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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

LA KARA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROJECT

(698-0388.12)

USAID/Togo

by

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1. Accronyms:

USAID - United States Agency for International Development
GOT - Government of Togo
NCNW - National Council of Negro Women
UNFT - National Union of Togolese Women
SOTED - Togolese Society for Development Studies
EOPS - End of Project Status
PCV - Peace Corps Volunteer
CNCA - National Agricultural Credit Association
FUCEC - National Federation of Cooperatives for Savings and Credit.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

La Kara Skills Development Training
698-0388.12

Project Description: The La Kara Skills Development Training Project, whose agreement was signed September 28, 1979, was designed to increase the socio-economic well-being of rural women in the Kara region of Togo by providing them with training in income generating skills, assistance in developing cooperative groups, and education in improved nutrition practices. The project was implemented by the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and the Women's Status Bureau of the Ministry of Public Health, Social Affairs, and Women's Status (henceforth referred to as the Ministry) in cooperation with the National Union of Togolese Women (UNFT). The USAID grant provided $612,000, of which $229,000 was awarded to the Government of Togo (GOT) and $383,000 to NCNW. The GOT added $59,000 of its own resources to make the total project funding $671,000. The project was originally designed for three years but was later extended to five years (until September 30, 1984) to compensate for implementation delays.

Evaluation Purpose and Methodology: The final project evaluation was conducted February 24 to March 10, 1985 by the following team:

GOT: Mme Ahlonkoba Aithnard, Director General of Women's Status for the Ministry
M. Adodosse Ametowoun, Section Chief of Professional Training for Women's Status
M. M'Bao Todjalla, Kara Regional Director of Social Affairs
Mme Mina Awade, Kara Regional Coordinator for Women's Status Programs
Mme Baloukina Nimon, Project Coordinator
Mme Koulanka Katamina, Social Promotion Agent for Women's Status.

REDSO/WCA: James R. Washington, Human Resources Development Officer
Esther Addo, Assistant Human Resources Development Officer

PEACE CORPS: Suzanne Marks, Cooperative advisor

USAID/Togo: Rudolph Thomas, Project Officer

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess progress toward the achievement of the project's goal and purpose, identify benefits, and judge the long-term viability and institutionalization of the project. From this information, lessons learned throughout the course of the project were to be identified and recomendations made to the GOT for improvement of project activities. Evaluation methodology consisted of reviewing project documentation, interviewing GOT officials and project personnel, visiting the training center and visiting six of the women's groups, to observe the activities and interview group members.

Findings:

By the end of the project, 432 women had been trained in one of three income generating activities: weaving, soap-making, or gardening. These women benefited from the improved quality of goods produced and the increase in income over that earned using traditional production methods. The women had been organized into twenty one groups and their officers and social agents trained in cooperative management techniques. Several groups had received at least one training session in improved nutrition practices. A training center capable of training 350 women per year was built and equipped. Training courses in the three skill areas and in nutrition education had been developed and seven instructors trained. GOT project personnel had received substantial on the job experience and reached the capability to manage the project on their own.

The project encountered several major implementation problems that limited its impact. There were long delays by both NCNW and the GOT in assigning project personnel. Faulty construction designs and periodic shortages of funds slowed the completion of the training center. Failure to assess the appropriateness and practicality of the proposed craft activities resulted from inadequate background research during the project design. The quality and timing of the research studies rendered them of little value in choosing the project activities. Irregular production caused by shortages of raw materials and marketing difficulties reduced the amount of income earned, inhibited effective cooperative management training, and called into question the economic viability of the chosen activities. The large geographic region covered by the project restricted supervision and follow-up training.

Overall, the evaluation team found that the project goal of increasing the socio-economic well-being of rural women in the Kara region had been attained, but that the project's impact had been adversely affected by the lack of available production materials, the limited market and the slow growth of the pre-cooperative groups. Training had been provided in the three income generating skills; but more training is needed to improve upon the present proficiency level. Assistance in cooperative

development had been started, yet each group still needs intensive training to ensure continual progress in cooperative management. Only a small effort has been made so far to educate rural women in improved nutrition practices; a nutrition training program needs to be emphasized. The project activities permitted rural women to earn more income from their trades than they did using traditional production methods. However, the substantial amount of money invested in the project raises questions as to whether the methods chosen to increase rural women's well-being were cost-effective. The fact that the groups are encountering production difficulties but have not yet reached a state of self sufficiency to be able to resolve the problems for themselves means that they will require a lot of assistance and supervision from the Ministry in the immediate future. Until the difficulties are resolved by the current groups, no efforts should be made to identify and train new groups.

Lessons Learned:

Lessons learned throughout the course of the project were: 1) The research studies should have been carried out as part of the project design prior to project approval so that the project could have incorporated the research findings; 2) also, as part of the project design, a closer look should have been taken at the role of women in the traditional structure in order to determine the best way to reach the target population; 3) the three year time frame did not allow sufficient start-up time as well as time to carry out proposed activities; 4) the geographic region was too large, given the pilot nature of the project and the limited resources and personnel available; and 5) A.I.D. should maintain the availability of advance funds by requesting additional funds while there are still adequate funds available to cover activities up to the arrival of the additional funds.

Recommendations:

In spite of the fact that USAID/Togo's financial contribution to the project ended on September 30, 1984, the evaluation makes several recommendations to the GOT for the further development of project activities: 1) additional cooperative training should be provided for group officers and social agents; 2) social agents should then be given the role of training group members so that the members can take more control of their economic activities; 3) a monthly profit/loss or income statement should be included in the accounting system; 4) more literate women should be incorporated into the groups; 5) the Ministry and the groups should identify new markets for the products and reliable sources of raw materials; 6) more training is needed for weaving and soap making instructors in new techniques and for the project coordinator in project management; and 7) the groups need additional training and follow up in nutrition education.

