

FD-ANN-265
6980388/68
ISN-31592

Final Report

African Women in Development
Gara Cloth Industry - Sierra Leone

by

Olive T. Wong

September 29, 1978

This report is prepared at the request of the Office of Africa Regional Affairs, USAID. The author of the study bears the entire responsibility for all opinions expressed therein. The work was done under Contract No. AID/afr-c-1291 with The BLK Group, Inc.

PREFACE

This is the Final Report under Contract No. AID/afr-C-1291, African Women in Development. It consists of two separate reports prepared by Ms. Olive Wong, Resident Manager assigned to the project during Phase III to provide technical assistance to the Gara Women's Association for the period of December 28, 1977 to June 23, 1978.

The first report (June 23, 1978) describes the technical assistance provided and the project activities occurring during this period. It concludes with recommendations for continued support of the project.

The second report describes the implementation and results of follow-up activities recommended in the previous report. These reports were submitted to Ms. Jeanette Carson, Project Manager by Ms. Wong for her approval.

PHASE III
African Women in Development
Gara Cloth Industry - Sierra Leone

Submitted by
Olive Wong

To:

BLK Group, Inc.
1730 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

June 23, 1978

Contract No. AID/afr-c-1291

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. General Background
- III. Projected Tasks of Resident Manager
- IV. Situation on Arrival
- V. Implementation
- VI. Situation on Departure
- VII. Evaluation of Project
- VIII. Recommendations
- IX. Suggestions for New Proposal

Appendix

CUSO Report
Cooperative Department Report
Photographs

Introduction

As recommended in the Supplementary Proposal,¹ Contract No. AID/afrc-1291, for African Women in Development - Gara Cloth Industry - Sierra Leone, a resident manager - Olive Wong² - was assigned to Freetown for a period of 6 months.³

This draft of the final report describes the events, activities and developments of the project during this period - and includes an evaluation of the project, recommendations and suggestions for continued aid.

The final report will be submitted in July 1978.

¹ Submitted to AID, June 9, 1977 by the ELK Group

² Mrs. Wong replaced Sara Penn, the original designate

³ December 28, 1977 - June 23, 1978

General Background

A USAID sponsored project to assist in the development of the Gara Cloth Industry of Sierra Leone was initiated in December 1976. Originally proposed for one year, the project was subsequently expanded and extended through June, 1978.

The project was carried out in three phases. Each phase grew out of research, analysis and on-site observations and interviews. Each phase implemented aspects of the project's goals and objectives through technical assistance.

In Phase I, feasibility studies were conducted on-site by Juliet Dobbs Blackburn¹, a marketing consultant. These studies focused on the economic potential of gara cloth as a product, the organization and functioning of the Gara Women's Association as producer and local and foreign markets. Objectives were defined, technical assistance and financial issues indicated and implementation schedule projected.

As a result of findings of these studies, a supplementary proposal for expanding the technical assistance and financial support was submitted and subsequently approved.

¹ Report - Phase I - AID Project # 698-0388 - March 2, 1977;
Interior Report - May 1977

Phase II² was implemented in three areas. Research in the form of a survey of the local retail and export market, sources for raw materials and production costs. On-site Technical Assistance - by Mrs. Blackburn who conducted marketing workshops for the Association. During her stay in Freetown, officers of the Association were elected, the first issue of a newsletter, Gara News, was circulated, three members of the association were selected for study in the U.S., and plans for their training finalized.

Independent Function of Association and Members - in which the three students completed their studies and participated in the International Trade Fair in Atlanta (under the guidance of Mrs. Blackburn). As a result, orders for gara cloth and clothing were sent to the Association in Freetown. The preparation and sending of these orders and the locating and rental of an office-show room became the responsibility of the association. Phase II ended with the anticipated return of the trainees to Freetown where they were to form a Business Advisory Committee for the Association and coordinate activities of the Association in the provinces - and the arrival in Freetown of a resident manager for six months.

²Report Phase IIA - August, 1977; Report Phase IIB - February 1978

Phase III - which is fully described in this report - focused on the establishing of the GWA's local and export operation, stabilizing the organization of the GWA and implementing the overall goals and objectives of the project under the guidance of the resident manager with the assistance of returning trainees.

Projected Tasks of Resident Manager - Technical assistance in the form of a resident manager was recognized from the inception of the project. However, it was not until the completion of Phase I that the need was clearly established.

