and children in the community are free to attend as well. The program initially funded by Dining for Women is set to continue and grow.

We also provided skills training to the mothers in the program. The women selected what types of skills training they would like to learn. Those women that took up tailoring have been particularly successful. The tailoring courses were provided by the Indian government's Human Resource Development Ministry's agency Jan Shikshan Sansthan. We conducted the courses at the Panmala community center. DFW grant funds were used to pay for the course expenses (such as supplies and instructors). Each of the women participating completed the courses successfully. They first learned basic tailoring techniques, including how to take measurements, stitch clothes for infants, dresses for girls and simple types of blouses for ladies. Twelve of the women decided to continue learning more tailoring skills and took advanced tailoring courses. At the end of the courses, an evaluation was done by the agency and each woman received certificates of completion.

We also provided microloans to the mothers in the program. Each of the women in the Self Help Groups (SHG) was given an initial loan of \$100 over an initial 10 month period (which first ended in December 2014). The women decided each would have to pay \$110 back into the account. Before anyone could take a loan, each had to submit a business plan. Many of the women went into tailoring; many chose other business ideas (such as selling plants, selling jewelry, selling garlands, and cutting iron). Some of them used their loans to buy sewing machines. After they repaid their initial loans, in the second year of the program, they were able to take a loan for \$110.

In the grant proposal, we suggested several metrics to measure program success. They are summarized in the following two tables:

Table 1: Measuring Program Success – Targets for Girls

Program Objective	Description of objective	Measuring success
1. Grade advancement	Sponsored girls should be receiving good report cards, passing their school exams and progressing to higher grade levels.	We have a target of 90% of all our sponsored girls advancing to the next grade, every year they are in the program.
2. End to wastepicking	Field teams will visit the sponsored families at their homes and visit the waste dump sites to ensure that girls are attending school and not working at the trash dumps.	We have a target of 90% of all our sponsored girls ceasing to be wastepickers, and fully concentrating on being students.
3. Regular attendance	We will check with the girls'	We have a target of each child

teachers to monitor their attendance.	missing no more than 15 days per school year.
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Table 2: Measuring Program Success – Targets for Mothers

Program Objective	Description of objective	Measuring success
4. Income generation	Increase each mother’s income to \$2 per day.	We have a target of 50% of women meeting this goal in two years. And our goal is to have 90% of our sponsored women meeting that income target in 5 years.
5. Loan repayment	Initially, each women will be given a small loan of Rs. 5000/- (\$100 US), and given six months to repay that loan. Those that are successful in repaying the smaller loan, will be given larger loans (up to Rs. 25000/- or \$500 US).	Our goal is to have 75% of the mothers paying back the small loan within the first six months. Our goal is to have 75% of the larger loans repaid in two years (by the end of the DFW grant period).

For the girls, we had a target of 90% of all or sponsored girls advancing to the next grade, every year they are in the program. All of our girls have been advancing through the school system, so on that score, we can say the program was successful. However, as is discussed later, girls have been having issues graduating from the schools and passing their final exams. We also had a target of 90% of all our sponsored girls ceasing to be wastepickers. That is about the rate that we have seen after girls have been in the program for two years; some, however, have been under pressure by their parents to earn additional income. We also had a target of girls missing no more than 15 days per school year; that is about the attendance rate we have seen.

The ability of the women to repay their loans has been somewhat less than what we had hoped. Those that pursued tailoring were more successful than the others. Our goal was to have 75% of the women paying back their loans. As of today, about 50% are still current with their loans. Five women were unfortunately not able to repay their loans. Three women left the slums. One passed away. Our success with the girls has been better than our success with the women, but we also expected that. Most of the women in the SHGs still wastepick periodically to supplement their income. It is easier to positively impact the lives of the children; turning the lives of the mothers around may take several more years.

Measuring Program Success – Targets for Girls

Program Objective	Description of objective	Measuring success	Objective met?
Grade advancement	Sponsored girls should be receiving good report cards, passing their school exams and progressing to higher grade levels.	We have a target of 90% of all our sponsored girls advancing to the next grade, every year they are in the program.	Yes, in fact 100% of our sponsored girls have advanced to the next year
End to wastepicking	Field teams will visit the sponsored families at their homes and visit the waste dump sites to ensure that girls are attending school and not working at the trash dumps.	We have a target of 90% of all our sponsored girls ceasing to be wastepickers, and fully concentrating on being students.	Yes, in fact 100% of our sponsored girls have ceased wastepicking
Regular attendance	We will check with the girls' teachers to monitor their attendance.	We have a target of each child missing no more than 15 days per school year.	Yes, our sponsored girls have been regularly attending school

