

PN-ABZ-962



World Education

Report of the Training Workshop on
Proposal Writing

December 6 - 11, 1993
Nairobi, Kenya

AND

Report of the Field Visits with TOTOTO
Working Groups

December 11 - 16, 1993
Mombasa, Kenya

Funded by SWAY Project
under USAID contract No. 279-0080-C-0003-8

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of the workshop through which I benefitted greatly, specifically:

- United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Yemen and the SWAY Project .

- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), represented by the Training Department in the Head Office, Nairobi.

- TOTOTO Home Industries in Mombasa, represented by the Director and the Executive Training Manager who assisted and facilitated my stay in Kenya to achieve the goals of the workshop.

Executive Summary

SWAY Project has conducted and supported a number of training workshops for the women's associations in Taiz and Ibb governorates as well as for its program staff. The Ibb Program Officer attended a Workshop on Proposal Writing and participated in a Study Tour of Women's Income-Generating Activities in Kenya in December of 1993.

The overall objectives of the workshop and the field visits were :

- To introduce and train the participants on the development and formulation of project ideas into a concrete written project proposal ready for submission to a donor group.
- To visit the credit program of TOTOTO and to determine if and how their approach and techniques can be applied to SWAY's future activities with women's associations in Yemen.

Proposal Writing Workshop

This training took place at Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Nairobi under the auspices of World Education, Boston . Participants from four countries attended the workshop including the United States, Republic of Yemen, Namibia and Kenya.

The workshop was designed for the participants to be able to: formulate project ideas and to develop a proposal including essential elements; introduce project development in relation proposal preparation; determine appropriate stages of proposal improvement and writing; present a recruitment plan for the proposed project; and, prepare a project budget. The workshop addressed donor groups and stressed the importance of the applicant organization in following standardized formats developed by the particular donor agency.

The workshop also focused on developing the most important elements in a project proposal including project objectives, identification of beneficiaries of the project, capacity of the applicant organization, program strategies, program action plan, plan for program continuity and sustainability, and budget.

Different training methods were applied during the workshop including lectures, small and large groups discussions, brainstorming, role playing, ice breakers, and involving participants as co-trainers.

Twenty project ideas were presented by the participants. These ranged from health and community development to agriculture, and others. One of the indicators of success in this training was that eleven of these ideas were actually developed into draft proposals by the small groups. Each was prepared according to the key elements cited above.

Field Visits with Women Groups Working with TOTOTO and YWCA

The TOTOTO Credit Program targets 45 women's groups in Mombasa and provides loans to both individuals and groups . TOTOTO addresses issues in community health, adult education, family planning, child care, and income generation. Training in saving and marketing are the main services provided by TOTOTO to women's groups.

While the TOTOTO experience is valuable, one should be cautious before attempting to replicate the program in a country such as Yemen. Without taking in account the available experience and the local needs, a poor level of success may result.

Overall Recommendations

- It is important to carry out a training workshop for Yemeni women in proposal writing particularly since proposal writing and presentations to donors are an essential aspect of development work. The workshop should take into consideration their educational levels and their understanding of donors and NGO's.
- Women in Yemen involved in group savings programs under the name Gemeya (or association) should be encouraged as it is a viable way to develop women's savings programs.
- Women working in community service management should be paid. Voluntary work can reduce the development program's chance for success and may lower women's self esteem.
- Since the concept of women's credit programs in Yemen is relatively new, a comprehensive study should be a priority in order to facilitate the design of an appropriate and viable program.

Introduction

One of the overall objectives of Support for Women's Associations of Yemen (SWAY) is strengthening the institutional capabilities of Yemeni women in the centers and branches of the associations in Taiz and Ibb, in addition to developing the SWAY program staff. To achieve this general objective, SWAY office held a number of training workshops for the associations' members in Taiz and Ibb. Also program staff have participated in regional training workshops.

I participated in a workshop designed for the training of trainers (TOT) which took place in Esmailia, Egypt, as well as a Proposal Writing Workshop in Kenya which included field visits to women's income-generating enterprises and credit programs.

Most private voluntary organizations depend upon international donors to get the financial aid to carry out their programs. Donor agencies normally require a written proposal that is considered the principal document on which a funding decision will be made. Therefore, it is essential that the proposal be prepared in such way to bring interest and trust to the organization proposing the project.

The following report summarizes the important aspects of the proposal writing workshop and the field visits and is organized as follows:

Proposal Writing

- Workshop Objectives
- Workshop Setting
- Workshop Content

TOTOTO Program - Field Visits

- Introduction to TOTOTO
- TOTOTO Programs

Overall Recommendations

Overall Objective of the Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to introduce and train the participants on the development formulation project ideas into a concrete written project proposal ready for submission to a donor group.