As recommended in the supplementary proposal and in Reports I - A, B, the project would: "provide a resident marketing manager in Sierra Leone for a period not to exceed six (6) months ----
The tasks of the resident manager were projected as follows:

1. To train GWA members in wholesale/retail management operations.
2. To offer operational guidance to the GWA.
3. To provide monitoring of GWA activities.
4. To implement a local marketing and export program.
5. To establish a newsletter.
6. To develop a promotion plan for local and international advertising.
7. To institute production, styling, design, finishing and quality control.
8. To conduct workshops covering dye technique.

9. To offer retail help to existing Arts & Crafts Coop Marketing Store.
10. To continue investigation and negotiate for importation of raw material.
11. To implement bulk buying of fabric and dyes.

Situation on Arrival

On her arrival in Freetown, Olive Wong resident manager found the following situation:

1. No office space had been rented.
2. The GWA as an organization was essentially inactive.
3. Dissention and a lack of cooperative and interest prevailed among members of the GWA.
4. Most of the elected officers of the GWA were either - involved in their own shops or selling gara independently.
5. The GWA was not registered as a Cooperative.
6. Only one of the members sent to the U.S. for training had returned.
7. Orders received from the IFF in Atlanta in September were unprepared.
8. The Arts & Crafts Cooperative Store - the local retail outlet for GWA - was operation on consignment only.
9. The manager of the ACCS was suspected of mismanagement of funds.

In light of these developments, projected tasks were revised to meet the needs and problems of the immediate situation.

Implementation

As projected at the end of Phase II-A, the objectives and tasks of Phase III were based on the following assumptions:

1. That the GWA was a functioning organization.
2. That office space for GWA had been found and was ready for use.
3. That the trainees would be returning to Freetown and carry out their assigned tasks -
 - a. Mabel Konteh - Office Manager
 - b. Mrs. N'Silk - } coordinate GWA
 - c. Constance Ngobeh - } activities in the provinces
4. That members of the GWA were united in their effort and committed to the association.

Since these assumptions¹ were not in fact valid when Mrs. Wong arrived, implementation of Phase III proceeded accordingly.

January

1. GWA - Assessment

Inactivity

Mrs. Wong met and talked with officers and members of the GWA.

She learned that the Association was inactive, divided and fragmented due to an unanticipated chain of events -

¹Except for 3A - Mabel Konteh returned.

- A. The Arts & Crafts Cooperative Store which was to serve as the principal local retail outlet for goods produced by members, operated on consignment - paying only when and if goods were sold. This meant that members had to wait - often for several months before receiving payment.
- B. As a result, members had turned their attention to setting up their own shops and/or developing their own clients - in order to receive immediate cash payment.
- C. This emphasis on individual selling mitigated against group effort undermining the association and creating competition, rivalry and distrust.

2. Lack of Follow-Through

Furthermore, the members had been unable to follow through the plan of action set in motion by Mrs. Blackburn because of:

- A. Poor communication between members.
- B. No central office or meeting place.
- C. Lack of guidance and coordination of activities.
- D. Confusion about export orders received.

In order to begin to resolve these problems, priority was given to finding an office to provide a base of operation.

Finding Office

An office space had been found by the Association in November and a cable sent to Washington requesting allocated funds. However, by the time the money was claimed in Freetown, the space was no longer available.

After two days of concentrated effort, an office space was found in the heart of Freetown. Officers of the GWA inspected, approved and signed a year's lease.

Opening of Office

The next 10 days were spent finding and hiring workmen to do basic renovation - purchasing paint and lumber - securing minimum furnishings - arranging for utilities, etc.

The first meeting of the officers of the GWA was held in the new office. At this meeting Mabel Konteh reported on her U.S. training and was officially named office manager. Arrangements were made to follow through and complete the outstanding orders and plans were discussed for a general meeting.

Merger with Sierra Leone Arts & Crafts Cooperative Society

Inquiries were made at the Department of Cooperative concerning the status of the GWA. The Association was not registered as a Cooperative.

Further interviews with CUSO sponsoring agency of the Arts and Crafts Cooperative Store, Small Industries and Cooperative

²The money was cabled to Barclays Bank but remained unclaimed for three weeks due to a misunderstanding regarding the name of the claimant.

Department officials indicated that most of the active members of the GWA were also members of the Sierra Leone Arts & Crafts Society - a registered Cooperative - consisting of gara makers and other crafts people.

Out of these discussions came the idea of merging the GWA and the SLACS into one registered Cooperative Society devoted to the producing and marketing of indigenous S.L. Arts & Crafts.