II. INPUTS

Inputs provided over the life of the project totaled $671,000. This included a $383,000 grant from AID to NCNW to provide project management and technical assistance and a $229,000 grant to the GOT to cover the cost of training, salaries, construction, commodities, and project vehicles. The GOT provided $59,000 worth of land and salaries.

NCNW provided a project coordinator from March 1980 to May 1983. Three consultants were hired by NCNW to develop craft technologies, conduct marketing and nutrition studies, and design a training program for the village women. The failure to provide these inputs in a qualitative and timely manner delayed project implementation. The NCNW project coordinator arrived 5 months after the agreement was signed with the GOT in September 1979. The lack of success by soap and oil consultants in developing appropriate technologies delayed soap training until July 1982. The craft marketing study was not completed until July 1983. Project implementation was also adversely affected by the following delays in inputs:

a) the assistant project coordinator assumed her responsibilities in February 1981, 17 months after the agreement was signed,
b) the project accountant assumed his duties in October 1981, 25 months late;
c) the project chauffeur assumed his responsibilities in November 1981, a delay of 26 months;
d) the GOT assigned the cooperative advisor in April 1983, 43 months after the signed agreement.

Serious difficulties were encountered in the construction of the training center due initially to the use of faulty architectural designs. However, when the construction began again after more than a year of waiting, there were further delays caused by the limited availability of the AID engineer and periodic interruptions of project funding which resulted from AID's strict procedures for advancing funds and lengthy processing time for checks.

III. OUTPUTS

By the original project completion date of September 30, 1982, the following outputs were to be achieved: 560 women trained in improved techniques of weaving, cloth-dying, soap-making, and basketry; 560 women instructed in improved child care, health, and nutrition practices; 29 village-based artisan cooperatives legally constituted and functioning, making credit available to cooperative members; documentation on the socio-economic and nutritional status of women and their families in the Kara region; surveys conducted by the technical advisor and craft

consultants on outlets for products produced in the four skill areas; 29 women trained in cooperative and credit management skills; and technologies designed to aid in craft production in place and operating in villages.

In the course of the September 1982 evaluation, it was concluded that the outputs were too ambitious. To make the implementation plan more realistic and improve the prospects for achieving the project goal, the craft skills training was limited to soap-making and weaving; gardening took the place of the other 2 activities that were dropped; the number of women's groups was reduced from 28 to 22 (reducing the total number of women to be reached from 560 to 415); and the project was extended for 2 years until September 30, 1984. Listed below are the project outputs and progress made toward their achievement as of February 1985.

Output	Progress as of February 1985
A. 415 women trained in improved techniques of weaving, soap making and gardening.	432* women have been trained: 74 in weaving, 139 in soap making, and 219 in gardening.
B. 415 women instructed in improved child care, health, hygiene and nutrition practices.	432 women have participated in at least one training session on nutrition and food preparation methods. The lack of follow-up sessions resulted in limited improvements of the diets of the women and their children.
C. 22 village-based artisan cooperatives legally constituted and functioning, making credit available to cooperative members.	There are as yet no legally registered cooperatives. Formal cooperative training started in August 1983. 21 groups are presently functioning at a pre-cooperative stage.

* The targeted number of 415 women was exceeded because several soap and gardening groups have more members than was anticipated.

D. Documentation on the socio-economic and nutritional status of women and their families in the Kara Region.	1) A socio-economic study to determine the daily activities, sources of income, and traditional craft activities for rural women was conducted by the Togolese Society for Development Studies (SOTED) in March 1981. The study was a low-budget undertaking, resulting in questionable data. 2) The Cacavelli Center for Nutrition and Food Science completed its report in December 1981 on the nutritional practices of women and children in the Kara Region. This study was useful in designing the nutrition education courses.
E. Surveys conducted by the Technical Advisor and craft consultants on the market for project products.	A market study was conducted in July 1983 by Prof. Adzomada, Assistant Professor of Marketing and Management at the University of Benin in Lome. The study was designed to determine the market in Togo for hand-woven cloth and soap. The study was of limited use since it was conducted three years after the project started rather than during the design stage. The study had little affect on the goods produced or the availability of markets.
F. 22 women trained in cooperative and credit management skills.	A total of 51 rural women, including the presidents, secretaries, and treasurers of 17 of the 21 groups have participated in cooperative training programs offered by the Cooperative Service of the Ministry of Rural Development. The four other groups were not yet functioning at the time of the training sessions.
G. Technologies designed to aid in craft production are in place and operating in the villages.	By September 1984, 6 weaving groups, 6 soap groups, and 10 gardening groups had been trained in their respective skills. Since one gardening group that had been trained is no longer functional, the total number of groups is now 21.

IV. GOALS

The project goal is to increase the level of socio-economic well-being of rural women in the Kara region of Togo. At the time of this evaluation, 21 groups, consisting of 432 village women, had been trained in the soap-making, weaving, gardening, and nutrition. These groups have been producing and selling their goods for approximately two years. As a result of the project activities, improvements have been achieved in the areas of social well-being and, to a more limited extent, economic well-being of the rural women. Economically, the women are somewhat better off in terms of their income; and they produce a greater quantity and improved quality of goods. The increase in their income provides the women with more funds to spend on the feeding, education, and health care of their children, thus improving their well-being. Other social gains include the acquiring of knowledge and experience in cooperative management and group activities. Because of the more efficient production techniques, the women have more time for other activities. The nutritional training that they received has allowed the women to better plan the meals for the family and improve their understanding of the nutritional value of local foods.

