

FINAL PROJECT REVIEW

Basic programme/project information (To be provided by programme or project management)

Programme or project number and title:	<u>STP/01/H04 «Sustainable Livelihoods for Adolescent Girls in STP»</u>
UNFIP project number:	<u>UDP-STP-00-135</u>
Designated institution:	<u>Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports</u>
Project starting date:	
Originally planned:	<u>16/07/2001</u>
Actual:	<u>01/08/2001</u>
Project completion date:	
Originally planned:	<u>15/07/2004</u>
New:	<u>30/06/2006</u>
Total budget (\$):	
Original:	<u>836.404 (including 5% support costs)</u>
Latest signed revision:	<u>836.404</u>
Period covered by the report:	<u>2001 - 2006</u>

PART I: NUMERICAL RATING

Rate the relevance and performance of the programme or project using the following scale:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1 - Highly satisfactory | 4 - Unsatisfactory |
| 2 - Satisfactory | X - Not applicable |
| 3 - Unsatisfactory, with some positive elements | |

Place your answers in the column that corresponds to your role in the programme or project.

SUBSTANTIVE FOCUS	Target group(s)	Programme or project manager	Government	UNDP
A. RELEVANCE				
1. How relevant is the programme or project to the development priorities of the country?		1		
2. How relevant is the programme or project to the promotion of sustainable human development? Indicate your rating on the focus area which the programme or project was designed to address.				
(a) Poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods		1		
(b) Protection and regeneration of the environment		2		
(c) Gender in development		1		
(d) Promoting an enabling environment for SHD, including governance		1		
3. To what extent are appropriate beneficiary groups being targeted by the programme or project, based on the following considerations?				
(a) Gender		1		
(b) Socio-economic factors		1		
(c) Geographic location		1		
4. Given the objectives of the programme or project, are the appropriate institutions being assisted?		2		
B. PERFORMANCE				
1. Using the following indicators				

rate the contribution of the outputs to the achievement of the immediate objectives: ^{a/}				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of communities intervened • Regular attendance of a group to the group dynamics sessions • # of income generating activities started up 		1 2 2		
2. Rate the production of target outputs.		2		
3. Are the management arrangements of the programme or project appropriate?		1		
4. Are programme or project resources (financial, physical and manpower) adequate in terms of:				
(a) quantity?		1		
(b) quality?		2		
5. Are programme or project resources being used efficiently to produce planned results?		1		
6. Is the programme or project cost-effective compared to similar interventions?	There is not a similar intervention in the country to compare cost effectiveness with.			
7. Based on its work plan, how would you rate the timeliness of the programme or project in terms of:				
(a) Production of outputs and initial results?		2		
(b) Inputs delivery?		2		
	Target group(s)	Programme or project manager	Government	UNDP
OVERALL RATING OF THE PROGRAMME OR PROJECT		2		

^{a/} The programme or project manager must list the indicators as reflected in the programme support document or project document or as agreed on by the stakeholders.

Explain the basis of your rating, which need not be limited to, or which may be different from, the relevance and performance criteria rated above.

The overall rating is two (2). The results obtained in 2005 are satisfactory because they are more visible. The girls widened their perspectives and show eagerness for continuous learning. Their participation in community life has also improved; their general living conditions have improved, as has the health situation of their children. Social values and skills such as solidarity and friendship are also more evidenced.

However, one of the project's objectives, that is, the promotion of empowerment in adolescent girls, is a slow and progressive process which results are not always immediate and straight. Some external factors, such as the girls' surrounding environment, the emerging epidemics, the political campaigns among others, at times hinder the advancement of the project and the attainment of results.

PART II: TEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

1. What are the major achievements of the programme or project vis-à-vis the expected results during the year under review? To the extent possible, include an assessment of the potential impact, sustainability and contribution to capacity development.

The project had reached 12 communities by August 2004. During the year 2005 the efforts concentrated on:

- The consolidation of results attained during the previous years and the progressive exit from eight communities and,
- The training in Income Generating Activities (IGA) in four communities, of which two are in the island of Principe.

The project comes to an end; therefore the young girls from the communities where the project intervened first have become more self-sufficient in their businesses as well as more dynamic and resilient at finding solutions for their problems. They are also more demanding.