A meeting was held with officers and members of the GWA, members of the SLACS, Cooperative officials, the representatives of CUSO and the resident manager to discuss the pros and cons of such a merger. Unanimous agreement on the merger was reached and plans for a general meeting of members of both organization was scheduled for early February. Publicity for the meeting included regular announcement on the S.L. radio broadcast throughout the country, visits to individual members in Freetown and telephone calls to members in the provinces.

Investigation of Management of Craft Shop

The Cooperative Department and CUSO staff terminated the services of the manager of the Craft shop due to mismanagement.

An officer of the Department was assigned to the shop as interim manager.

Finances and members' accounts were audited. Members' dissatisfaction expressed and noted.

Delayed Orders Shipped to Atlanta

February

The Merger Becomes Official

Members of both organizations met on February 3rd, agreed upon the proposed merger, and elected new officers to serve as a 5 person executive charged with the responsibility of running the affairs of the society.

Setting Up and Use of Office-Work Rooms

The office space was arranged to include and accommodate a work room.

The following aids were installed in the office-work room.

1. A library of resource materials - books, magazines, newspapers, patterns, pictures - to provide a continuous flow of information for members re: U.S. and international design, fashion and household trends.
2. Samples of fabric³, clothing and household items from abroad.

Out of these resources, the following developed:

Creation of new items - primarily for export market

1. Patchwork pillows using gara cloth and elaborate machine embroidery practices by S.L. tailors.
2. A line of gara and country cloth clothing combining local and 3rd world styles.
3. A series of samples on silk and cotton batiste of gara tie dye by individual members.

³Silk and cotton batiste not available in S.L. but popular and in demand in U.S. and elsewhere.

Production - Training - Quality Control

In order to make the above samples - the following steps were taken:

1. Recruiting of new members as seamstresses, tailors and embroiderers.
2. On the job training of new members where needed - in cutting, sewing and finishing.
3. Establishing standards of workmanship and quality.
4. Monitoring and requisition of all items made.

Color Photographs Taken of First Samples

Through the interest and generosity of Mr. Maturi of S.L. Diamond Co., one hour photo session with the world renowned photographer and his assistant was arranged in which 20 color photographs of gara samples and craft items were taken. The negatives as well as slides and prints of these photographs were donated to the Society, and are available for advertising and publicity when needed.

Visit from Jeanette Carson

Jeanette Carson, AID Representative from Washington spent two days in Sierra Leone meeting with members of the SLACS and discussing the project, its progress, needs and expectations.

A general meeting - reception was held in the office-work room in her honor and an informal fashion show of the gara - country cloth clothing for export was presented.

Mrs. Carson's presence in Freetown inspired and motivated the membership to increase their support of the project. She stressed membership participation, buying of shares and building up of its own resources.

Ongoing Tasks Activities and Policies

- I. Mabel functioning as office manager.
- II. Regular bi-monthly meetings of Executive of SLACS.
- III. Correspondence to U.S. and other countries re direct importation of dyes and fabric.
- IV. Additions to research library.
- V. Individual consultation with members re quality control-design - problems.
- VI. Regular consultation with Cooperative officials.
- VII. Regular survey and consultation of Craft Shop.
- VIII. Cash payment for all work done on samples for export.

These were established and continued throughout the rest of the time

March

As a result of the fashion show - Local Orders were received.

- I. Bintumani Hotel Boutique for the opening of S.L.'s newest hotel complex. The Manager of the boutique and gift shop ordered and purchased 20 items from the export office as well as numerous craft items from the SLAC store.
- II. Several local individuals ordered and purchased export items.

Equipping of Office-Work Room

A sewing machine, sewing supplies, a typewriter and storage and display shelves⁴ were installed in the office work room.

New Items for Export

1. Framed gara cloth for use as wall hangings (3 sold to U.S. Embassy)
2. Floor - gara patchwork pillows
3. Gara patchwork shopping bags
4. Leather shopping bag
5. Large size gara napkins w/o table cloth
6. Country cloth place-mats made and designed in the provinces.

First Samples Sent to New York

Twenty-five samples of gara cloth, gara cloth clothing, and pillows and craft items were sent to Knobkerry, Inc. - NYC.

Member of Executive of SLACS Attends PAN-African Cooperative Conference in Abidjan

Mimie Foray, Treasurer was the only woman at the conference.