The progress toward the goal of improving rural women's economic well-being through increasing their income has been limited by several factors. The shortages of raw materials interrupted production and diminished the income earning capacity of the groups. During 1984, the shortage of sufficient quantities of palm nut oil at reasonable prices caused some soap groups to be operational as little as 3 months of the year. The weaving groups experienced difficulties in obtaining thread imported from Burkina Faso. Another limit on income earning capacity was created by marketing problems. The soap makers reached a point in 1984 where their soap was having trouble competing with other locally produced soaps and those coming from Benin, resulting in a stockpile of unsold soap. The fact that the market for woven cloth depends on tourists and government employees outside of Kara often resulted in a long waiting period between the time of production and the sale of goods, limiting both the available capital for production and the groups' revenues. Progress toward achieving the project's goal has also been impeded by the slow development of the groups as viable pre-cooperative societies. Even though the officers of the groups have been trained, the groups are not yet effectively on their own to obtain supplies and pursue new markets.

V. PURPOSE

The project purpose is to 1) provide training in income generating skills and assistance in cooperative development for rural women; and 2) educate rural women and their families in improved nutrition practices.

The logical framework included in the approved sub-project paper for the project presents seven end-of-project status (EOPS) indicators for the achievement of the project purposes. The following information defines the EOPS and discusses the progress toward their achievement:

A. EOPS # 1

A fully operational training facility capable of providing training for 350 women per year.

Progress to date:

Construction of the training center was completed in August 1984, one month before the September 30, 1984 project assistance completion date. The center consists of:

a. Four round buildings: 2 used as workshops for soap-making and weaving, each with a stock of raw materials for training; the other 2 have been converted into dormitories equipped with 10 beds each.

b. One large multi-purpose building: contains 4 furnished offices designated for center personnel, 1 general storage room, and a large open-air hall to be used for meetings, social gatherings, and slide or film shows.

c. One classroom: used for training in cooperative management, nutrition demonstrations and literacy lessons in local languages.

d. One kitchen: used for food preparation for trainees and by the nutrition trainer to give cooking demonstrations.

e. 4 showers and 4 toilets.

The Ministry plans to use the center for training additional village women in weaving, soap-making, gardening, nutrition, and cooperative management. The center would also provide refresher courses in the above activities for those women who are members of the 21 established groups and for the trainers. Moreover, the Ministry plans to use the center to carry out experimental research to improve the quality of artisanal goods produced. The buildings will serve as a center for the collection and exchange of appropriate technologies and for nutritional research using local farm products. The production and sale of experimental products will help finance the maintenance of the center. Also, vegetables from the center's garden will meet some of the food requirements of the center and the nutrition demonstrations.

With the 7 instructors trained by the project (2 in soap-making, 2 in weaving, 2 in nutrition , and 1 in gardening) plus the proposed staff to run the center (a Director, Assistant Director, secretary, accountant, chauffeur, guard, gardener, and cooks), the center will have the capacity to provide training for 350 women or more per year. The GOT has budgeted 2 million francs CFA per quarter for the operation and management of the center at least for one year. It is expected that this will continue as a budget item to support the center and its activities .

Even though the training center exists and has some financing, it is not yet fully operational. Since the center's completion in August 1984, there has not yet been a full-time staff assigned at the center and training activities have been minimal. One training session in soap-making took place in December 1984 for 16 women under the North Togo Project, which is funded by the European Economic Development Fund. Another training session that was being held at the time of the evaluation was a weaving class for the Landa group which showed them how to use the pedal loom. The Ministry's immediate plans for the use of the center consist of refresher courses in cooperative management and nutrition for the current 21 groups, and training for the six existing weaving groups on the use of the pedal loom. The Ministry originally intended to train additional women from other villages within and outside the Kara region. No detailed plan has been drawn up as to how these women will be chosen nor when their training would start so that the center could be utilized at its full capacity.

B. EOPS # 2

Training courses in 4 occupational skills designed, tested and implemented.

Progress to date:

The project has developed occupational skills in 3 areas: soap-making, weaving, and gardening. The other two craft skills (cloth dying and basketry) that were contained in the original proposal were dropped due to lack of local interest and available raw materials. The gardening activity was added to replace the two dropped skills. Soap and weaving consultants were hired to research and develop appropriate technologies to upgrade the traditional skills of rural women to allow them to increase their income. The craft consultants incorporated their research findings into the design of course curricula for a training program. The craft advisors then trained 2 instructors in improved weaving technology and 2 in improved soap-making. The weaving instructors, in turn, trained 6 groups for a total of 74 women at their village sites. The soap instructors trained 139 women organized into 6 groups. Gardening training was provided at no cost to the project by a French volunteer and his Togolese counterpart who taught 219 women organized into 9 groups.

The training that the women received was effective in improving upon traditional skills. The soap consultant developed a recipe that increased the hardness of the soap, reduced the preparation time, and required no heat, thus eliminating the need for wood or other fuels. The consultant provided follow-up training and research to improve the odor, color, and cut of the soap. But further research still needs to be done to find a cost-effective way of improving its odor, a stain-proof method of coloring the soap, and an efficient means of cutting it. The soap training lasts for approximately 2 weeks during which time the trainees learn technical information and gain practical experience in soap making. At the end of the 2 weeks, each trainee is evaluated on knowledge and capability in soap-making.

The weavers were trained to use an all metal loom that improves upon the traditional wooden loom in the following ways: 1) lasts longer; 2) is adjustable to variable band lengths; 3) permits the thread to be beaten down better for a tighter weave; 4) can be easily reassembled to take advantage of changing light and weather; and 5) can accomodate two women on one loom. Each weaving group also has one pedal loom which further extends the groups's capacity to produce different sizes and lengths of cloth quickly and with intricate designs, resulting in an increased variety of possible products. In order to increase marketability, efforts need to be made to improve the quality of the weave, improve the color combinations, and develop a greater variety of products. The training period for this activity lasts one month, with a proficiency examination given at the end.