The girls from the four communities where the project entered later have also evolved and their self-esteem increased, although they express some concern that the support through the project intervention might be too short for them to consolidate the recent changes.

❖ General overview of the project activities in the rural communities

The project intervention in the communities has taken place gradually, in phases, as agreed in the strategy defined at the beginning of the project. Consequently, the communities are all in different stages of intervention.

During the first half of 2005, there was a focus on concluding the IGA and assuring sustainability in the first four communities, where the intervention started in 2002 (Monte Macaco, Praia Lochinga, Santo Antonio e Angra Toldo). This included a training course in small business management that was organised by the Project Management Team (PMT) for the two first communities.

During the second half of the year, the exit strategy started to be implemented, focusing on two main lines:

- i) The reduction of the time spent in the field by the Field Development Agents (FDA) (from twice a week to once a week);
- ii) The emphasis on encouraging the girls to pursue the IGA practice, to develop alternatives in order to make businesses profitable and sustainable, to reimburse the microcredit, to form production groups (especially where the IGA is related to handicrafts).

It is remarkable how the girls of these communities became more autonomous, a lot more preoccupied with the management of their economic initiatives, contribute more in the household economy, give more attention to their children and program better their pregnancies, for now they are aware of and practice family planning methods. Sometimes they prefer to dedicate to the management of their small business than to go to life skills education/sensitization sessions, which has provoked an attendance drop off.

In the other four communities (Uba Budo, Boa Entrada, Lemos e Folha Fede) where the activities began in 2003, the girls also received training in IGA during the first half of the year. Some girls from Boa Entrada and those from Uba Budo benefited from a micro loan. In Lemos and Folha Fede, they received training in credit/saving practices organized by the microcredit NGO MICONDO and began the mandatory saving before borrowing. During the second semester, despite the problems with the microcredit component were not totally solved, the PMT proceeded to the consolidation activities as well as to the implementing of the the progressive exit strategy. It is worth noting that the delays in the microcredit component provoked some despondency and lack of motivation among the girls, as it will be described below.

In the last four communities (Santo Antonio e Porto Real in Principe and Agostinho Neto e Vista Alegre in Sao Tomé), where the intervention began only in the year 2004, the activities focused mainly on two areas, namely:

- i) Life skills education, addressed to the acquisition of the new capacities and the increase of the self- esteem as well as reproductive and general health Information, Education and Communication activities and;
- ii) Training in the IGA previously chosen by the girls. For these communities, microcredit borrowing has not begin yet and the girls are anxious, for, despite the extension of three months, the end of the project approaches and they might not get their loan.

In a general manner, in the communities where girls have already received a loan, they carry out several initiatives, such as pastry, production/sale of handicrafts, animal breeding, fish drying and smoking, small trade of various items such as second-hand clothes.

Girls who did not access the credit, work the land and strive to find ways to put into practice the skills acquired through the training sessions.

❖ **Training in Income Generating Activities**

One of the guiding principles of the project was to not impose or bring preconceived ideas to the communities girls. The girls themselves choose their IGA and the project organizes the training and provides support in terms of materials and equipments.

Thus, the girls from the communities of Praia Lochinga, Folha Fede, Lemos, Agostinho Neto in Sao Tomé and Porto Real and Santo António in Príncipe received training in the domain of pastry. It is important to say that the community of Agostinho Neto has just finished this training and the follow-up period will be during January and February 2006.

On the other hand, the girls from the communities of Santo Antonio and Boa Entrada in Sao Tomé and Santo Antonio and Porto Real in Principe were trained in the domain of handicrafts with coconut tree leaves and coconut shell. In Uba Budo, Folha Fede in Sao Tomé and Santo Antonio and Porto Real in Principe, the girls received training in livestock breeding. The girls in Principe also received training in fish transformation techniques (drying and salting), which is already one of the main activities in the island.

With the exception of the handicrafts training courses which last four to six/seven months, all the other courses have an average duration of three months. With a weekly frequency of six hours, they are followed by a two months monitoring period, where frequency is reduced to three weekly hours.

Some girls in Boa Entrada followed all the necessary procedures to benefit from one month of training in banana dehydration techniques.