Resident Manager and Office Manager Visit Members in Nakeni & Bo

⁴ Limited funds were available for office equipment (1000) therefore it was decided to rent sewing machine and typewriter in order to use the money to buy fabric and to be able to pay members for production work. The Cooperative Department carpenter built shelves at no labor costs.

Ongoing Tasks Continued (see previous month)

Book-keeping and accounting system for Export Office established.

April

U.S. Boutique Owner Spends Two Weeks Assisting in Export Office

Chrystal Button⁵, owner and manager of Chi Wari a Boutique in Atlanta, Georgia assisted Mabel Konteh with record and book-keeping, offered suggestions for U.S. market and consulted with members.

Two Shipments of Samples to U.S.

1. Fifteen samples of export-office and craft shop items taken to Atlanta by Chrystal Button.
2. Twenty additional samples delivered to Knobkerry NYC by Chrystal Button.

⁵ Referred by Juliet Blackburn

May

Members Participate in Management Workshop

Mrs. Abator Cheedy - Vice President of the SLACS served as the only woman member of a panel on Marketing which was part of a 3-day workshop for managers and entrepreneurs. The workshop was sponsored by Fourah Bay College (Freetown). Department of Education.

Mabel Konteh, Office Manager attended the entire workshop and her fees was paid for by the SLACS.

New Items for Export

Gara patchwork quilts in 3 sizes - crib, single, double (all first samples were sold locally). Gara patchwork pot holders, gara scarfs and handkerchiefs.

Bulk Purchasing of Fabric and Dyes

The society used \$2,000 of the remaining \$3,000 of the AID grant for local⁵ bulk purchasing of fabric and dyes.

These were distributed to members in Freetown - and in the provinces - Makeni, Bo, Yonibana, Magburaka and Bonthe.

Members were permitted to buy on credit with up to 1 month to pay.

A special bank account was opened at the Cooperative Bank to serve as a revolving fund for fabrics and dyes.

⁵To date all inquiries for direct purchase of fabric and dyes have not yielded sources within the means of the society. (see recommendations).

June

Meeting with AID Representative to discuss New Proposal

After a preliminary executive meeting, a joint meeting of officers of the SLACS, Cooperative officials, the Acting Manager of the SLACS store, a representative from Small Industry and Robert Huddleston, AID Representative in Freetown and Mrs. Wong.

This meeting focused on the need and procedure for submitting a new proposal to AID for ongoing aid.

Mr. Huddleston summarized AID guidelines and the group decided to prepare a preliminary proposal for Mrs. Wong to take to Washington at the end of June.

Meetings with Cooperating Agencies

Additional meetings to discuss ongoing and joint aid to the society were held with: Representatives from CUSO, CRS and Ralph Metcalf of UNIDO. The results were favorable.

Meeting with Sierra Leone Government Officials

Mrs. Wong met with Peter Kuyembeh of the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning. He indicated that the GCSL would contribute its share of a continuing USAID grant for arts and crafts.

Mrs. Wong met with Mr. Gabisi of the Cooperative Department, who reaffirmed the continued support, supervision and in-kind contribution of the department and staff.

Society Applies for Self-Help from U.S. Embassy

The society submitted a request for self-help funds from the U.S. Embassy to purchase sewing machines and other equipment⁶ with which to produce samples and orders for export.

Export Order Received

A \$300 order for 15 items selected from samples taken to Atlanta by Chrystal Button (see April) was received by the society.

Color Photographs of Gara Cloth Designs

The Executive voted to have 18 photographs of traditional gara patterns taken⁷ in order to use them as calendars and/or postcards - to be sold by the society as a means of income and advertising and documentation of the craft.

Grass Roots Survey of Members

Mrs. Wong spent the last two weeks meeting and talking with members of the society in order to find out their needs, problems and ideas for the best use of aid.

Mrs. Wong and Mabel Konteh spent two days in the provinces talking to members.

Departure of Resident Manager

Mrs. Wong left Freetown on June 25, 1978 ending the final Phase (III) of the project.

⁶ Due to limited funds - the office - workroom was unable to continue paying rental for typewriter and sewing machine beyond May.

⁷ A local free-lance photographer was commissioned to take pictures.

