Bina Roy
Partners in Development
2019-2020
Final Reports Summaries
The Bina Roy Partners in Development (BRPID) programme supports locally-developed and operated projects initiated by Graduate Women International (GWI) National Federations and Associations (NFAs) aimed to empower women and girls through education and leadership development. BRPID grants are awarded on a competitive basis to NFAs in countries with a Gross National Income of less than US$12,616 per annum and who are fully paid members of GWI. All projects are in line with GWI’s mission towards lifelong education, advancement and participation in leadership decision-making for women and girls.

BRPID began in 1978 and was later renamed in honour of Dr. Bina Roy, educator and former GWI President from India. BRPID projects have been generously supported by our dedicated donors and also through contributions from GWI NFAs around the world. For the 2024 round of funding, applications were received from El Salvador, D.R. Congo, Turkey, Ghana, and Mexico.

These BRPID projects focused on training women for a variety of skills. In Mexico, workshops in Human Rights and Criminal Law were provided. Similarly, in El Salvador, Human Rights workshops with an emphasis on the Rights of Women and Children, were held. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, mentoring sessions were setup to empower school girls. In Turkey, similar mentoring sessions were organised to empower families more broadly in supporting their daughters’ school journeys. Finally, in Ghana, workshops were held encouraging women to pursue TVET.

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Congo: Empowerment of school girls in Kinkole, rural area in Kinshasa through a mentorship programme

Project Summary

This project is an extension of an existing mentorship programme, created in 2016 in Kinshasa, to the Kinkole area. Thousands of girls, aged 9 to 18, in Kinkole are forced to work informally to earn an income, which allows them to go to school and support their families. This situation exposes girls to higher risks of dropping out. This, in turn, means they are further exposed to high, and unnecessary, risks of gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, along with trafficking. This project aimed to increase school girls’ and parents’ awareness of these risks, arising from working alone on the Kinkole market. It also aimed to equip school girls with a good understanding of the concept of gender and sexual violence and teach them how to report occurrences of sexual harassment and gender-based violence, along with providing them with access to information for their professional development after school, and improve their self-image.

The Association Congolaise des Femmes Diplômées des Universités (ACOFDU) planned to train twenty (20) mentors from the Kinkole community and to organize mentorship programmes for a hundred (100) school girls, from ten different public schools. ACOFDU also aimed to organize immersion sessions to allow the school girls to spend time in an existing company where women work and hold leadership positions, presenting the girls with relatable role models from within their communities. ACOFDU further organized sensitization sessions to raise awareness of the importance of girls’ education amongst the parents and community leaders.

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In August of 2019, ACOFDU successfully trained 20 mentors, selected from the Progeny Association Members, on effective mentorship techniques, ensuring the sustainability of this project in the long term. From August to December 2019, these mentors subsequently trained a total of 109 school girls. Along with being sensitized to the existence and risks of sexual violence and gender based violence, these girls were trained to reverberate this information. ACOFDU evaluated the impact of this project through a series of questions assessing the girls’, and their surroundings’, perspectives and visions of life prior and after these mentoring sessions. They found significant behaviour changes in the girls arising from the mentorship sessions. They also found that the girls seemed to have successfully disseminated the information to their families who demonstrated newfound knowledge on reproductive and sexual health when answering the post-mentorship questionnaire. An estimated 445 people, from a total of 89 families have directly and indirectly benefitted from this project.

The pandemic, COVID-19, only minimally interfered with ACOFDU’s objectives: of the two (2) field visits to local schools they had planned, they were only able to go ahead with one (1) before schools closed. Instead of impeding the effectiveness of this project, COVID-19 created new needs and objectives. In fact, ACOFDU set out to spend the leftover budget, allocated to field visits, on six (6) hand washing stations, two (2) thermometers, and three hundred (300) masks, in order to support schools in preventing the spread of COVID. The girls’ parents proved to be the biggest barrier in undertaking this project, a lot of prior sensitization of the parents was necessary to help them understand and allow their child to participate in the sessions.
Overall, the project had significant positive impacts on the trained girls as they lack role models in their daily lives, even a few sessions with mentors was enough to improve their self-image. This project has the potential of being efficiently replicated in other rural areas, and even other countries.

Maryam, 12 years old:
“I have learned that as a girl/woman, I should not be limited, I should dream big and become an important person in my country”.

Benedicte, 14 years old:
“Thanks to mentorship sessions, I know now that I can be a President of D.R. Congo... maybe the first female President of my country”.

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El Salvador: Workshops in Human Rights with Emphasis on the Rights of Women and Childhood for its dissemination among the Salvadorian Population

Project Summary
According to the 2018 Salvadorian National Survey of Violence Against Women (ENVCM), one woman out of 10, in El Salvador, has been of victim of Gender Based Violence in her lifetime. This project aimed to raise awareness on the importance of the rights of women and children, provide women with knowledge and skills to protect their rights, along with safe spaces to share experiences and get support when facing gender based violence. With workshops set up by university professors specialised in human, women, and children’s rights and their safeguarding, the plan consisted of, firstly, training members of the Associacion de Mujeres Universitarias de El Salvador (AMUS). This initial group of trainees was to further train teachers and students from two (2) secondary schools in underprivileged communities.

