

1. Please provide the following information:

Organization Name: Sahar

Project Title: Early Marriage Prevention Program (EMPP)

Grant Amount: \$50,000

Contact Person: Ginna Brelsford (Executive Director)

Address: ginnab@sahareducation.org

2. Recap briefly what outcomes the project was designed to achieve?

Our goals are twofold: Our first goal is to decrease student dropouts due to early marriage in our target population. Our second goal is to learn the most effective interventions for preventing early marriage dropouts in order to replicate these tools at other schools throughout the province and then throughout the country. The long-term goal is to provide the Ministry of Education with a replicable model for country-wide implementation.

3. Has funding changed for this project? For example, have you received unexpected funding from another source?

No, funding has not changed for this project. We are still committed to spending our grant from DFW effectively and in a timely fashion. We have not received any unexpected funding from another source.

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

No, our organization and project situation remains consistent with the approved proposal.

5. Have the number of beneficiaries changed? To report this please refer to the original numbers in your grant proposal under *Number of women and girls Directly Impacted and population Indirectly Impacted*.

No, the number of beneficiaries have not changed. At this time of this report, we are still looking at serving 500 girls directly and 7,600 women and girls indirectly.

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

One of our constant challenges has been securing participation of fathers' in our training. For significant change to occur in Afghanistan, a substantial and deep attitudinal shift of men towards women and girls will need to happen. Thus, we highly encourage parents to attend training sessions. Community leaders endorse this but the barriers for fathers to join our sessions remains mostly economic: they are day laborers and would lose money by taking work off to join our sessions. Mothers are more willing and able to participate. We do require that both parents sign a permission form for their daughters to participate in the EMMP and thus have their 'buy in' at a basic level. We hope this addition will underline the urgency and the importance of the matter especially for fathers.

Another major difficulty has been that the schools we work in are missing the most basic classroom needs. The rooms are often in need of chairs, tables, and heating /cooling methods to combat the extreme temperatures. We have tried to be creative in dealing with these issues by doing as much of the work as we can ourselves, for example laying carpet and installing heaters / coolers ourselves. This process can sometimes delay the start of our program. We choose to invest in these components because we believe that a better learning environment adds to the quality of education that one receives. Additionally, we believe that it is important that one should feel that they are being valued and worth being invested in.

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

Our objectives largely remain the same as our initial submission of the application. However, we are pleased to inform you that we have added a new module to our EMPP curriculum for Mental Health. The request for this module and topic was made by the students in Afghanistan. This module is designed to spark discussions about mental health among the girls and give them the language to talk about mental health in a safe space. The module is made of interactive sessions, mindfulness, speakers and art therapy.

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

Sahar will use a multi-pronged approach to achieve the primary goals and objectives of increasing the awareness of the target population and the community of the problem of early marriage, the legal rights of girls not to marry until 16 and the benefits of delaying marriage and continuing schooling for girls through secondary school. One main component will consist of a 13-session curriculum for the girls participating in the school program, including guest speakers, leadership training, discussions and writing assignments. The other main component will involve community meetings with family members of the target population and

community, school and religious leaders to increase knowledge in the community about benefits of delaying marriage for girls and to ensure community support of the program.

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

We do not anticipate any difficulties in completing our project in the timeframe outlined in our proposal. Our ability to deliver the program on time is helped by the fact that the EMPP is an afterschool program and we account for holidays and days schools are likely to be closed due to weather.

In addition to the above answers, we would like to share with your membership and donors that their contributions and support are transforming the lives of many girls in rural northern Afghanistan. Their generosity is enabling many Afghan girls to dream big and take part in the development of Afghanistan.

- Detailed list of all expenses incurred during the reporting period which have been paid for with the Dining for Women grant.