Measuring Program Success – Targets for Mothers

Program Objective	Description of objective	Measuring success	Objective met?
Income generation	Increase each mother's income to \$2 per day.	We have a target of 50% of women meeting this goal in two years. And our goal is to have 90% of our sponsored women meeting that income target in 5 years.	Yes, one of the SHG has increased their income to \$4 US per day. Half of the women in the other SHGs have been able to do the same.
Loan repayment	Initially, each women will be given a small loan of Rs. 5000/- (\$100 US), and given six months to repay that	Our goal is to have 75% of the mothers paying back the small loan within the first six	Yes, about 75% of the mothers have paid back their first loan. In one SHG

loan. Those that are successful in repaying the smaller loan, will be given larger loans (up to Rs. 25000/- or \$500 US).	months. Our goal is to have 75% of the larger loans repaid in two years (by the end of the DFW grant period).	the rate has been 100%.
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Beneficiaries

We did reach the number of beneficiaries that we promised in the grant proposal. That is we did reach 100 girls and 50 women. In fact, we reached more than 130 girls; and this number is still increasing. Girls now come to the tutoring classes we offer in the community hall; the girls come in different groups both mornings and afternoons, according to their school timings and standards.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

We faced numerous challenges with the girls in our program:

Quality tutoring: Initially we enrolled the girls in our program for private tutoring at Shri Ganesh, and used DFW funds to pay for the sessions. Unfortunately, we found that the tutoring sessions were not improving student performance and grades. The students were not receiving the attention they needed in the coaching classes. So, in the second year of the DFW grant, we began to offer our own tutoring sessions. We brought on staff a teacher (Ms. Sweety Sonawane), leased an office space nearby the school where the girls were attending school, and held our own sessions before and after school. Now, in the third year, since our program has continued to grow, we are offering study sessions in the newly constructed Rajiv Gandhi Nagar community center.

Parental Interest: Unfortunately, we have found that parents in these Indian slum communities are not much interested in the higher education of their girls. Once a girl reaches 7th or 8th standard, parents often withdraw their girls from school and take them to work with them. Some girls go with their mothers to work as maids, a few go with them for wastepicking. The goal of this grant was to expand enrollment in primary school of young girls; that is relatively easier to accomplish. However, as the students advance through school, it becomes harder and harder for us to encourage them to finish. The number of high school girls in these slums interested in coming to our coaching classes is quite less. We have to continuously follow up with the parents

by making home visits, asking them to send the girls to school and classes. Again, the issue is not really with primary school girls (the subjects of this grant); they attend our coaching classes quite regularly. In the table below are some statistics that show the dropoff rate in the Rajiv Gandhi Nagar slum community:

Table 1. Dropoff Rate of Girls in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar

Sr. No	Girls attending class at community	Total
1.	Primary	21
2	Upper Primary	14
3	Secondary	11
4	Drop out students appearing for 10 th examination	09
	Total	55

Quality of Education. Under the scope of this grant, our goal was to enroll the wastepicker girls in school, and provide outside tutoring to supplement their education. However, we are finding that teachers, overwhelmed with the number of students in their classes, often pass their students through the primary and upper primary school years. By the time the girls reach high school, when they are ready to sit for their exams, we are finding that the girls are having difficulty reading, writing and performing basic mathematical calculations. As the Government of India has declared a no examination system till 8th standard, and introduced different assessment methods, the teachers have become more lethargic in government schools, and it is affecting the quality of education. Most of the girls are failing in the 9th standard exams; very few can reach to 10th standard and matriculation. So the girls reaching to higher education institutes are very few in numbers. So, we are trying to intervene early, in the primary and upper primary school years (the goal of this grant). Our teacher is making a lot of effort to make them learn the basics.

Need for community center in Panmala Vasahat. We had chosen two wastepicker slum communities for the work in Pune city. We have started classes at Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, but in Panmala Vasahat, we are still waiting for the construction of the community hall to be finished before we can offer classes in the community itself. In the meantime, we have to use our field

office near the girls' school. Attendance will be much improved when we have access to space in the Panmala community.

The challenges improving the lives of the women in our program are significant:

Loan repayment. We had hoped to see more women leaving wastepicking and taking an interest in learning other skills. Those that have taken advantage of the skills training (like tailoring) that we had provided, were more successful in developing side businesses. Those that had an earlier activity that they wanted to expand with a loan were more successful. Those that merely took the loans to build a business from scratch without training or experience were not successful. And some women just used the loan to cover household expenses because they were in desperate need of funds. Our goal was to have 75% of the women stay current with their loan repayments; our rate is closer to 50%. Also, it is difficult for our staff to continuously ask for loan repayments, when we can see that the women are in situations in which they cannot repay. In the future, before we lend more funds out, we will ask the women to develop better business plans. Or alternatively, we can ask that the women provide their own capital (community savings accounts), and our role would be that of facilitator/administrator. At the moment, we are not providing any more new loans using grant funds.