A total of seventy-five (75) women, from AMUS, were expected to participate in the first phase of training and to volunteer in the two secondary schools. At Queen’s Secondary School in San Salvador, an additional forty-two (42) teachers and one hundred and fifty (150) low-income students were expected to receive training. Along with sixty (60) female teachers and two hundred (200) female students in their last year of study from the Walter Deininger Secondary Urban Public School in Cojutepeque, 50 km from the capital San Salvador.

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AMUS’s activities could fortunately be continued virtually, on zoom and other social networks, post COVID. Thanks to experienced and specialised university professors, and the Ombudsman for the Defence of Human Rights which specialises in training and sensitising its employees on this subject, they successfully trained all the members of AMUS in the first phase. They further trained crucial stakeholders actively defending women’s rights and fighting against violence against women. This includes having trained 18 members of the Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (PDDH), the Attorney’s Office for the Defence of Human Rights in El Salvador. Between 2017 and 2018, this agency received over 1500 complaints of human rights violations, training these employees became primordial in ensuring they are equipped to provide the necessary support for women and children whose human rights have been infringed. Additionally, they provided trainings for public and private school teachers as they have a direct impact on people’s behaviours towards women, along with the capacity to transmit this knowledge further and maintain it through generations. The success of this project was measured through knowledge tests held after each monthly session.
Ghana: Harnessing Girls Potential in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in High Schools in the Central Region of Ghana

Project Summary
This project aimed to train and provide a safe space for women in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in high schools in Cape Coast, as they continue to be severely underrepresented in these fields. In fact, a study shows only one in six women in Cape Coast were pursuing a technical education within three technical institutions, although financial constraints and other socio economic barriers, such as teenage pregnancies, come in the way of girls pursuing more formal education. The goal was to train these women to overcome the barriers posed by gender-based discrimination and prejudices and support them in the successful completion of their education. This would be done by organising trainings to enhance their leadership and entrepreneurial skills, discussions between target students, teachers, high school leaders and local technical professionals to raise awareness on the barriers faced by women in TVET. This would allow women to gain understanding on the concept and theory of gender and equip them with critical knowledge and skills through gender education and sensitization, along with exposing them to the significance of the impact of gender roles on their career choices. This project would culminate with the production of a short documentary on the importance of opening TVET to women, which would be shared in the local community.

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This project had three phases, only two were able to take place with plans on undertaking the last phase in the future. About 60 girls drawn from the electrical, masonry and auto-mechanic departments of the three schools involved participated. For this, they partnered with various stakeholder, including the Centre for Gender Research Advocacy and Documentation (CEGRAD), the Directorate of Public Affairs, the Ghana Education Service, the Gender Metro Department, and Women Caucus. In the first phase, they held a gender and leadership workshop where the girls from the three technical institutions were introduced to the concept of gender and its impact on their career choices, and were provided with leadership skills necessary to achieve sustainable development. The second phase included a tour and technical outreach to Cape Coast Technical University. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Asuansi Technical Institute, which offers training in technical and vocational education to senior high school students, was the only school that got permission to participate and only the second year participants were able to participate since they were the only ones in school. Despite this, the second phase of the project was a success. The girls went on a tour of the Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) where they were welcomed by the Director of the TVET of CCTU, and introduced to the various departmental heads of the TVET programmes. They got the chance to meet and interact with two young female university graduates who were working in the Electrical, Civil and Mechanical engineering departments, along with a national service person and an alumna of Asuansi in the welding section. Additional unexpected expenses because of the pandemic came in the way of undertaking the third phase of the project. Currently GAUW is working on going ahead with this third phase.
Mexico: Workshops on Human Rights and Criminal Law with a Gender Perspective

Project Summary
This project aimed to teach women and girls about their rights, and how to exercise and protect them. Through monthly workshops (also live streamed on the Federacion Mexicana de Universitarias, FEMU’s page) on various topics, including the right to health, sexual and reproductive rights, the right to water, freedom of work, and indigenous rights, women and girls will be made aware of the importance of human rights and women’s rights specifically in Mexico City. These workshops, featuring various relevant speakers, provided women and girls with knowledge of legal mechanisms to ensure the preservation and protection of their fundamental rights, along with sensitization on gender based violence and crimes against women and how to prevent these and protect survivors.

Around 300 women, from teenagers to older women, including representatives of local and federal authorities, government authorities and relevant members of the private sector, were expected to participate in a total of 13 workshops. Surveys with five questions regarding the session’s topics were used to evaluate the effectiveness of these workshops and the impact on the participating women.