Situation on Departure

1. Sierra Leone Arts and Crafts Society functioning as a registered cooperative with a 5-member executive in charge of running its affairs.
2. Executive holding regularly bi-weekly meetings and on call.
3. Membership participation and interest.
4. SLAC Store well managed and run by Cooperative Department Officer.
5. Export Office-Work Room equipped and functioning as a center for research, production, showroom for export items and meeting place for members.
6. Some local and U.S. markets for goods established.
7. Procedure for orders worked out.
8. Mabel Konteh employed as Office Manager. She is familiar with all aspects and functioning capably.
9. A nucleus of members - seamstresses, tailors and embroiderers experienced in the making and finishing of all samples and new designs to date.
10. Strong support from Cooperative Department Officials.
11. Contact with provincial members established.
12. Revolving fund set up for fabric and dyes.

Still to be Accomplished

1. Compilation of complete and up-to-date membership list including provinces.
2. Regular purchase of shares by members.
3. Adoption of By-laws.
4. Publicity and Advertising.
5. Newsletter (?)

6. Regular flow of goods and raw materials to and from the provinces.
7. Sources for direct purchasing of raw materials especially fabrics and dyes.
8. Development of specific overseas and local buyers and outlet.
9. Testing and revisions of samples relative to overseas and local market.
10. Transport (see 6 above) and recommendations.
11. Increasing membership.
12. Developing loyalty and cooperative spirit among members.
13. Lowering costs of goods.
14. Sierra Leone Government subsidy for purchase of raw materials.
15. Workshops on dye techniques.
16. Return of two trainees to carry out work in the provinces as stipulated in their contracts.

Evaluation of Project

The project as it evolved from proposal to implementation, focused on technical assistance in the form of feasibility studies, market surveys, consultant and technical training to accomplish its objectives.

This was essentially an indirect approach to the target group - rural women producers of gara cloth. By this means it set out to insure a market for gara and to provide the most efficient and sure means of reaching that market.

Thus creating a reliable and regular source of income, employment and motivation for these women.

In this regard, the project provided important information, established procedures for effective marketing and merchandising and reaffirmed the unique aesthetic value and quality of gara cloth.

However, before gara can be produced at all, cloth, dyes and and solvents must be purchased by the producer who in turn must be able to sell it for immediate cash in order to produce more.

When the producer has only a meagre¹ income out of which to pay for food, clothing shelter, school fees and medical costs for her family, the initial outlay for raw materials must be weighed against these necessities.

The project, it seems to me, failed to make provision² for the actual situation faced - to a more or less extent by most of the rural and urban gara cloth producers.

Without the means to produce, there is no product.

Now that the project has set the table, let us provide the meal.

¹ Sierra Leone per capita income less than Le500 per annum

² Out of a total budget of approximately \$109,000 - only \$2,000 was allocated for fabrics and dyes.

Recommendations

- That USAID continue its support of the Gara Cloth and Craft Industry for at least another two years.
- That a new proposal be drawn up and submitted for this fiscal year to include provision for the following:
 1. Seed money for fabric, dyes, solvents and other raw materials.
 2. Seed money to provide cash to be able to pay crafts people for products.
 3. A vehicle, driver and maintenance allowance.
 - to make regular weekly trips to provincial centers and villages.
 - to take raw materials.
 - to pick up and purchase craft items.
 - to transport traveling consultant familiar with market and production to provide on the spot and direct technical assistance and direction to individual crafts person.
 4. The services of a buyer whose sole responsibility would be to locate, negotiate and set up direct delivery of fabric and dyes T-shirts and other items to the society.
 5. Product development - i.e. sales person in the U.S.- to take samples to selected stores, discuss modifications and specifications, take orders and suggest items.
 6. To provide on-the-job training of members for short periods in all aspects of operation including 3,4 and 5.

Marketing Report

Phase III

African Women in Development
Gara Cloth Industry - Sierra Leone

Submitted by
Olive Wong

To:

BLK Group, Inc.
1730 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

September, 1978

Contract No. AID/afr-c-1291

Introduction

The Gara Cloth Industry Project in Sierra Leone, as originally conceived, was scheduled to terminate with the return of Olive Wong, resident manager, to the US. However, as the project drew to a close it became evident that additional and immediate follow-through would be necessary if the goals of the project were to be sustained.

An export office had been equipped, staffed and was functioning. A group of samples representing the full range of Sierra Leonian handicrafts had been selected, produced and assembled. Procurement and production of these items had been worked out. Communication and coordination between the export office and the Crafts Shop had been established. The Cooperative was organized and operating under the close supervision of the Department of Cooperatives. Individual member-producers in Freetown and the provinces were ready to produce for export. US/AID funding was at an end.