The gardening training includes the use of appropriate technologies that improve productivity. The trainers visit each group once a week during the gardening season to demonstrate the new techniques or to discuss specific problems. Gardening training and evaluation is a continual process.

C. EOPS # 3

Women are members of legally constituted cooperatives thereby assured of access to credit.

Progress to date:

The cooperative development strategy designed by the Cooperative Service of the Ministry of Rural Development emphasizes the growth of small pre-cooperative work groups, rather than large scale cooperatives. With this goal in mind, the Cooperative Service provides formal training workshops and supervision by the field agents. The Cooperative Service did not become active in the Kara region until March 1984. From August 1983 to March 1984, the cooperative advisor for the North-Togo Project in collaboration with the Peace Corps volunteer cooperative advisor for the project provided formal training for the presidents, secretaries, and

treasurers of 17 of the 21 women's groups* plus 12 social agents and 3 project personnel. The training covered cooperative principles, group objectives, cooperative structure, management, and accounting principles. Since March 1984, the Cooperative Service sponsored 3 more training sessions: 2 on the evaluation of past activities to define future needs for cooperative training and 1 on adult learning theory. In addition to the formal training sessions held at the Social Affairs Service in Kara, the PCV cooperative advisor procided informal training and visited the individual groups at their village locations.

As a result of the cooperative training, the groups have functioning officers, agreed upon objectives and goals, an awareness of the need for regular meetings and democratic decision-making, a list of by-laws governing the organization, a cashbox ledger (containing receipts, expenses, and the balance), stock and production records, and a knowledge of the importance of good accounting practices. One third of the gropus have opened bank accounts. All the groups have adopted a system whereby 60% of the profit made from sales in shared among members of the group, 30% goes towards capital investment, and 10% towards a solidarity fund which helps members in time of need. For example, a member can borrow from the solidarity fund during personal crises and reimburse the funds within a specified period.

Although the groups have achieved a minimum level of cooperative management, there is need for improvement and additional training. Several factors impeded the effectiveness of the cooperative training: 1) the group's lack of a steady production level due to shortages of raw materials and marketing dificulties; 2) the lack of literate members in the groups; 3) the lack of an active regional cooperative service before March 1984; and, 4) the distribution of the groups over the vast Kara region.

In order to become a legally registered pre-cooperative group, the Cooperative Service has developed a list of criteria to which a group must conform, such as maintaning a cashbox ledger, the establishment of a written set of by-laws specific to the group, and the attainment of a level of profitability. The Service often requires that the group be functioning and viable for a period of two years before they become eligible for official registration. Given that formal cooperative training started in August 1983, it has not yet been possible to register the project's groups with the Coopertive Service. Once the groups have been accepted by the Service they will

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* The remaining 3 weaving groups and 1 gardening group were not yet functional at the time of the training sessions.

become eligible to apply for credit from the CNCA (National Agricultural Credit Association). The Ministry also intends to look into the possibility of receiving loans from FUCEC (National Federation of Cooperatives for Savings and Credit). The six month program for the Training Center developed by the Ministry indicated that there will be additional cooperative training for group officers in February, April, and June 1985. Cooperative training needs to be continually evaluated and reinforced by further training.

D. EOPS # 4

One woman trained in design, implementation and management of community development projects.

Progress to date:

The Ministry's project coordinator has been actively involved in the La Kara Skills Project for over 4 years, working closely with the NCNW project coordinator, the USAID project officer, the Director General of Women's Status, the Kara Regional Coordinator for Women's Status, and the Kara Regional Director of Social Affairs. As a result, the project coordinator has acquired a substantial amount of practical training and on-the-job experience. The coordinator also participated in a 5-week project management training program in Washington, D.C.

The GOT feels, however, that the coordinator needs further management training to enable her to manage and program activities more effectively.

E. EOPS # 5

Four instructors trained as trainers of occupational skills.

Progress to date:

The project has trained 7 instructors instead of 4 as originally planned. The number of instructors was increased to ensure that absences (e.g., maternity leave) would not interrupt project activities and to accelerate the training schedule. As a result, two instructors have been trained in soap-making, two in weaving, two in nutrition and one in gardening. The project has retained 4 trainers on a full time basis, one in each of the project's four areas of training.

As a part of NCNW's final report on its project activities published in February 1984, documentation was provided for the development of a specific training course curriculum, quality standards to be achieved, and a system of trainee evaluation. This input came too late for the trainers to use on the 21 groups, but can be employed to train new groups at the center.

F. EOPS # 6

One demonstration garden located at the training facility serving as a source of food for the trainers and staff and as a teaching aid for nutrition.

Progress to date:

There is a plot for a pilot garden at the training center but nothing has yet been planted. The Ministry explained that the gardening instructor had been busy training the individual groups in their villages which prevented him from being able to start and maintain a garden at the center during the past dry season. He is expected to start the demonstration garden in March 1985.

G. EOPS #7

One nutrition education course designed, tested and implemented.

Progress to date:

The nutrition education course was developed and tested by the Applied Nutrition and Diet Division of Togo's Center for Nutrition and Food Science in Cacavelli. The course curriculum concentrates on the use of locally available foods to prepare balanced meals for the family. It also instructs the women on causes and consequences of infant malnutrition, the preparation of baby weaning foods, and on supplementary diet needs for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Included in the course are the use of growth charts, nutrition posters, cooking demonstrations, a field trip to the market to classify local foods, and the weighing of babies to survey their growth.

Two nutritionists from Cacavelli conducted two training sessions for the nutrition trainers: one in May 1982 and the other in April 1983. The two nutrition instructors were then to provide follow-up nutrition training to the individual groups, following the guidelines of the course curriculum. Several groups have participated in at least one training session but have had little or no follow-up. The great distances between villages coupled with the failure to program the nutrition activities led to irregular group visits. The women who have received nutrition training report that they use the new methods and have seen an improvement on the physical well-being of their children.

VI. BENEFICIARIES

The primary beneficiaries of the project are the 7 technical instructors who were trained in soap-making, weaving, and nutrition and then were employed to train village women; the 432 women belonging to 21 groups who were trained in income-generating activities; and the 12 social agents and 3 project personnel who received cooperative and management training. The secondary beneficaries are the families of the women in the groups and the villages where the groups are located.

The 432 village women in the groups benefited from the goods produced by the groups and the income generated by such activities. For those making soap, the women distribute among themselves scrap soap in the form of balls which are by-products of each work session. If the balls do not satisfy all their consumption needs, the women can purchase the soap from the groups at cost. The obtaining of soap for free or at less than market price is an important benefit for rural women who have limited access to cash. Moreover, in using their own soap the women have access to a superior quality soap that lasts longer than the traditional type. In 1983, soap group members received an annual average of 4000 francs CFA per women as their share of the groups's profit. It is uncertain whether the women earned more or less income during 1984 since data was unavailable. Women in the gardening groups benefit from the consumption of vegetables during the dry season, the savings from not having to buy the vegetables, and the cash received from the sale of surplus produce. Usually the money is not distributed as a return but is saved to buy something in the future for the members. The weaving groups sometimes produce cloth for their own consumption but more often sell their output to earn a profit. The women in the weaving groups earned on average 5000 francs CFA per woman during 1983. Group members also have access to a solidarity fund which is made up of ten percent of the group's profit and which is used as a source of financial aid to be reimbursed later for members who are sick or are having major difficulties.

Among the many non-material benefits that group members have received as a result of the project are the technical skills that the women have improved. The soap producers have learned a method for making soap that takes one day instead of three, that needs no heat and therefore no scarce wood, that earns money instead of making a loss, and that produces a durable soap. The weavers are now capable of producing a cloth that is of a finer weave and that lasts longer due to the use of higher quality thread. They have also learned how to make designs in the cloth and how to weave on a pedal loom, which increases the variety and saleability of the products. The gardeners have acquired such new techniques as the use of seed beds and improved seed varieties, planting in lines, the fabrication of compost, and methods of moisture conservation.

As for the acquisition of organization and communication skills, group members have been exposed to the basics of good cooperative management, group decision making, bookkeeping, setting up work rules and schedules, and the roles and responsibilities of group officers. Due to the practical experience of working in groups, the women have improved their skills in working together for the benefit of all the members. They have a better understanding of the need for helping each other and for exchanging ideas. They have developed self-initiative in order to solve their own problems and eventually improve their standard of living.

As one of several secondary benefits of the project, the increase in women's income often increases the standard of living of other members in the family because the money is spent on food, education, clothing, and medical care for their children. The project activities have resulted in a demonstration effect which encouraged others to start similar or entirely new activities and thus aid village development. The increase in the availability of goods that the groups produce has caused their competitors to maintain low prices which contributes to price stability in the region. In addition, the project's groups have received official recognition by the Togolese Government and international organizations (e.g., Conseil d'Entente) for the quality of their activities and their contribution to the general development efforts for Togo.

VI. RETURN ON THE INVESTMENT

The total budget for the project was $671,000. More than 57% ($383,000) of the total was granted to NCNW to provide technical assistance. Approximately 9% ($59,000) of the total budget was financed by the GOT leaving 34% ($229,000) USAID funds provided directly to the GOT. To assess the economic benefits of the total amount of money invested in a project to help 432 village women earn income on improved traditional skills, one needs to investigate the actual returns that were gained on the investment.

Did the project enable rural women to earn more income from their trades than they did traditionally? What is the internal rate of return earned on the investment made? Of the $229,000 given to the GOT (which is approximately 101.447.000 francs CFA*) 14.414.000 francs CFA or 14% was directly invested in the groups in the form of equipment and raw materials to get them started.

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* Converted at August 1984 exchange rate of 443 francs/dollar, the period when most of the materials were bought.

Following is a table detailing the investments:

INVESTMENT FOR EQUIPMENT AND RAW MATERIALS (in Francs CFA)

	Total Investment By Activity	Average Investment Per Group	Average Investment Per Woman
Weaving (6 groups) (74 women)	7,762,000	1,294,000	105,000
Soap Making (6 groups) 139 women)	4,733,000	789,000	34,000
Gardening ** (10 groups) (219 women)	1,919,000	192,000	8,000
TOTAL	14,414,000		

** Investment for equipping the 10th group was provided. But since the 10th group is no longer operational, average investment per woman was calculated on total gardening investment for the remaining 9 groups divided by the total number of women in the 9 groups (219).

Using best-case data for each of the three activities, annual profit (defined as total receipts minus total expenses) earned by the following groups was:

BEST CASE PROFIT IN 1983 (Francs CFA)

	Total Annual Profit	Profit Distributed To Members	Profit Per Woman
Kemerida* Weaving	86,210	52,632	5,848
Bafilo Soap making	298,212	76,228	4,484
Farende Gardening	21,570	**	**

*) In 1983, there were only 9 members in the Kemerida group.

**) Farende chose to deposit their profits in the bank until they became substantial enough to distribute a return to the members.