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Due to various circumstance, specifically COVID19, only two workshops took place, everything else turned into online lectures. Between January and March 2020, FEMU hosted over one thousand (1000) women of all ages with various geographic and socio-economic background, including students and social organisations, attending their events. However, any further events ended up taking place online, which allowed for a much wider reach. In fact, throughout the rest of the year, 118 events were created with over thousands of people engaging with the activities! These online lectures were also live streamed on Facebook, recorded and posted for further engagement.

From these various activities, some were carried out at the Woman’s Museum: Workshop on "Human Rights judgments judge us all" by Dr. Ydalia Pérez-Fernández Ceja (FEMU), and "Legal First Aid Workshop" by Gabriela Amore. Further online lectures can be found on FEMU’s Facebook page, including: “Mental Health as a Right for Women and Girls”, “The Penal System in Mexico in the environment of Violence experiences by Women”, “Roundtable of Human Rights Defenders”, and “September 28 for the Decriminalisation of Women”.

Despite some network connection issues, and the difficulty of some women to navigate such a digital environment, these workshops and lectures, not only had a very wide reach, they also taught women about their rights and provided them with the necessary tools to face discriminatory circumstances in a macho society.
TALLER “PRIMEROS AUXILIOS JURÍDICOS”
LA FORMA PERICIAL EN EL SISTEMA PENAL EN MÉXICO EN EL ENTORNO DE VIOLENCIA QUE VIVEN LAS MUJERES
Sábado 21 de noviembre de 2020

IMPARTE: LIC. GABRIELA AMORES (PERSPECTIVA JURÍDICA FEMINISTA)
MODERA: MTRA. GUADALUPE VALDÉS (FEDERACIÓN MEXICANA DE UNIVERSITARIAS)

TALLER LAS SENTENCIAS DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS NOS JUZGAN A TODXS
LA SALUD MENTAL COMO UN DERECHO PARA LAS MUJERES Y NIÑAS
Sábado 19 de diciembre de 2020

IMPARTE: DRA. YDALIA PÉREZ-FERNÁNDEZ CEJA (FEDERACIÓN MEXICANA DE UNIVERSITARIAS)
Turkey: Workshops on family-based empowerment of girls to prevent school dropout of girls before secondary school

Project Summary

This is an extension of an 2017 TAUW Antalya Branch project on developing a model of parent-student coaching, aimed at providing girls, ages 11 to 14, with support to continue their secondary education by mentoring their mothers. This new component targets fathers and male relatives in order to implement a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for socio-economically disadvantaged families. By changing attitudes and behaviours in the family unit, girls are provided with more positive role models at home. For this project, each family was specially attended by one of the volunteer members of TAUW Antalya and each target student was attended by one of the volunteer university students, allowing for constructive relationships and educational dialogues about academic matters and their future potentials. This setup allows for a continued mentoring and supportive relationship between the voluntary scholarship students and the children, extending beyond the scope of this project.

The plan was to have psychologists hold six workshops and the team organizing seven collective social activities for 30 mothers and fathers from fifteen local families that had one or more girls in the 4th to 8th grade of two local schools: Inonu Primary School and Gultekin Primary School. The parents and children would partake in social activities together that can change attitudes within the family in order to positively impact their school attendance and results and provide them with a chance to pursue their education. Other siblings, and extended family, would also indirectly benefit from these attitudinal changes.

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For this project TAUW called upon Konyaaltı Municipality and Muratpaşa Municipality for additional contributions to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions, including transportation to and from the University and upon request from the families. Additionally, the Antalya Directorate of the Ministry of National Education, delegated partnering of the project to the Inonu Primary School in the region which got the families’ written consent for participation.

By partnering with the Antalya Branch of the Turkish Association of Psychologists, they successfully held 6 training sessions for the parents and 6 trainings for the targeted students. These psychologists also followed up with the families to evaluate the extent of the behavioural changes and effectiveness of the trainings. Due to COVID-19 they were only able to hold 4 of the social activities. They also had an Opening and Closing ceremony with all of the targeted families. In October 2019, they successfully gathered 15 participating families from the neighbourhoods of Zeytinköy region in Antalya. Due to COVID, in March 2020, when the project was almost halfway completed, they had to postpone their activities to Fall of 2021. Only 8 of the original 15 families were available to continue with this project in October 2021. Despite being impressed with the project results, fathers were not in stable attendance during the activities, especially after the COVID break. Since most of the fathers are workers, working week-ends, arranging for their stable participation was difficult. Of these 8 continuing families, 6 siblings were invited to also participate in the trainings. This means at least 24 people were direct beneficiaries of the project, an additional 21 could be counted if we consider the families who did not continue post-covid. Furthermore, an additional 22 people, project team members and scholarship students, are indirect beneficiaries of this project as they also participated in the training sessions with the psychologists.