Specific Objectives

The following objectives were addressed during the five days of the workshop. The workshop was designed for the participants to be able to:

- Formulate project ideas and to develop the proposal according to the essential elements .
- Introduce project development in relation to improved proposal preparation .
- Determine appropriate stages of proposal improvement and writing.
- Identify the most important parts of the proposal and financial resources
- Include the following elements in the proposal:
 - Introduction
 - Background
 - General and specific objectives
 - Action plan
 - Execution policies
 - Management
 - Staff recruitment
 - Evaluation
 - Budget
- Explore contributions other than that of the donor (e.g., in-kind support)
- Present the recruitment plan of the project
- Prepare full details of the project budget
- Summarize the proposal's contents (summary of the conclusion, cover letter, etc.)

Workshop setting

The training took place at Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Nairobi. It was an ideal tropical setting, and the efficient organization of the workshop reflected positively on YWCA.

On a personal level, the sincere, warm reception I received from all the staff, gave me encouragement to participate actively during the workshop.

Four countries participated in the workshop including: USA - World Education Inc. (Boston); Yemen - World Education (Taiz); Namibia and Kenya (Young Women Christian Associations).

Workshop Content

- Training Methods

Different training methods were applied during the workshop such as lectures, small and large groups discussions, brainstorming, role playing, ice breakers, and participants as co-trainers. It deserves mentioning that the participants' punctuality, their hard work until late hours, and their sincere concern to get the most benefit out of the training in proposal writing greatly added to the experience.

The trainer was of high quality and aware of the participants needs, and consequently amended or changed the training methods in order to transfer the most knowledge. The willingness of the trainer to continue to work hard until late hours contributed to the level of enthusiasm and interest among the group. Her method of involving the participants as her co-trainers according to a specific schedule allowed full participation of the attendees.

- Program Design and Donor Agencies

The first step is the program design, which should be based upon an overall summary study since the success and strength of the program starts in this stage. After preparing the design, a draft proposal can be started. Before the organization puts it in final draft, one should look carefully at the following :

- **Different donor agencies**, local and international, which may be interested in the proposed project. The determination of relevant donors will help avoid unnecessary submissions to inappropriate donor groups and thus save the organization time and money.
- **Approval standards** of the private voluntary organization. Knowledge of those standards applied by the donor agencies will assist your organization in realizing from the start whether the proposal should be submitted or not which will save a lot of time for the organization.

- Proposal Formats

Normally, donor agencies have their own format for project proposals. These formats outline the required information in an organized way. Sometimes project proposals are rejected if they do not follow the system required by the agency. When writing proposals, the following points should be considered:

Follow the adopted models or format required by the donor agency. If additional information is vital to the proposal and could not be inserted in the format, it should be placed in the appendices. The proposal should be written in a simple, clear and

direct manner to avoid misunderstanding and long paragraphs which could be confusing .

The remainder of this section on proposal writing will focus on key elements of the proposal.

- Project Objectives

Objectives are developed in order to determine the targeted and predicted outcomes during specific period of time when carrying out the proposed project. These objectives should be specific and achievable based on the strategies and resources to be used by the executing agency.

- Beneficiaries of the Project

This is a statement of the status of the demographic, economic and social situation of the beneficiaries and identification of their specific needs in which the proposed project will respond. In this part of the proposal, the role of the beneficiaries should be clarified, starting with their personal and family needs and its connection to the local community as well as their role in the program planning and implementation. This aspect is what most of the donor agencies consider heavily in their funding decision.

- Capacity of the Applicant Organization

The private voluntary organization should be able to convince the donor of its capacity to carry out the program. In this part, a brief history of the organization and its structure, key personnel, previous success stories, present project experience, current programs and indicators of the financial capacity of the organization should be included. Experiences of the organization should be highlighted, especially those applicable to the proposed project. Even lack of experience in some parts of the proposal may be discussed. However, the organization should explain how it plans to gain that specific kind of knowledge in order to carry out the project. Finally, the proposal should be in proper proportion to the size of the administrative capabilities of the organization.

- Program Strategies

In this part, the different types of strategies of the private voluntary organization should be explained to show how it will carry out the desired objectives of the program. Examples may include credit assistance strategies, income generating programs, training of labors and volunteers, etc. Strategy testing and how it will be carried should be explained and the role of beneficiaries in each strategy should be clarified and stated.