In light of these circumstances, follow-through in the areas of funding, marketing and implementation of exports was discussed with the executive of the Cooperative, Cooperative Department officials and members at large. As a result of these discussions Mrs. Wong was requested to act on their behalf:

- to seek additional funding from US/AID
- to show samples and take orders for export
- to promote and seek to expedite export of Cooperative handicrafts

This report describes the implementation and results of these follow-through tasks and activities.

Implementation and Results

Paris

In Paris, Mrs. Wong visited the offices and boutique of the Fund for Research and Investment for the Development of Africa (FRITA) - an independent, international development agency.

Results:

FRITA officials expressed interest in the project and willingness to help the Cooperative secure technical assistance.

Arlette Rambaud, buyer and manager of the newly opened FRITA Boutique expressed interest in coming to Freetown in September on her fall buying trip to Africa.

New York

In New York, Mrs. Wong attempted to contact a number of buyers. However, since it was the long July 4th week-end only China Seas could be reached.

Results:

Inga Elliot, President of China Seas, a well known wholesale decorators outlet, purchased six Gara cloth lappas for display in the showroom.

The check for \$76.50 was mailed directly to the export office in Freetown.

Washington

At the conclusion of her de-briefing report to US/AID, Mrs. Wong recommended a two year extension of the project and requested a brief extension of the contract to permit follow-up marketing.

24

Results:

AID asked Mrs. Wong to write and submit a formal proposal for extending the project.

A written request for extending the existing contract to cover follow-up marketing was submitted to AID by BLK.

Marketing

In Washington, Mrs. Wong showed the samples to the African Boutique Museum

Results:

Lisa Wonderman, buyer for the African Boutique Museum placed an \$800.50 order for baskets and clothing.

The order and deposit check for \$225.00 was mailed directly to the export office in Freetown. Color photographs and full descriptions of the items ordered were sent to Freetown by Mrs. Wong.

San Francisco

In San Francisco, Mrs. Wong in consultation (by telephone) with Juliette Blackburn - wrote and submitted a proposal for extending the project to US/AID.

Marketing

1. Folkwear Patterns

Folkwear, A California based company producing authentic and traditional ethnic patterns had presented a complete set of their patterns to the Cooperative. Three garments in Gara and country cloth had been made from these patterns and were among the samples prepared for export.

Distributed nationally, Folkwear patterns are sold in over 2000 stores throughout the US and are used by thousands of Americans for home sewing.

25

Results:

Folkwear photographed the three SL garments for their catalogue and submitted a detailed proposal* for collaborating with the Cooperative on a joint promotional project in the spring of 1979.

This proposal includes:

- the publication of an African pattern based on a Sierra Leonian prototype
- a traveling exhibit of Folkwear garments made out of Gara and country cloth with the SL fabric offered for sale at the exhibiting stores
- inclusion of the name and address of the Cooperative in the pattern itself so that US home sewers could write directly to Freetown for cloth.

A copy of the proposal was sent to Freetown for discussion by members.

2. Fibers

Fibers, a natural fibers fabric store located in San Francisco's famous Ghiradelli Square, placed an \$707.00 order for fabrics and baskets.

The order and deposit check for \$175.00 were mailed directly to the export office in Freetown. Color photographs and full descriptions of the items ordered were sent to Freetown by Mrs. Wong.

AID approved an extension of the contract to allow Mrs. Wong an additional seventeen days for follow-up marketing in New York and Washington.

* See attached

Implementation and Results II

The second phase of market implementation attempted to achieve the following:

1. to show samples to various kinds of potential US markets
2. to keep orders within the present production capacity of the Cooperative as assessed on departure from Freetown
3. to make preliminary inquiries re: fabrics and dyes available from the US
4. to find out import requirements in US so that orders would be admitted to US
5. to make contact with Sierra Leone Embassy and inform them of marketing activities in US
6. to prepare and arrange for the purchase of color photographs, labels and other print-type materials needed for promotion and export and not available in Sierra Leone
7. to lay a foundation for future orders.

New York

Marketing

1. Rosemary Peck.

Rosemary Peck is an accessory company selling accessories to leading US department stores and specialty shops.

Results:

Ms. Peck placed a \$98.00 order for country cloth hats and a coat. She plans to use the traditional SL country cloth hat as part of her spring line.

The order and deposit check of \$50.00 was sent directly to the export office in Freetown. Color photographs and detailed descriptions were sent to Freetown by Mrs. Wong.

2. Willie Smith

Willie Smith is a well known US black designer.