As it was mentioned in the 2004 Annual Report, the young men of the community of Monte Macaco, have also benefited from a training in the production of bamboo furniture. Since bamboo is an abundant raw material in the area, the girls and the young men decided to organize themselves and work jointly in an association where girls and young men share the power.

The project also continued supporting girls wishing to receive training in sewing, hairdressing or information technologies. The practice of the two first activities was not encouraged (for being traditionally associated to women, the project wanted to diversify), but as a response to the girls' persistence and also to the characteristics of the respective communities, the PMT accepted that one or two girls by community followed those courses. For example, in Principe, there are no hairdressers with trained personnel. Therefore the project supported the training of one girl in this domain.

Finally, a community showed interest for learning about agriculture. Thus, the logistics were arranged during the December 2005 and the training begun in January 2006.

It is important to mention the vivid interest shown by the girls towards learning new things. At the end of a given training course, they always want to begin another one. Unfortunately this is not possible since the project programmed an average of three trainings by community.

❖ **Microcredit**

The project's microfinance component is executed by MICONDO, the sole Microfinance NGO in the country. The United Nations Development Programme Country Office (UNDP CO) and the Cabinet for Youth Support (CYS) signed a service contract with MICONDO in June 2003, over a period of 18 months. This agreement ended in December of 2004.

When the project Tripartite Review was held in August last year, the microfinance component did not yet work properly. Consequently, two recommendations were issued in this respect:

- « Review the terms of the contract with the microcredit NGO MICONDO, so that a more favourable payment modality can be found for the girls ».
- « Sensitise the NGO MICONDO into the reinforcement of its field team, the training and the follow-up component. The NGO should also define the intervention strategy for the island of Príncipe ».

After thorough consideration, a second agreement was signed with the NGO MICONDO for a period of nine months.

Unfortunately, the loan disbursement continued to be very slow. During this period only 20 loans were obtained, among which, one by a girl of Praia Lochinga, that after having reimbursed his second credit, requested a third one. In the island of Príncipe, the microcredit scheme is not yet in place, despite all the efforts and contacts between the PMT and the direction of MICONDO. In this context, the contract was not renewed after the nine first months. Currently, the PMT and the UNDP country office are looking for alternative mechanisms to both recover the outstanding loans and to continue giving loans to the girls that wait expectantly.

This situation has provoked discontent and disappointment among the girls of the six communities not benefiting from the microcredit yet. Some have even stopped saving. The girls of the island of Príncipe already finished all the training courses in IGA (pastry, livestock breeding, handicrafts and fish transformation techniques) and hope the credit will allow them to start-up their small businesses.

MICONDO, under its new direction, is analyzing with the PMT the possibilities to recover the outstanding loans.

❖ **Urban Component**

Only 16 girls benefited from the in-job training programme this year. On the one hand, the contacts with the Ministry of the Labour and the Chamber of Commerce did not produce the expected results; on the other hand, the emerging businesses in the country search for experienced personnel rather than for inexperienced young girls. Another aspect that has also hindered this component results is the project duration. Some employers showed interest in participating, although they would want a larger in-job training period. One last aspect is the limited capacity of the employment market. Given the profile of the applicant girls, there are no many options for in-job placement apart from the restaurant sector.

In any case, out of those 16 girls that benefited from the programme, the employers hired 90%.

❖ **Other activities**

- Conclusion of the working spaces for the communities girls.

As advanced in the 2004 Annual Report, the working spaces for the girls of three communities were concluded and inaugurated. The girls were very engaged in the organization and realization of the inauguration activities. Fortunately, they feel fully

responsible for the new community infrastructure that belongs to them and will be managed directly by them. This achievement greatly contributed to changing the community's attitude towards the girls. Now, they are more respected, their opinions taken into account, as they gained influence in their surroundings.

- Establishment of the management committees for the working spaces.

Management committees have been constituted by the girls of all the communities that benefited from working spaces. In some communities, the young men also integrate the committee. In other groups, these committees constitute an embryo of a bigger structure (association) that the girls envision for the future.