Wastepicking as an occupation. An additional complication of our project sites in Pune, India, is that our partner charity, KKPKP, is doing admirably well to make wastepicking an acceptable occupation. KKPKP is a union of wastepickers – fighting for their rights as laborers. Wastepickers now have badges and some safety equipment. They are being increasingly recognized as performing an environmental contribution, by separating out recyclables, and reducing the waste at the landfills. Some are even able to work as sanitation workers, with the apartment complexes segregating the waste prior to their rounds. Wastepicking, in short, is becoming an honorable profession. Thus, most of the women in the Self Help Groups still wastepick periodically to supplement their income; it is hard to see that changing anytime soon.

It is easier for the children to leave the life of wastepicker; it may take several more years for the women to obtain other professions. At some point, after age 40 or so, wastepicking becomes too physically demanding for the women to continue. And severe health issues caused by the hazardous work environment take their toll. Many of these women will need other professions to earn a living in their later years.

Work schedule. It was often a challenge to schedule training events for the mothers. They go for their rounds of wastepicking very early in the morning, and come home late in the afternoon quite tired. And then they are burdened with their household responsibilities. So motivating

them to learn new skills and income generating activities was not easy. We did our best to schedule trainings during the late evenings and on holidays; this makes it tough on our field staff, but is really the only way to help the mothers.

Health issues. Our charity is focused primarily on education and skills training. The women in our program have a host of other issues, such as being victims of domestic violence and suffering from poor health; these issues are beyond our scope. To help the women on these other issues, we collaborated with other NGOs working in the same community. That also helped us to build trust with the women we are trying to help.

Dependency. We have to be careful about contributing to the dependency on aid that often exists in these slum communities. The women in the slums often receive aid from government agencies, political parties and other charitable trusts. They can get accustomed to receiving aid, and often lose the motivation to try and better themselves. We have made a lot of effort to provide skills training like tailoring, clothes bag making, and paper bag making to enable the women to start new businesses for increasing their income. We would like the women to make a greater effort to improve their lives; it does become frustrating for our field staff if it seems the women whose lives we are trying to change seem content with just “taking” and waiting for the next handout from the next donor. To counter this “dependency”, we are trying to make it clear that there will be an end to the aid they will be receiving from us, and only those that are making a serious effort will be retained in the program. We tell the women/girls in our program that after 5 years in the program, they should be able to support themselves, and that they should take full advantage of the program while that opportunity exists for them. After 5 years in the program, the charity resources would be redirected to support other women and children.

Organizational and program status

There have been no significant organizational or programmatic changes at the charity. Our programmatic goals remain the same. The Executive Director is still Amit Kapadia. Our project manager is Ratna Yashwante. Our Board members overseeing the project are still Ashwini Jog, Vandana Naik, Dhriti Nayyar, Eeshaan Asaikar and Rani Varma. We have added Assistant Project Manager and Teacher Ms. Sweety Sonawane. The field staff (Priya Alhat and Shilpa Zombade) have successfully completed their technical courses. Charity funding has remained stable. We have added several volunteers to our field office.

What has changed within your organization as a result of this project?

The grant from DFW has truly shaped our organizational mission, not only in India, but in the other countries we operate in (Zambia and Sierra Leone). Prior to this grant, we were helping

primarily young boy wastepickers. After this grant, we shifted our focus to young girls. In Sierra Leone, our newest program, we started with only mothers and girls as beneficiaries. This shift in focus makes absolutely perfect sense. Women and girls are indeed the most vulnerable in our project sites. This new focus also resonates with our donor base. This focus also is in keeping with the other UN Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals. Our project managers and in-country leads in Zambia, India and Sierra Leone are all women. All of our paid charity staff are now composed of women.

The new focus on women and girls in our organizational mission and our staff composition cannot be overstated. It is a direct result of this Dining for Women Grant. We are truly, truly grateful for it, and the positive impact it has had in our work.

Approximately how many lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the program?

Directly, 50 women and 130 girls have directly benefited by the program supported by the DFW grant. Our classes at the community center are open, so siblings of the girls receive educational help as well, so closer to 200 children have been touched by the grant.

If the program is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.

This program will be ongoing. We will continue to focus on this cohort of girls. Our emphasis will shift towards helping the girls in our program progress through higher primary and high school. We have to work on reducing the dropout rate in this community, and motivating them to pursue college/university education in order to reduce the likelihood of early marriages.

We will continue to provide skills training to the mothers in our program. We will be more careful, however, before giving out more microloans, insisting on well thought out business plans.

We have a five year time horizon to change the lives of these women and children. We are now in the third year of that window. After five years, we would like the women to be able to support their own families. We would then like to bring in a new cohort of women and children, by working in a new slum area.

Provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle which have been paid for with the Dining for Women grant.

Program Expenses – Year 1 (April 2014 to March 2015)

Expense	DFW budget	DFW funds expended
Pay school fees for children	\$7,500	\$6,750
School supplies	\$1,750	\$1,750
Tutoring	\$2,000	\$2,000
Provide microloans to mothers	\$10,000	\$6,000
Provide training/workshops to mothers	\$2,500	\$2,500
Pay for project coordinator salary	\$1,250	\$1,250
Pay for field worker salary	\$850	\$850
Facilities. Includes classrooms for tutoring and microlending workshops.	\$1,200	\$0
Year 1 total	\$27,050	\$21,100

Program Expenses – Year 2 (April 2015 to March 2016)

Expense	DFW budget	DFW funds expended
Pay school fees for children	\$7,500	\$6,497
School supplies	\$1,750	\$1,750
Tutoring	\$500	\$500
Pay for project coordinator salary	\$1,250	\$1,250
Pay for field worker salary	\$850	\$1,021
Pay for teacher/tutors	\$1,000	\$1,641
Facilities. Includes classrooms for tutoring and microlending workshops.	\$1,200	\$1,300
Year 2 total	\$14,050	\$13,959

Program Expenses – Year 3 (April 2016 to November 2016)

Expense	DFW budget	DFW funds expensed
Pay school fees for children	\$5,500	\$7,059
School supplies	\$743	\$1,750
Tutoring	\$500	\$500
Pay for project coordinator salary	\$0	\$833
Pay for training/workshops to mothers	\$1,400	\$1,400
Pay for field worker salary	\$0	\$681
Pay for teacher/tutors	\$0	\$1,094
Facilities. Includes classrooms for tutoring and microlending workshops.	\$0	\$867
Year 3 total	\$8,143	\$14,184
Grand Total	\$49,243	\$49,243

Facilitating Partnerships and Securing Outside Funding

This DFW grant came at a crucial point, and early, in our charity's history. It came at a time when we had some history working in India, and were just beginning to operate in Africa (Sierra Leone and Zambia). Though the grant was for our work in India, it shaped our programs in Africa, indirectly, by showing us the importance of working with women and girls. Women and girls are now the focus of our charity's mission.

The DFW grant was the first major grant we received as a charity. Prior to that we had received a few small grants and donations from individuals. Receiving the DFW grant, and executing the work under our proposal has given us invaluable experience as an organization. It has helped us build valuable partnerships, such as with Planete Urgence. The French NGO provided filmmakers that helped us make a documentary of the work being done under the grant, and trained our staff in filmmaking. The DFW grant also enabled us to secure other funding (such as from Graphic Social Development Foundation and the Shah Family Foundation) to continue our work in Pune, India. And now we have the confidence to apply for other grants to grow our programs further. We are currently applying for grants from U.S. Embassies, The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), The Noel Buxton Trust, Friends of Sierra Leone, The Global Fund for Children, to name a few.

Success story: Kudale girls

The Kudale family has five daughters that had little chance of obtaining an education; none were in school. They have lived in the wastepicker slum of Rajiv Gandhi Nager for the last 10 years. Thanks to the support of the DFW grant, the youngest three are now in school.

The eldest two Kudale girls, work as maids. They dropped out of school at a very young age. They are to be married soon.



Figure 2. Kudale girls

The youngest three were not in school when the Unforgotten field team was surveying the slum community during school hours. As is common in the slums, the parents don't have their children's birth certificates. And without them, schools will not admit students. Their parents had tried to enroll them, but with no success.

The Unforgotten field staff followed up these cases with the Government General Hospital continuously for three days, and finally obtained the birth certificates for these girls. Then our teacher lobbied the school to admit these three girls. The girls are attending school now, and our tutoring sessions in the community. Thanks to DFW, and the efforts of the Unforgotten staff, three Kudale girls have a chance of receiving an education.

Success Story: Preeti Ratan Gaikwad graduates



Figure 3. Ms. Preeti Ratan Gaikwad

Many girls in the wastepicker slum of Rajiv Gandhi Nagar drop out from school. Ms. Preeti Ratan Gaikwad was one of them. She had been out of school for two years, and was helping her mother with work. She heard about the tutoring classes in the community that The Unforgotten was holding, and met with our teacher Ms. Sweety Sonawane. Sweety encouraged her to continue her studies. Preeti is a very hard working girl, and regularly attended Sweety's classes. She was just a little weak in science, but not anymore. Sweety helped her, and other students who wanted to appear for the 10th standard examination, to complete the formal registration process. This year, thanks to the program that DFW funds created, Preeti successfully cleared her secondary schooling and has been admitted for higher education!