- Program Action Plan

In this part, the different activities (before and during implementation, monitoring, and evaluation) should be arranged according to target dates and responsible staff. The

program activity should be detailed to clarify the process which will lead to carrying out the targeted objectives.

- Program Continuity and Sustainability

Financial aid from any donor is subject to a specific duration. Therefore, one must consider how the program will continue beyond the funding period. The organization should explain how it plans to finance the program and identify other resources to cover the cost of the program which enable it to actively assist the beneficiaries when the funding stops.

- Budget

The budget is a monetary indication of the program plans. When the donor agencies review the proposal's budgets, it is in relation to the activities in the program. An exaggerated budget is one of the main reasons that proposals are rejected. Most of the donor agencies expect part of the budget to be self financed by the executing organization or the beneficiaries. The more self financing, the greater chance the donor will approve the proposal. In identifying the contributions of the private voluntary organization, agents, or the beneficiaries one should make sure that documentation confirming this contribution to the budget will be available upon request.

Additional data may be requested by the donor agency. Follow up and the submission of all information needed or requested is essential. If the proposal was rejected, amendments or changes to the proposal according to the donor's recommendations should be made. If these changes cannot be made, other donor agencies should be explored.

Report on the Field Visits of Women Groups Working with TOTOTO and YWCA, Mombasa , December 12 - 16, 1993

Introduction

It is wrong to believe that the government is entirely responsible for reducing extreme poverty. Management of the development process and large industries and agricultural development program are key to property and the national development needs of different kinds and on different levels. It has been proven that encouraging home activities through the establishment of the small-scale services is the ideal method to increase family income. In this way, income can be increased and will reflect positively on the development of the community.

TOTOTO, a Non-governmental Organization (NGO), has a strong link with owners of small enterprises. It has been clearly shown that TOTOTO program had achieved great success in increasing family income. Projects of TOTOTO have also tremendously added to the village community's new skills in business administration and production.

TOTOTO Programs

TOTOTO encourages home activities through credit programs, training, technical assistance and assistance in creating new markets to sell the products of poor families.

One of the criteria of receiving loan from TOTOTO is to be member of self-formulated women group. The women get the loan as individual, but her group is responsible to TOTOTO to guarantee the repayment. The failure of any individual in repaying the loan threatens the credibility of all group members. The TOTOTO credit program targets 45 women groups in Mombasa. Through participating, women address areas of community health, adult education, family planning, child care as well as income generating activities.

Some examples of women's projects (working as individuals or groups) include :

- Home building and renting
- Sewing of local dresses and selling
- Selling of fruits and vegetables
- Renting of vehicles
- Goat and cattle raising
- Honeybee production

Training

Women's groups are trained in community service work as part of the program which includes:

- Saving
- Marketing
- Group structure and contracts.

For those who are working on following up on women's credit programs or on their own group, training includes:

- Program promotion among the women in the area.
- Looking for other women entitled to credit and encouraging them to formulate their own credit group.
- Organizing meetings for income generating activities and to explain the philosophy of credit systems.
- Assisting women in carrying out simple feasibility studies for their proposed activities.
- Assisting the program officers in refunding the due payments from the groups.

Obstacles Facing Credit Programs in Yemen

Most of the programs in Yemen attempt to borrow and imitate some of the successful programs elsewhere and apply them as they are without taking in account the available experience and the local needs. The final results of those programs are medium to poor levels of success and in some cases, complete failure.

Most credit programs in Yemen or any other developing countries, in general, are planned in a way which does not promote the active participation of women as beneficiaries or responsible members. The reason behind this is the large size of the loans or the non-existence of social support.

Lastly, the misunderstanding of the Yemeni family has led to poor or unambitious credit programs addressing women. This misunderstanding is due to the perception of male domination in the family and his supposed role as the sole financial supporter and his rejection of women's income generating enterprises.

Overall Recommendations

- Proposal writing and presentations to donors are considered the first step in community development especially those related to small projects of non-governmental organizations. It is important to carry out a training workshop for Yemeni women on the proposal writing, taking into consideration their educational and cultural levels and their understanding of donors and NGO's.
- Women in Yemen involved in group savings programs under the name Gemeya (or association) should be encouraged, as it is a viable way to develop women's savings programs.
- Although the voluntary, unpaid work is highly desirable in local community development programs, it is not recommended to ask individuals working in community service to work for free. This reduces the development program's chance for success and even the women's self esteem. Women working in community service management should be paid.
- Encourage women to solve problems through group discussion and following a detailed action plan in cooperation.