- Exchange Visits

The girls of Monte Macaco and Praia Lochinga received the visit of a group of girls from the North-eastern region (Lemba), supported by a NGO called «Association for the Progress of the Women ». This visit was very important for the girls, because, it was an occasion to share experiences with a similar group of girls using a different methodology. They could talk about them, their work and the acquired skills through the work with the CYS, about their assets and weaknesses, etc.

The girls of Santo Antonio, who are considering the establishment of an association, went to visit an association that produces biological cocoa in an organized community. This visit allowed them to see « in loco » how a well-organized association works, to know the strong and weak points and the advantages of group work.

Other visits organized for the girls of other groups (Vista Alegre, Agostinho Neto and Principe) aimed at getting to know different economic initiatives and production centres. The ultimate objective of this activity is to open their minds and to help them make a decision in relation with the IGA.

- Mission of a Brazilian designer

Sao Tomé and Principe is a small country where the handicraft industry is neither developed nor diversified. Since several girls' groups have shown interest for crafts, and taking into account that the Santomean market is small and limited, the PMT in consultation with UNDP organised a mission to Sao Tomé for a Brazilian designer (because Brazil is a tropical country with many raw materials that also exist in Sao Tomé).

During the mission, this specialist verified the large amount and diversity of unexplored raw materials in the country as well as the interest shown by the people (women and men) in this matter. He later formulated a training project and sent it to Sao Tomé for appreciation. However, given the short deadline until the end of this project (STP/01/H04), there will be no time for the execution of this new training project.

- Training in small business management

One of the recommendations of the evaluation mission last year was to reinforce the capacities of the FDA. One of the weaknesses identified by the PMT was in the area of small business management. A specialist was hired to build capacity among the FDA and among the girls of Praia Lochinga and Monte Macaco.

- Training in micro finance

As a way to reinforce the capacities within the PMT, the project's Technical Assistant participated in the microfinance training «Developing financial systems for the poor: how donors can make a difference », held in Cotonou, Benin in February.

2. What major issues and problems are affecting the achievement of programme or project results?

The year 2005 was largely devoted to the consolidation of the process and to the progressive exit from the communities where the project intervened first. Some problems have been identified, of which one is a major problem and some are minor difficulties. As a major problem:

- The questions related to microcredit: To present, only half of the groups have obtained loans. The girls received training in IGA, but risk not to have the necessary means to start-up their small businesses. This situation jeopardizes all the fieldwork done so far, for the ones that did not receive the credit know that girls from other communities received it, while they are aware of the fact that the project will finish soon.

Other problems to highlight are:

- Inadequate small business management techniques. The girls are eager to obtain immediate profit from their economic initiatives and do not normally have the patience and resilience a business manager needs. They want the profit, but they do not count in all the costs. There is also the risk of insolvency, since the girls, often living in extreme poverty conditions, tend to use part of the loan money to satisfy their immediate needs.
- Sao Tome and Principe is a small country with a tiny market. The population, especially in the communities, is poor and often do not have money to buy the products produced by the girls.
- As the girls are inexperienced, their products do not have enough quality to face the market competition.
- The delay in the quarterly funds allocation affected negatively the project's execution during the year. The funds were released systematically late (more than one-month), which hampered the purchasing of materials and equipments destined to the IGA training courses, in particular in the island of Principe.

3. How should these issues or problems be resolved? Please explain in detail the action(s) recommended. Specify who should be responsible for such actions. Also indicate a tentative time frame and the resources required.

Microcredit component : The PMT, the Youth Institute (former Cabinet for Youth Support) and UNDP in consultation with the new direction of MICONDO are studying different modalities for managing the microcredit scheme during the two remaining months of the project. They are as well considering the possibility of continuing with the microcredit scheme once the project finishes.

In order to build the girls' capacities in small business management, in addition to the short training they receive before accessing the loan, the project decided to reinforce the capacities of a FDA. She will rotate around the communities to support the girls, focusing on business plans elaboration and business start-up needs, among other subjects.

On the other hand, all of the FDA benefited from a training course in small business management so that they are ready to support the girls in everyday issues related to the economic activities that might arise during the sensitisation sessions. In these sessions, the FDA debate over ideas and topics aimed at enlarging the girls' management perspectives.

