

Women for Women International Organizational Overview

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Below you'll find general information on our organization, its mission and its program. You can use this as a guide to share the work of Women for Women International with your audience and answer any questions they may have. Feel free to share your personal feelings and dedication to the organization along with the facts and figures listed below. Encourage your audience to get involved in their own way with some suggestions as the end and send them to www.womenforwomen.org if they have more questions.

Organizational Information

- **Mission:** Women for Women International provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency, thereby promoting viable civil societies.
- **Vision:** Women for Women International envisions a world where no one is abused, poor, illiterate or marginalized; where members of communities have full and equal participation in the processes that ensure their health, well-being and economic independence; and where everyone has the freedom to define the scope of their life, their future and strive to achieve their full potential.
- Women for Women International focuses specifically on women survivors of war. Its goal is to help women move from victim to survivor to active citizens.
- The most socially excluded women in post-conflict, war-torn countries who have lost everything – family, home and health are served by this organization. These women are extremely vulnerable populations who may be widows, refugees, victims of rape and torture and *at the same time* the sole source of support for their families.
- Women for Women International believes that stronger women equal stronger nations. When the women in a country are healthy, understand their rights and have access to income-generation, the entire country fares better.
- Women for Women International is currently working in the Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sudan.
- Since 1993, Women for Women International has directly assisted more than 153,000 women and approximately 655,000 family members have benefited from its programs. Women for Women International has distributed nearly \$42 million in direct aid and microcredit loans since 1993.
- Women for Women International is unique in that 55% of its support comes from grassroots efforts of women helping women through one on one sponsorship and small donations.
- Women for Women International has mobilized over 125,000 men and women in 105 countries to reach out and support women survivors of war.
- Women for Women International is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that receives funding from individuals, foundations, businesses and governments.

Recognition

- Women for Women International is the recipient of the 2006 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian prize, a renowned award given to organizations that work to alleviate human suffering around the world.
- Women for Women International has been awarded high marks from Charity Navigator for five years running, meaning that our organization "exceeds or meets industry standards and performs as well as or better than most charities in its Cause."

Program Information

Women for Women International uses a multi-faceted approach to help achieve its goals. The program is comprised of:

- direct aid for food, medicine, clothing and schooling
- emotional support from the exchange of letters through the Sponsorship Program
- rights awareness and leadership education
- job skills training and
- microcredit loans and access to other economic opportunities .

Sponsorship

- The Sponsorship Program provides direct aid and emotional support, through monthly financial commitments and the exchange of letters. Women from all over the world are matched with a woman survivor of war in one of the program countries.
- Sponsors send \$27 a month to benefit their sister. A portion of these funds are given directly to the participant so she can provide her family with basic necessities. The remaining funds are used to provide her with rights awareness, leadership education and vocational skills training so she can continue to support her family in the future.
- The woman receives a monthly financial commitment from her sponsor to fulfill the basic necessities of life such as obtaining food, clothing or shelter; as well as pay for their children's school fees; invest in an income generating project; and otherwise buy things that will help benefit themselves or their families.
- In addition to the financial commitment, Women for Women International encourages sponsors and their sisters to communicate through the exchange of letters. Women for Women International believes that emotional support is an important part of helping a woman to rebuild her life. Nearly 115,000 letters were exchanged between sisters and participants in 2007 alone.

Rights Awareness Training and Leadership Education

- Women enrolled in Women for Women International's programs also receive rights awareness and leadership training. These workshops are based on *A Woman's World*, a proprietary training manual developed by Women for Women International.
- The training is designed to help women understand their unique rights: politically, as victims of war, ethnic and religious conflict and as voices in bringing about stability; economically, in understanding their rights to earn a fair income; legally, in acquiring skills to fight discrimination, domestic violence and other civil wrongs; and personally, with respect to understanding reproductive systems in women and men, pregnancy and childbirth, nutrition, stress and stress management and the spread, treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- She will receive leadership training that helps prepare her to become a role model for others in her community and health care training to improve her own health and the health of her family.
- The goal of the trainings is not to tell participants what to do, but to give them the tools to become role models for others in their communities and make their own informed decision, whatever that may be.

Job Skills Training

- Our goal for your sister is for her to graduate from the program with the ability to provide for herself and contribute to the family income. She must be able to earn a living in order to help her move forward and rebuild her life.
- The Sponsorship Program will teach her skills that she can use for income generation – skills that are relevant and needed in her community. Training is provided by local instructors in relevant and needed areas such as: food processing, bee keeping, horticulture, leatherwork, animal husbandry, carpet weaving, shoe repair and many more.
- Literacy classes may also be available in some of the countries where Women for Women International works.

Income Generation Support

- Upon completion of the program, women are eligible to receive income generation support. Income generation projects give women the opportunity start and manage their own microenterprises by giving them access to capital and markets.

- In Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Women for Women International operates a microcredit lending program. Loans are available based on the Grameen bank model. To date, there is a 99% repayment rate on all loans.
- In countries where microcredit lending is unavailable, Women for Women International provides access to microcredit loans through other organizations and other opportunities in the forms of cooperative stores, small business trainings, and support and organization of small group businesses.

How to Get Involved

- **Sponsor:** Become a sponsor to a woman survivor of war.
- **Donate:** You can make a donation to Women for Women International for a specific country or to a general operating fund. Donations help support Women for Women International program activities around the world, as well as support the organization.
- **Volunteer:** Tell your friends and colleagues about Women for Women International. If you are in the Washington, DC area there are volunteer opportunities at the Women for Women International office. From time to time, there may also be opportunities outside of the DC area. Please contact the organization if you are interested.
- **Host:** You can host an event or coordinate a fundraising project: Spread the word about Women for Women International by hosting an event or brainstorm ways that would interest your friends, family and acquaintances. For more information, visit www.womenforwomen.org and click "Get Involved."
- **Run for Congo Women:** Do a Lone Run! Raise awareness and money for the women of Congo by choosing an activity, distance and goal and asking friends and family to help you reach it. For example, you could ask for donations for each mile completed or ask supporters to sponsor a sister. For more information and downloadable resources, visit <http://www.runforcongowomen.org/lonerun.html>.

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