Results:

Mr. Smith did not place an order but was enthusiastic about the fabric and said he would think about working it into a future collection.

3. Henri Bendels

Henri Bendels is NYC's most exclusive high fashion department store and a trend setter for the rest of the country.

Results:

1. Frank McIntosh of Table Toppins (a section of the store) placed an \$566.00 order for 144 assorted Gara cloth napkins and one dozen Gara tablecloth and napkin sets.

2. Janine Weller, buyer for Sportswear placed an \$520.00 order for one dozen Moslem pants and two Gara Folkwear dresses.

While the orders were sent directly to the export office in Freetown, no deposit check could be sent as store policy dictates a 30 day payment on delivery. However, they agreed to pay within 10 days of delivery.

4. Fabrications

Fabrications is a retail and wholesale fabric company specializing in unusual fabrics. They also carry Folkwear Patterns.

Results:

Herman Phines, assistant buyer for Fabrications would like to have selected Gara fabrics included in their wholesale line. However, the Cooperative would have to guarantee that the basic cloth would always be the same. This would mean being able to buy in quantity from an established source. When this has been worked out, he would like to be contacted. He was also very interested in participating in the Folkwear Gara spring project.

23

5. United Nations Gift Shop

Located in the United Nations Building, the UN Gift Shop specializes in crafts from member nations. Although Sierra Leon is a member nation, there are no crafts from SL in the shop.

Results:

Mr. Mancini, buyer for the UN Gift Shop selected baskets, indigo Gara cloth, bedcovers, earrings, country cloth hangings and woven coasters and hanging plates.

However, the Gift Shop is not set up to receive direct imports. Therefore a New York agent for the Cooperative would have to receive the shipment. (See Knobkerry)

6. Brooklyn Museum Gift Shop

Located in the Brooklyn Museum, the gift shop specializes in unusual world handicrafts.

Results:

Bridgett Kernan, buyer for the Brooklyn Museum Gift Shop, selected dolls, leather boxes, patchwork Gara pillows and baby quilts, lappas, country cloth spread and baskets.

Like the UN, the Brooklyn Museum Gift Shop cannot receive direct imports. However, Ms. Kernan will mail her order direct to Freetown next week with instructions to ship to Knobkerry. (See following)

A copy of the order will be sent to Mrs. Wong who will send photo graphs and detailed descriptions to the export office.

7. Knobkerry, Inc.

Knobkerry is a well known NYC boutique specializing in Third World art, crafts and clothing. It is owned and operated by Sara Penn who was originally selected by BLK as the resident manager for the project in Freetown. She is thoroughly familiar with the work of the Cooperative and accompanied Mrs. Wong to many of her NYC

marketing appointments.

Results:

Sara Penn has agreed to act as importer for the Cooperative in New York. She will receive the orders for Bendel's, the UN Gift Shop and the Brooklyn Museum Gift Shop. She will also place an order for clothing, baskets and textiles for her own shop. Fees for her services, import duty and shipping cost will be included in the price of the items.

Other Marketing Contacts

The following companies were shown the samples and responded favorable. They were not in a position to place orders at this time, but are interested in ordering in the future.

African American Institute

Mrs. Oscar Reubhausen who is in charge of the annual Christmas sale at the Institute would like to order for next year.

Primitive Arts

Sam Hilo, owner of Primitive Arts would like to order Gara cloth for making bags created by his designer Bob Rogers for next year.

Ashanti Bazaar

Sandy Michaels, owner of Ashanti would like to order silk scarves (a new item still in production) and fabric at a future date.

Nairobi East

Interested in post and note cards of Gara and country cloth color photographs (see Photographs).

Fabrics

Direct wholesale sources for fabric are of major importance in the development of the Cooperative's Gara production. The following contacts were made for the most desirable fabrics.

A.H. Liebman

Mr. Liebman is the US representative for Centrtex, the Czechoslovakian firm which produces Super - the fine cotton damask cloth which is the preferred fabric of Sierra Leone Gara cloth dyers. At present this fabric sells in Freetown for \$5-\$8 per yard in the shops of Lebanese tradespeople. Considered the finest cotton in the world, this super gives Sierra Leonian tie dye its unique double-textured quality.

Results:

Mr. Liebman is contacting Prague, the head office, on behalf of the Cooperative to ask if they would be willing to ship this fabric in quantity directly to Freetown through his office.

