**Project Name:** Safe Home for domestic violence victims in Mizoram

**Project Location:** Zemabawk, Aizawl – Mizoram State

**Facilitating Organization:** Foundation for Social Transformation – enabling northeast india

**Project fundraising started on:** 1st September, 2014

**Focus of the Project:**

This project will provide for a ‘Safe Home’ for 20 women who are victims of domestic and gender violence in remote village of Zemabawk, Mizoram, a north eastern state of India.

G Lalthanzami from Aizawl, Mizoram is a survivor of domestic violence. She had walked out with her infant son unable to take the beatings her husband inflicted on her daily. She now works with women facing similar situations in and around her village. In 2008, the Safe Home was begun by Lalthanzami with just her meagre savings. Through small donations she had run the Home till 2013; in these years it had provided shelter to 52 women in addition to 28 girls and 20 infants. The Home is currently vacant as there is no funds to run the shelter. In the absence of such an institution, women find it very difficult to overcome and break away from gender abuse and domestic cruelty. Through this project the Safe Home will be able to provide shelter, food and relevant training to 20 women. In addition to legal aid and counselling, the women will be trained in leadership building along with livelihood skills to help them reach economic and social independence.

The focus of the programme is to revive the safe house wherein the women can be rehabilitated to lead a normal and self dependent life. They would strengthen their capacity through training on rights based issues so that they can avail their rights, reinforce their leadership quality as well as participate in social movements and in decision making mechanism.

Violence against women and girls is not a new trend in Mizoram and has gone unabated since long. There have been several incidents of death due to violence within homes in Mizoram but these often go unreported. Violence not leading to death is often not perceived as a crime, both by the community and the perpetrator. The social attitude towards women fighting legal battles, especially against their family, is negative and they are often stigmatized. Under the existing customary law, women are not entitled to property rights, which often mean that in case of violence, they do not have a place to escape to. In this context, safe houses for women are very essential.

**Goal of the project:**

Gender and domestic violence survivors in Mizoram to have a safe shelter and avail their rights and entitlements and have improved social, psychological and economic condition, while creating positive change within their families and communities around them.

**Objectives:**

* To revive the safe home with capacity to accommodate atleast 20 women/girls
* Strengthen capacity of the women to avail their rights and entitlements and to fight against all kinds of violence and gender discrimination.
* To ensure physical and mental health of the violence survivors
* To provide Legal aid for protection of their fundamental rights

**Activities**

To fulfil the objectives the project will include four core activities:

* Create Safe home for Women victims and survivors,
* Facilitating legal and medical aid to women,
* Extend Psycho-social support
* Provide training on different rights based issues
* Livelihood training
* Documentation

1. Safe house

The first step would be restarting the Safe House for women who have no other place to go for a temporary period. Depending upon individual needs, the situation of the woman and other factors, the Safe House will provide shelter to 20 women at a time in a safe environment. The shelter will include food, accommodation and activities such as reading and study, group discussion and leisure activities depending on the needs of the woman (and their children).

1. Facilitating legal and medical aid

Lalthanzami has been facilitating access to legal aid and assistance to women who have faced violence. She has been in contact with NGOs in Aizwal and other districts in Mizoram, including those that have been designated as Service Providers under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. She is also in touch with an informal group of lawyers to ensure that those who seek to initiate legal action have the required legal assistance.

A volunteer physician has in the past assisted in consulting and facilitating access to medical care when necessary. However medical supplies need to be purchased.

1. Psycho-social support

Psychological and social support is often the most crucial need for the women when they arrive at the safe house.

1. Training on Rights

This project intends to impart training on Rights. Human Rights, Women’s Human Rights, different acts related to women will be information made accessible to the inmates. For this experienced Resource Persons will be invited to conduct workshops.

1. Livelihood training

The women will be provided livelihood training that suit their own skills as well available resources. They will be supported in their efforts to build a steady source of income through sustainable avenues like livestock rearing, weaving, tailoring etc. However the exact nature of skill trainings will be determined later on based on each individual woman’s interests and skills.

1. Documentation

The core activities will be documented in a systematic way so that this helps in further advocacy. Towards this end, Lalthanzami would keep records of women who have accessed the safe house and those that have sought legal aid, psychosocial counseling, medical aid and information about their rights.

**Expected outcomes**

* Violence survivors will have access to a safe shelter along with minor children
* Attain skills to support themselves and minor dependants financially
* They will be empowered to avail their rights and empowerment
* Legal counseling will help them fight for their rights and entitlements
* They will be empowered to participate in decision making mechanism
* Psychological counseling will help them overcome the trauma of violence and abuse

**Fund required:** 5000$ or INR 300000 for 1 (one) year.