Market exiguity: To overcome this limitation, the PMT helped the girls to find selling spots for their products, found them potential customers and provided advise concerning the marketing of their products.

Product Quality: Concerning the quality of the products, the PMT, in consultation with UNDP, deployed a Brazilian designer to Sao Tomé. He assessed the handicraft products and the existing raw materials and elaborated a project for the development of the Santomean handicraft.

4. What new developments (if any) are likely to affect the achievement of programme or project results? What do you recommend to respond to these developments?

Along the year 2006, legislative and presidential elections will be held Sao Tomé and Principe. Traditionally at these occasions, campaigners distribute freebies (including money) to potential voters, spoiling and creating bad habits among the population. As an example, it is difficult to claim the reimbursement of a micro-loan when the political parties are distributing money among the population without any sacrifice. The Youth Institute will need to adopt a strategy to tackle this situation.

One of the project's objectives is the young girls' empowerment. The strategy of intervention in the communities proposed a phased approach to enter the communities and consequently there are communities that profited from longer periods of support than others did. The intervention in the first communities was not concluded in the first quarter of 2005, as initially planned since the PMT understood that the girls still needed further support.

Accomplishing a superior level of empowerment is a slow process that implies behavioural changes and the acquisition of new attitudes. To achieve sustainable results in those communities where the project intervened the last will be a great challenge for which the Youth Institute does not have the required resources. In a general manner, follow-up should be provided to all communities during a certain period in order to consolidate their advancements.

Political instability is one of the major hindering factors to the development process in the country. Unfortunately, this phenomenon is becoming more frequent and it delays all types of work.

The epidemics, specially the cholera that burst twice during 2005 and continues to be unresolved, are also one additional blocking factor. This problem should be addresses

with a lot of sensitisation and conscientization aimed at triggering behavioural changes.

5. What are the views of the target groups with regard to the programme or project? Please note any significant gender-based differences in those views.

In all communities, both the girls and the beneficiary young men have appreciated and responded positively to the work done by the project. The changes are visible: the girls are more caring with themselves and their children, new small economic initiatives that contribute to the family budget, a larger perspective on life, more knowledge about health-related issues, including reproductive health, less frequent pregnancy, more information about their surroundings and the country in general, etc.

The girls and the young men recognise that the project work has been beneficial and has contributed to changing their lives. The girls' purchasing power has improved while the dependency from their partners has decreased.

However, the target group considers that the time was not enough for them to acquire all the skills they would liked to have.

6. To date, what lessons (both positive and negative) can be drawn from the experience of the programme or project?

The first lesson is the importance of having a strong and cohered team, flexible and capable of adapting to changes, confronting new challenges and overcoming the difficulties, always with the same spirit.

The second lesson is the opportunity the project provided for a deeper knowledge and understanding of the rural communities' reality, the real poverty situation, their vulnerability and their assets.

The third lesson is the pertinence of the sustainable livelihoods strategy by which the person is valued from the start. However, time is an essential ingredient for this strategy to work. It is worth paying attention to issues such as the specificity of each community and the different evolving paces of the people between and within the communities.

The fourth lesson is the importance of analysing gender relations in the communities before the intervention, so that specific strategies can be adopted in order to avoid creating additional problems.

One last lesson related to the way patience is one of the leading ways to success. Work in the rural communities has plenty of vicissitudes. Perseverance and believe that things can be altered are always essential.

7. If the programme or project has been evaluated, what is the implementation status of the recommendations made by the evaluators?

The project was not evaluated in 2005. In relation to the evaluation carried out in 2004, an update in the implementation of the recommendations is as follows:

There are recommendations implemented in 2004 such as:

- Improvement of the information flow between the island of Sao Tomé and the island of Principe
- Capacity building of the FDA in conflict resolution
- Publication of an information newsletter
- Compilation of all community maps/transects/diagnosis
- Study trip
- Establishment of contacts with the Ministry of Labour and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the urban component.