Lowensteins

Alan Marx, export director for Lowensteins the largest US cotton mills was contacted re: 100% cotton muslin - a fabric widely used by Gara dye workers and selling for \$2-\$3 a yard in Freetown.

Results:

Mr. Marx had a sample of the fabric analyzed and will forward price and quantity figures to Freetown. He also referred Mrs. Wong to the sheeting division for wide 100% cotton fabric used for tie-dyeing sheets and bedcovers.

Lowenstein has worked with AID on other African projects and is interested in further cooperation.

Photographs

Before leaving Freetown, the Cooperative asked Mrs. Wong to have color photographs made and developed of Gara and country cloth for use as post cards, calendars and note paper - as a means of income, and for promotion of the cloth.

51

John Pinderhughes

John Pinderhughes, an award winning New York photographer photographed & made six color transparencies of Gara and Country cloth in detail closeup. These are now available for printing.

New Windsor

On her way to Washington, Mrs. Wong stopped over in New Windsor, Maryland, the office of Serrv.

Serrv

Serrv, is an alternative marketing organization sponsored by Church World Service and operating a marketing outlet for the handicrafts of developing nations.

Results:

Randy Gibson, marketing director for Serrv placed an \$800.00 order for baskets and hanging woven plates. The order and check* were mailed directly to Freetown. Serrv was also interested in T shirts, wrap skirts and other clothing items. However, at this time the price is too high. If the Cooperative is able to purchase fabric in quantity and thus lower their prices, this and other outlets would become available.

Washington

Sierra Leone Embassy

Mrs. Wong met with Ambassador Toure, First Secretary Harding and Economic Secretary Jasabe to inform them of the US export activities of the Cooperative and of the response which SL handicrafts received from buyers.

Results:

The Embassy was gratified to know about the marketing efforts of \$400 or half of the total amount.

the Cooperative and said they would inform government officials in Freetown and urge them to assist in expediting the shipment of orders.

Mr. Jasabe went over custom regulations for export with Mrs. Wong and indicated that he could be called upon for assistance.

Marketing

Nuevo Mundo

Cornelia Noland, owner of Nuevo Mundo a Third World clothing and craft boutique in Alexandria, Virginia selected a large group of clothing, fabric and craft items.

She will mail the order with a deposit check directly to the export office in Freetown with instructions to mail the order in \$250.00 small shipments.

A copy of the order will be sent to Mrs. Wong who will mail photographs and detailed descriptions to Freetown.

San Francisco

Returning to San Francisco, Mrs. Wong is completing the implementation of marketing in the following areas:

Labels and Tags

All orders from SL must be tagged or labeled with country of origin, fiber content and care instructions. These labels are not available in Sierra Leone. Therefore, they are being ordered in the US and shipped to Freetown to be placed on all items in incoming shipments.

Custom Regulations and Papers

Without the proper invoices, bills of lading and forms, shipments to the US will not be passed through customs. Mrs. Wong is gathering and preparing copies of forms and instructions for

mailing to the export office in Freetown since it is very difficult to secure this information there.

Photographs

Color printing is not available in Freetown. Therefore Mrs. Wong is getting cost estimates and sample layouts for mailing to Freetown so that printed promotional and sale items can be selected and ordered by the Cooperative.

Summary

Orders placed:

China Seas	\$ 76.50
African Boutique	800.50
Fibers	707.00
Rosemary Peck	98.00
Bendels	1086.00
Serrv	800.00
	<u>\$3568.00</u>

Selections made - orders to follow:

UN Gift Shop
Brooklyn Museum
Nuevo Mundo
Knobkerry

Potential Orders:

Fabrications
Ashanti
Nairobi East
Folkwear Project

Conclusion

Marketing follow-up of Sierra Leone handicrafts as produced by members of the Cooperative clearly established that there is an excellent market for their products in the US. Buyers were unanimous in their enthusiasm for the vibrancy, beauty and design. "Fabulous!" was the most frequent response.

Buyers also offered suggestions for product modifications relative to US preferences, trends and requirements. This invaluable feed-back will make it possible for Cooperative members to have the benefit of first hand response.

It will not be easy. Communication between the US and Freetown is slow and difficult. Custom regulations are complicated and exacting. Follow-through is tedious. The rhythm and life style of Freetown and village craftspeople is a world away from the deadline pressures of 7th Avenue.

Hardwork, cooperation and determination on the part of members - encouragement, support and assistance from US/AID, the Sierra Leone Government and concerned individuals - can build a thriving handicraft industry for the people and the Republic.