Profits earned per woman by using improved techniques do show an increase over what was earned by using traditional production methods. Traditionally woven cloth is sold for about 3,500 francs CFA of which 3,000 francs goes to pay for thread, leaving a profit of 500 francs CFA. Cloth woven on improved looms is of a tighter weave and retails for 4,500 francs CFA. Since the higher quality cloth requires more thread and uses a stronger brand that comes from Burkina Faso, the cost of thread is about 3,500 francs, including transportation costs, to produce a cloth the same size as the one made on the traditional loom. This results in a gross margin of approximately 1,000 francs, but can reach up to 2,000 francs depending upon the customer and current thread prices. Not all of this amount is distributed as profit. Forty percent is kept in the bank for future capital investment and a solidarity fund. Women who weave traditionally in the village usually do not set aside any money for capital reinvestment. During 1983, each woman in the Kemerida weaving group received 5,848 francs. that was distributed to the members as profit. This figure is low considering the amount that can be earned per cloth, but it reflects the fact that the women weave only 6 months during the year. Although profit received by each woman is higher than that earned traditionally, the average investment per women provided by A.I.D. in the form of looms, thread, and other equipment was a very large amount: 105,000 francs. If the Kemerida weaving group were required to reimburse the total investment from its fund set aside for capital reinvestment (which is made up of 30 percent of annual profit), it would take the group over 40 years of they

continued at their present profit level. Assuming that Kemerida continued making the same level of profit year after year for 10 years, the internal rate of return on investment would be less than the interest earned at the local agricultural credit bank which is 8.5 percent*.

Women producing soap by the traditional method often break even or spend more than they bring in as revenue. Depending upon the seasonal price of palm nut oil, the cost of production to make 60 balls of local soap varies between 1,550 and 1,750 francs CFA.** Whereas, the revenue earned when the soap is sold at 25 francs/ball is only 1,500 francs CFA, resulting in a loss of 1 to 4 francs per ball of soap. If the women counted their labor as part of the production costs, the loss would be even higher since the traditional process takes 3 days. The women continue to produce at a loss because that amount is less than what they would have to spend on buying soap in the market. By using the improved soap production technique, the women actually earn a profit for their efforts. Each bar of soap earns between 11 and 26 francs over its costs

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* Internal rate of return calculation

10

+=0

where B = benfits
C = costs
+ = life of investment
r = internal rate

Assuming that profits are constant over the next 10 years at 86,210 francs and using an 8.5% interest rate, the internal rate of return over the 1,128,250 franc investment made for Kemerida is negative. This means that the investment earns less than 8.5%:

$$\frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^2} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^3} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^4} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^5} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^6}$$
$$+ \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^7} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^8} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^9} + \frac{86,210}{(1+8.5)^{10}} - 1,128,250$$

$$= -1,118,107$$

0

** Cost of Producing Traditional Soap:

	Quantity	Price/Unit	Total Cost
Cinders	1 large bowl	350	350 francs
Wood	1 bundle	200	200 francs
Palm nut oil	2 2/3 liters	375-450/1	1000-1200 francs
Total			1550-1750 francs

of production, depending upon the current market price. Since the capital investment required for this activity is less than that for weaving, a sample soap group earning as much as Bafilo did in 1983 (which was 298,212 francs) and which put aside 30 percent of its annual profits would be able to reimburse the total investment for supplies and equipment after almost 9 years. However, the internal rate of return on investment is still less than the 8.5 Percent given by the agricultural credit bank*.

For gardening, any income earned by using improved techniques is an increase over traditional practices. Gardening is not traditionally done during the dry season. By teaching the skills necessary for dry season gardening the project provided the women with a source of income during months that they would otherwise not be earning anything. But since the primary goal of the garden activity is subsistence production, profits made from the sale of surplus vegetables are low. Consequently, the group's capacity to reimburse the capital invested in them is minimal. For example, it would take the Farende gardening group at least 28 seasons to reimburse the capital investment if they continued at their current production level.

Generally, all 3 activities provide women with a means to earn more income from their trades than they did traditionally. But the low profits received per woman and the long periods required to recover the costs of the initial capital investment lead to a questionable conclusion as to whether the project was a cost-effective method of increasing rural women's income.

The groups will eventually have to replace their capital equipment once it is no longer operational. At their present production level, it is doubtful that the groups will be able to pay for the replacement cost before the equipment breaks down. The large initial capital investment required inhibits other village groups from starting the same activities. The GOT's capacity to duplicate such a project in another region is also doubtful. In fact, if the GOT had 105,000 francs to spend on one woman (which was the amount invested in each woman weaver), it would do better to deposit the money in a modest interest earning bank account at 8.5% so that the woman could earn 8,925 francs at the end of the year.

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* Internal rate of return calculation:

5

$$\frac{B - C}{(1+r)^{+}} = 0$$

+=0

$$\frac{298,212}{(1+8.5)^1} + \frac{298,212}{(1+8.5)^2} + \frac{298,212}{(1+8.5)^3} + \frac{298,212}{(1+8.5)^4} + \frac{298,212}{(1+8.5)^5}$$

$$- 790,215 = - 755,132 \qquad 0$$

VII. LONG-TERM VIABILITY

The long-term viability of the project activities depends upon: 1) the profitability of the existing 21 groups and their ability to sustain themselves; 2) the use of the training center and the GOT's ability to finance it; and 3) the GOT's capability to continue to assist the 21 groups as well as start up new groups.