During 2005, the former recommendations were sustained:

- The information flow between the island of Sao Tomé and the island of Principe
- Compilation of all community maps/transects/diagnosis
- Improvement of the techniques for internal information recording (meeting minutes)
- Creation of management committees for the working spaces built in the communities
- Reviewing of the contract with MICONDO concerning the microcredit scheme
- Capacity building in small business management
- Registration of the ex-ante community diagnosis
- Improvement of the project visibility by producing a documentary that compiles information on all beneficiary communities

There are other recommendations which implementation is not completed yet:

- Newsletter: it did not have the expected impact among the girls given the high level of illiteracy. Even those that can read do not have reading habits. Besides, the PMT did not find a person to remain responsible for this issue. On the other hand, the project documentary is already concluded and has been exhibited to all beneficiaries.
- Joint visits to the field with MICONDO: as explained above, the contract with the NGO did not work well and was finalised.
- Development of specific gender materials for sensitisation of the target groups: some materials have been produced for priority themes such as contraception methods, adolescent pregnancy, STD and AIDS.
- Formal meetings with UNFPA: since one of the members of the PMT is a focal point for Communication for Behavioural Changes, he acts as

intermediary between the project and UNFPA. Therefore, the UN Agency does not consider necessary the holding of formal meetings.

8. Do you propose any substantive revision to the programme or project document? If yes, what are they? State justification.

The project comes to an end. If a new project document is to be formulated, it should pay attention to the different gender relations within the communities from the beginning. Both men and women should be considered as beneficiaries, according to their specificities and needs.

Other aspect to consider is the timeframe to produce observable, sustainable changes. Each community has a rhythm. It is certain that the latest communities did not have the same extent of support and consequently the consolidation of the acquired skills will be a challenge.

9. Provide any other information that may further support or clarify your assessment of the programme or project. You may include annexes, as you deem necessary.

The project's results are positive. It is interesting to observe how the girls themselves assess their own progress. Their lives and those of their families (children and partner) has changed. They know what they want; the project awakened their hunger for knowledge. Even in the first communities, where the project is already exiting, the girls demand more training to improve their skills. In some cases, the girls themselves contact other institutions and demand to participate in training courses.

In Praia Lochinga, one girl has obtained a third loan, has enlarged her shop and claims that the money she makes has considerably changed the family life.

Other girl in the same community has opened up a hairdressing parlour and employs other girls from the group.

Some girls from Folha Fede trained in pastry have already set up a small economic initiative and wait for the credit to expand their business.

In Monte Macaco, both girls and boys produce and easily sell handicrafts.

The dry fish from Praia Loxinga is well-known in the Santomean market.

These are some examples that illustrate the project results.



Handicrafts with coconut shell in Boa Entrada



Handicrafts with cononut-tree leave in Praia Lochinga



Fish transformation in Praia Lochinga



Pastry in Boa Entrada



Production of bamboo furniture in Monte Macaco

For the project management:

Name: Aida Maria Afonso Beirao

Title: National Director

Date: 30/01/2006

Signature:

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- The young girls are more self confident and rely more on their own capacities, more open, capable of interacting with the tourist that visit their communities, more knowledgeable about themselves and about the world in general.
 - The young girls have decreased the alcohol intake and, they and their children, are more presentable and healthy.
 - The girls are ready to propose a meeting to the community chief to expose their concern about the unhealthy environmental condition.
 - The girls have the capacity to mobilise the community to analyse existing problems (lack of water, lack of health post, telephone booth, etc.) and propose viable solutions.
 - The men that showed interest and benefited from the project support as a consequence of observing how the girls were learning new things and increasing their revenues.
 - The girls organise themselves to address public and private institutions, such as the national electricity company, and demand solutions for the community problems.
 - The girls specialised in animal first-aid (pigs' castration, bird vaccination, etc.)
- Even though this does not apply for all the girls, the results are very encouraging.

10 - Writer's assessment

This project was the first initiative of this kind. This was a process of discovery and continuous learning. It was built along the four and a half years of implementation and the results are encouraging. Resources will be necessary to monitor the girls' groups in the communities. We have started a process that is half way through. The young girls still need a lot of support to organise themselves in a productive manner, to understand that business profit does not come always straight and immediate. It will be necessary to lead the girls into the creation of associations and cooperatives and to foster their entrepreneurship.

For UNDP

Name: Bacar Abdourohmane
 Title: Officer-in-Charge
 Date: 28/ 06/ 2006

Signature:

