

Jan. 26, 2015

Circle of Women: Reach and Teach Across Borders

Grant Receipt from the Forix Foundation: Final Report

Overview:

Our current project is a partnership with the Barli Development Institute for Rural Women (BDIRW) in Indore, India. BDIRW is dedicated to educating rural, village, and tribal women who have not had the opportunity to receive secondary school education. The mission of the Institute is to facilitate the process of sustainable community development. The education program at BDIRW is based on the idea that women are the central pillars in society; if women are educated, then the entire society is educated. Given the immense popularity of the program, hundreds of girls who hear about BDIRW from graduates are unable to attend due to capacity restrictions. To solve this dilemma, Circle of Women will partner with BDIRW to build an additional classroom, computer room, and dormitory at the Institute. The additional rooms will be able to accommodate 50 additional students per class.

Over its short history, Circle of Women has mobilized students to provide education for hundreds of women across the world. Our work is centered in regions where women do not have an equal opportunity to attend school, much less secondary school. One such area is India, where the female literacy rate is only 65.4 percent. Rural residents have an even lower literacy rate than urban residents, with women at about 60 percent (versus 74 percent for men). Only 38 percent of female Indian students in rural areas reach secondary school, compared to 50 percent of their male counterparts. In the most rural parts of India, literacy rates are as low as 29 percent, and very few individuals have the opportunity to attend primary and secondary school.

Given these abysmal statistics, Circle of Women has decided to help construct and furnish a pre-existing secondary school for girls in Indore, India. This institute, known as the Barli Developmental Institute for Rural Women (BDIRW), works to facilitate the process of “sustainable community development at the grassroots levels by educating and training rural and tribal women” in the Indore community. BDIRW is a truly tremendous and deserving organization that has worked tirelessly to educate as many women as they possibly can. With Circle of Women’s help, the Institute can expand their facilities and student body to reach and empower even more of these women.

Starting in May of 2014, Project Indore broke ground on its three-year collaboration with BDIRW consisting of expansion and enhancement of existing parts of the Institute. Currently, the school allows for a capacity of training 80 girls during every 6-month duration. With the help of Circle of Women, BDIRW has thus far realized its aims to increase capacity by 50 more girls per 6-month batch, making a total of 130 students in each batch. Thus BIRDW’s project with Circle of Women will provide access to secondary education to 50 girls who would otherwise have no alternative.

The Project Indore Executive Committee has overseen and will continue to oversee the project. Circle of Women continues to manage, monitor, and evaluate the project over the three years of construction. The Executive Director of Circle of Women (Ana Sofia Guerra), Project Management Director (Kelsey Miller), Project Indore Founder (Mary Kathryn Abel), and Harvard Circle of Women Director (Emery Poor) are the primary contacts for the project. In addition, the directors of BDIRW, Yogesh and Tahera Jadhav, serve as the on-the-ground contacts during the three years of construction. Both Yogesh and Tahera live and work in Indore and have strong contacts with local rural populations in and around Indore, as well as with civic authorities. Thus, the issues concerning monitoring the progress of implementation of projects, maintaining the quality of education by regular field visits, and training and development of new staff have been easily addressed. In addition, the nine-member Board of Directors at BDIRW have been a part of the Executive Committee.

This past May, Circle of Women initiated Year 1 of Project Indore. This phase includes the construction of an additional dormitory on the campus of BDIRW. With the generosity of the Forix Foundation, we have used the \$5,000 to construct and furnish this dormitory, specifically with bunk-beds that are furnishing both the existing dormitories. Prior to the receipt of the Forix Foundation grant, the students have slept on the floor or on mats, an arrangement that is highly unsuitable especially given the students' rigorous schedule. Once the first year of construction is complete, BDIRW will introduce 10 girls into their batch. These girls will sleep in the additional dormitory, and will take classes in the existing classrooms, which have been deemed large enough to accommodate 10 new girls.

Specific Project: Furnishing of New and Existing Dormitories

Within Year 1, new bed frames have been purchased to ensure that the girls have an adequate place to sleep at night using the funds allowed by the Forix Foundation grant. Specifically, this purchase included 65 two-person bunk-beds, at a cost of 3650 Rs. each; total 237250 Rs., or approx.. \$3862. The cost of the plywood for the structure of the bunk-beds was 830 Rs. each; total 81900 Rs or \$1332. The transport of the materials was 4000 Rs, or \$65. The total project amounted to 323150 Rs, or \$5255.3. Thus the \$5000 dollars granted to Circle of Women by the Forix Foundation covered a full 95% of Circle of Women's provision of bunk-beds to BDIRW.

Timeline: By the end of June, Indore Project contractor Yogesh Jadhav confirmed his choice of fabricator will be finalized by end of June, and personally purchased the necessary construction materials to be given to the chosen fabricator. By the end of July, the constructed bunk-beds were available for use by students within school dormitories. Please see attached the final receipt confirmation of the fabricator's construction and delivery of the bunk-beds.

C. Evaluation

Given the cost of the project, Circle of Women wants to ensure that we are making a true difference at BDIRW and in the lives of their students. We have received monthly updates from Yogesh and Tahera, consisting of written and visual accounts (photographs and videos) of the construction progress. We have also conducted regular phone meetings with contractors and suppliers.

Circle of Women thanks the Forix Foundation for its support and is proud that with the assistance of the Forix Foundation's grant that its collaboration with BDIRW has continued smoothly and to the benefit of BDIRW's students. We hope to maintain our partnership with the Forix Foundation, and we remain deeply grateful for your consideration and aid.

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CIRCLE OF WOMEN

There is a local opportunity to have a global impact.