Most of the 21 groups have been producing for over 2 years. But problems encountered in locating a regular source of reasonably priced, locally available raw materials for both the weaving and soap-making activities have caused serious ruptures in the supply of inputs and, consequently, very irregular production and questionable profitability. Soap production requires a large quantity of high quality palm nut oil which is currently obtained from the IOTO factory in Lome. But the drought of 1984 which closed down the factory and more than doubled palm nut oil prices nearly devastated the soap activities. The profit margins for those groups who managed to continue producing were cut to a bare minimum because competitive soap coming from Benin and Nigeria limited the groups' flexibility in raising prices to cover their costs. Although recent palm nut oil prices have dropped to a level which would allow the project's soap to be competitive again and earn a good profit, the groups still need to establish a reliable source of raw materials to ensure the future viability and profitability of the soap making activity. The same can be said for the weaving groups who, with the assistance of the GOT, obtain their thread from Burkina Faso. The imported thread is subjected to import taxes and high transportation costs. To date, the Ministry has been playing the major role in the location, transportation, and the purchase of raw materials for the groups. In order to become self-reliant and autonomous, each group must perform these functions for itself. The current assistance of the GOT represents a subsidy to the groups which uses up scarce GOT resources that could be used for other activities.

Marketing problems also limited the profit earning capacity of the soap and weaving groups. Often the groups sell the products on credit and wait 2 to 3 months to receive payment. Since most groups do not have a large enough revolving capital fund to be able to continue buying raw materials to produce during this period, production stops completely until the money is received. For the soap groups, the waiting period is caused by the large quantities sold wholesale to military camps and hospitals whose payment procedures take a long time. It would be preferable if a system of cash on delivery could be arranged for these sales. For the weaving groups, a similar delay between the time of production and payment is caused by the nature and location of the market for woven goods. Most of the buyers of woven cloth are either tourists or government employees who can afford to pay a relatively high price for cloth but who are not located in the villages. Many of the

government employees who live in Lome place large orders with the groups and only pay upon delivery. A system of partial advance payment should be arranged for large orders. Since the tourists and state officials rarely come to the weaving workshops, the groups usually send their finished products to the Ministry's Kara and Lome offices for sale. This creates a dependency upon the Ministry and puts the Ministry in the position of being a retailer. Instead, the groups need to develop a local, regional and national network of private retailers who could sell the products quickly. An effort also needs to be made to develop new markets through improving cloth quality and color combinations and increasing the variety of products. The weaving groups need to better focus their products towards consumer tastes to enhance sales.

The groups need to reach higher competency in accounting and cooperative management to become profitable and economically viable. The group leaders have received training in cooperative principles, as have the social agents who supervise the groups. What remains now is to communicate this information to the other group members so that they can better identify and understand their problems and actively participate in their resolution. The lack of literate members in the groups and the dispersement of the groups over such a large region pose big obstacles to achieving this goal. Literacy lessons need to be increased and adapted to teaching management and bookkeeping techniques in the local language. The groups also need to be associated with the national and regional cooperative service so that they can benefit from additional training and supervision. Cooperative training at the individual group level should become the responsibility of the social agents who should set up a training and supervisory schedule.

The existing 21 groups have not yet reached a state of long term viability. In order to become viable, they must overcome the current obstacles facing them in obtaining a regular supply of raw materials, developing the market potential of their goods, and receiving further training and supervision in cooperative accounting and management. Serious consideration should be given to resolving these obstacles before training any new women in the present activities.

A training center was built so that group members could receive additional technical and nutritional instruction and so that other village women could be trained in the project activities. The building exists, the trainers are available, and the GOT has budgeted 2 million francs CFA per quarter for the operation and management of the center at least for one year.

However, there has not yet been a full-time staff assigned to work at the center; and training activities have been minimal since its opening in August 1984. Because of the marketing and supply problems encountered by the current 21 groups and the fact that these groups need further training, immediate plans for the center concentrate on re-training the present groups instead of training new ones. At this point, there is no clear rationale for the GOT to begin identifying and training new groups. First, the production and marketing problems must be solved to prove that the activities are viable and income generating. Then a detailed, specific plan needs to be developed to define who will be trained, how they will be chosen, in what activities they will be trained, and when their training will begin. After that, a source of financing needs to be identified in order to supply the new groups with start-up capital. Finally, a system of supervision and continual cooperative management training needs to be organized to follow-up on the new groups. Although the GOT has committed its support and financial resources to the project as a model for similar activities in other regions, it is uncertain whether the GOT has the capacity to finance all the activities that the project has planned. For these reasons, the GOT should give serious thought to the long-term use of the center.

As for the GOT's capability to continue to assist the existing 21 groups, there are 12 social agents who supervise the individual groups and a project administration staff that oversees all project activities at the regional level. These people have been working with the groups for over 2 years supplying them with raw materials, marketing their products, and resolving their difficulties. Now their job is to transfer the skills that they have acquired to the group leaders to enable the groups to become autonomous and viable entities.

VIII. LESSONS LEARNED

A. The research studies should have been carried out as part of the project design prior to USAID approval of the project or any commitment of funds. No training should have been started until the results of a feasibility study showed that supplies were locally available for production and that a market existed for the sale of the goods. The socio-economic study to determine traditional craft activities should have included enough village participation to accurately assess the local interest in continuing the crafts, or in starting other income generating activities. The marketing study should have been analyzed before production started in order to identify existing and potential markets for the crafts, to assess local supply and demand for the products, and to estimate the impact of increased craft production on the profitability of the products.

B. As part of the project design, a closer look should have been taken at the role of women in the traditional structure in order to determine the best way to reach the target population. The fact that the groups are composed mostly of middle age women shows that the target population (female school-leavers 15 years of age or older) was not successfully integrated into the project.

C. The project's three year time frame was insufficient to allow the proposed activities to be carried out. At least 2 years should have been permitted to complete the start-up and planning phase activities which included recruitment of personnel, construction of the training center, identification of women's groups and sensitization, completion of the 4 research studies, identification of training activities, and development of training programs. Considering that the last 2 activities depended upon the successful completion of the research studies, 2 years for the planning phase would have been more realistic than the proposed 14 months. A period of 3 years would have been reasonable for the training of trainers, the actual training of village women, and the formation of pre-cooperative groups capable of producing and marketing their goods. The achievement of legally constituted pre-cooperatives that are independent and viable should have been scheduled for 2 years after the groups had reached a steady production level.

E. AID should provide additional advances of funds before the previous advance is completely spent. Since it often takes up to two months for an advance check to arrive from the time it is ordered, the new advance should be ordered when it is estimated that the remaining funds will last approximately two months. The work stoppages caused by the long waits between receiving advance funds delayed the completion of the training center and interrupted soap and weaving production due to lack of supplies.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made with the understanding that no additional A.I.D. funding for this project is anticipated. Given this, we recommend that:

1. Officers of the groups be provided refresher cooperative training to improve their appreciation of the role of the cooperatives and improve the effectiveness of the accounting system;

2. Social agents also be provided cooperative refresher training and should be assigned the task of training group members as well as supervising their accounts;

3. Group members be encouraged to take control over the range of activities involved in making their groups economically viable;

4. The accounting system be modified to include a monthly review of expenditures and receipts to determine whether there is a profit or a loss;

5. More literate women be involved in the groups in order to increase the groups' autonomy and effectiveness;

6. The Ministry and the groups try to identify new markets for the products produced and make sure that production decisions of the groups are responsive to local demand;

7. The Ministry and the women's groups develop reliable means of obtaining production materials, i.e. thread, oil, caustic soda, etc;

8. The project coordinator be provided additional training in project management and implementation;

9. The groups receive additional training in nutrition. To achieve this, the Ministry should evaluate the effectiveness of past nutrition training and develop a schedule for training and follow-up nutrition visits to be carried out by the nutrition trainers;

10. The Training Center at Landa become a total community and regional facility for the purposes of: 1) Providing follow-up training to the groups in craft skills and cooperative instruction; 2) evaluating group activities; 3) continuing literacy training; and, 4) conducting appropriate research on artisanal techniques used;

11. Provide additional training to weaving and soap making instructors to introduce them to new techniques.

APPENDIX A

GOT Requests

The GOT feels that the project needs the following additional inputs in order to achieve the goals of the project activities.

1. Financial assistance to carry out follow-up training for group leaders in accounting and management.

2. An increase in the revolving funds for the various groups.

3. Financial support to undertake other project-related activities such as production of raw materials, i.e. palm oil for soap making.

4. Identification of external markets in the U.S. for woven articles.

5. Study tours for weaving instructors.

6. Financial assistance to train weavers to sew.

7. Expansion of infrastructure at the Landa center (electrification, construction of 2 dormitories, each capable of housing 20 people, construction of housing units for personnel at the center).

8. Financial assistance to complete workshops for the groups.

9. Acquisition of a shop where products can be sold.

APPENDIX B

Evaluation Program and People Contacted

Program:

	Tuesday, February 26, 1985:
4:00 p.m.	Visit to the training center at Landa
	Wednesday, February 27,1984:
7:30 a.m.	Visit the weaving group at Gande
10:00 a.m.	Visit the soap group at Bafilo
11:30 a.m.	Visit to North-Togo Project at Abuda
2:30 p.m.	Courtesy visit to the Prefet of the Kozah
3:00 p.m.	Visit the gardening group at Pya
5:00 p.m.	Visit the Regional Director of Planning
	Thursday, February 28, 1985:
6:00 a.m.	Visit the gardening group at Guerin Kouka
11:00 a.m.	Visit the soap group at Baga Tenega
4:00 a.m.	Visit the weaving group at Kemerida
	Friday, March 1, 1985:
7:00 a.m.	Visit to the Subdivision Chief of Public Works - Kara
8:00 a.m.	Visit the Cooperative Service at the Regional Rural Development Office
9:00 a.m.	Visit to Project Food Crop at Atchangbade-Sirka
10:00 a.m.	Synthesis meeting with representatives of Women's Status, Social Affairs, and USAID

People Contacted:

At the Project Direction Level:

Mme Ahlonkoba Aithnard, General Director for Women's Status
M. Adodosse Ametowoun, Section Chief of Professional Training for Women's Status
M. M'Bao Todjalla, Kara Regional Director of Social Affairs
Mme Mina Awade, Kara Regional Coordinator for Women's Status
Mme Baloukina Nimon, Project Coordinator
Mme Koulanka Katamina, Social Agent for Women's Status
Ms. Suzanne Marks, Project Advisor for Cooperative Training, PCV

During group visits:

Gande Weaving Group
M. Tchalla Kossou, Social Agent.
Mme Salamatou Lady, UNFT President of Assoli Prefecture
M. Egbataou Aledsi, Literacy Supervisor

Bafilo Soap Group
M. Komlan Aziati, Social Agent
Mme Azietou Esso, Social Agent

Pya Gardening Group
M. Tchadarou Pounpouni, Sector Chief of Social Affairs for Kozah Prefecture
Mme Sededsi, Social Agent

Guerin-Kouka Gardening Group
M. Koukou Adjamani, Social Agent

Baga-Tenega Soap Group
Mme Ragouena, UNFT President of Doufelgou Prefecture
M. Arfa Makote, Canton Chief

Kemerida Weaving Group
M. Koumitcha Bimoya, Social Agent

At Services related to the Project:

Project Food Crop at Atchangbade-Sirka
M. Tabe Dejean, Chief of the Training Division

Cooperative Service at Regional Rural Development
M. Bouraima Olagboye, Representative for the Regional Cooperative Service
M. Yves Couvreur, ILO Expert for the Regional Cooperative Service
Mme Esso Awesso, Cooperative Agent

North-Togo Project at Abuda
M. Tchabore, Director of Operations
M. Moumouni, Responsible for Cooperative Training