Assessment of the Effectiveness of Literacy and Numeracy Programs in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste Small Grants Program

Contract No. DOT-I-00-03-00004-00 Task Order #801

November 2007

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Katy Anis under contract to Development Alternatives, Inc.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Literacy and Numeracy Programs in Timor-Leste

Prepared by:
Katy Anis

Submitted by:
Kate Heuisler
Chief of Party, USAID Timor-Leste Small Grants Program
Email address: kate_heuisler@dai.com

Development Alternatives, Inc.
7600 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 200
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
Fax: 301 771-7777

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms ... 3
Locally-Used Terms ... 3
Executive Summary ... 4
Introduction ... 6
Educational Context ... 6
Language Context ... 7
Numeracy Context ... 8
Small Grants Program Background ... 8
Methodology ... 9
Tools ... 9
Criteria ... 9
Learning and Refining the Tools ... 12
Language Issues in Interviewing ... 13
Classroom Observation ... 13
Learner Examinations ... 14
Numeracy Interactions ... 15
Findings ... 17
Local-Level Impact of Literacy and Numeracy Courses ... 17
Changes in the Ability to Read ... 17
Changes in the Ability to Write ... 17
Changes in the Ability to Communicate Orally in Tetum Prasa ... 17
Changes in the Ability to Apply Numeracy Skills ... 18
Change in the Ability to Apply Skills to Business and Economic Activity ... 18
Mushroom Benefits of Participation in the Course ... 19
Lack of Change ... 20
Findings and Recommendations on the Teaching And Learning Process ... 21
The Learning Process ... 24
The Teaching Process ... 31
The Management Process ... 35

ACRONYMS

DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
FBM	Fundacao Buka Matenek
FPWO	Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse
FCF	Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru
FXG	Fundacao Xanana Gusmao
FC	Fundacao Cristal
GFFTL	Grupu Feto Foinsa'e Timor Lorosa'e
MOEC	Ministerio da Educacao e Cultura
MFM	Moris Foun Maliana
TA	Timor Aid
SGP	Small Grants Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

LOCALLY-USED TERMS

aldeia	sub-village
chefe	chief
sede do suco	community center
tais	local woven material
Tetum Dili	a word used by speakers of other varieties of Tetum, used to refer to Tetum Prasa, or the Tetum of Dili.
Tetum Prasa	a version of Tetum spoken in and around the vicinity of the capital, Dili. Prasa is taken from "Praça," a Portuguese term for plaza, and referring to the former term for the capital, Dili, during Portuguese times.

The terms grantee, NGO, organization are used inter-changeably to denote the eight organizations that implemented literacy and numeracy activities through the USAID Small Grants Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment sought to evaluate the impact of literacy and numeracy courses implemented through the USAID Small Grants Program between 2005 and 2007 in Timor-Leste. The courses targeted economically active, non-literate Timorese, residing in seven districts of the island.

The evaluation produced findings on the local-level impact of literacy and numeracy courses, findings and recommendations on the teaching and learning process, and an assessment of and recommendations on the provision of nonformal education by eight Timorese organizations. The evaluation team used the following methodologies to bring to light these findings: interviews and focus groups with nonformal education providers, facilitators, and learners; classroom observation; reading, writing and numeracy examinations; and realistic numeracy interactions.

In terms of local-level impact of literacy and numeracy courses on learners' lives, the assessment found the following types of changes had occurred in learners' lives:

- Changes in the Ability to Read
- Changes in the Ability to Write
- Changes in the Ability to Communicate Orally in Tetum Prasa
- Changes in the Ability to Apply Numeracy Skills
- Change in the Ability to Apply Skills to Business and Economic Activity
- Mushroom Benefits of Participation in the Course
- Lack of Change

By the end of six months, many learners were able to count up to the 100s, complete basic addition and read short sentences. The assessment brought to light an unintended outcome: that many learners felt the ability to communicate orally in the Tetum used in Dili was one of the most significant impacts of the course on their lives. A summary of the key findings and recommendations
follow:

Finding:	***Recommendation:***
The significance of learning in a second language has been overlooked.	Second language needs to be addressed as a subject in and of itself.
Lack of clarity exists regarding what language learners comprehend as a medium of instruction.	Facilitators need training on how to mediate the issue of language of instruction in the classroom.
A plethora of unutilized opportunities exist in terms of linking the literacy and numeracy more tightly to business and economic development activities.	Better results and greater capacity building could be achieved through greater synergy between USAID SGP programs.
Learners are not gaining full competency skills in literacy and numeracy after six months.	It is recommended that the literacy/numeracy grants be allotted, coupled in two six-month sequences.
The training of facilitators does not adequately prepare teachers with the pedagogical preparation they need to teach.	Improving the effectiveness of facilitator training and support will result in higher quality learning.

The evaluation surveyed the literacy and numeracy programs of the following implementing Timorese NGOs, providing assessments of strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations:

- Fundacao Buka Matenek
- Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse
- Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru

- Fundacao Xanana Gusmao
- Fundacao Cristal
- Grupu Feto Foinsa'e Timor Lorosa'e
- Moris Foun Maliana
- Timor Aid

The combined findings and recommendations of the evaluation are to be used to help the Small Grants Program determine an action plan on how to focus its efforts in literacy and numeracy for the remaining months of the project, as well as to benefit the progress of nonformal education within Timor-Leste.

It is envisioned that the following pilot programs could be scaled up by the government or by other nonformal education implementers in Timor-Leste. The information provided in this evaluation is intended to serve as lessons learned for those who will scale-up the pilots in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Timor-Leste forms the eastern tip of the Timor Island located in the Pacific Ocean between Indonesia and Australia. East Timor was colonized from 1515 until 1975 by the Portuguese. Nine days after liberation, Indonesia invaded East Timor and made the island part of the nation of Indonesian until 1999. In 2002, the island became independent for the first time in almost 500 years, earning the appellation of 'the newest country in the world.'

Educational Context

Timor-Leste is home to 256,000 non-literate citizens, out of a total population of almost a million, as identified through 2004 census. Fifty-five percent of all adult females and forty-six percent of all adult males cannot read or write (World Bank, 2005). A World Bank report in 2001 found that fifty-seven percent of all Timorese adults had attended little or no schooling, and that twenty-three percent had attended some limited schooling (World Bank, 2004). The job opportunities and economic advancement opportunities for this population are often limited to petty trading, small-scale agriculture, forestry and production of local goods.

The World Bank points to current conditions producing students who are "low achievers and even functional illiterates" (World Bank, 2004). Seven out of ten cited education as the top national priority, prior to Timor-Leste gaining independence. Yet, the World Bank estimates that fifty-three percent of those who enter grade 1 will drop out before reaching grade 6, with dropouts completing an average of only 4 years of schooling. Out-of-school children and youth are concentrated in certain areas. Fifty percent of Timorese out-of-school children are living in the central rural inlands of the country, while twenty percent live in rural areas in the eastern part of the country (World Bank, 2004).

This means that while the nation is trying to catch up on several generations of non-literate people generated through previous regimes, a new generation of individuals without the

essential literacy needed to become fully productive workers in the formal economy is also emerging. Great attention is needed to increase the literacy and numeracy skills of the existing non-literate population, as well as to coordinate efforts with the wider education community.

Language Context

During the 450 years of Portuguese rule, Portuguese was used as the language of the state and the language of instruction during the period of the Portuguese rule. During the following Indonesian period, Indonesian was the official language in use. Following independence, Portuguese was chosen as the official language. Currently, the Ministry of Education and Culture has adopted Portuguese and Tetum as national languages, with Bahasa Indonesia and English allowable for use as 'working languages" (Plano Curricular No. 5.2.2: As línguas no processo de ensino--linguas de instrução).

Language is a huge issue affecting all levels of instruction, as well as communication between stakeholders. There seem to be two roots making this such a major issue. Because of ancient accessibility issues, in which hilly terrain and transport limitations limited ability to travel, a wealth of local languages and local dialects developed. Within one hour's drive along the coast, people speak mutually unintelligible languages. The second complication is due to the recent rapid succession of regime changes. Four hundred and fifty years of Portuguese rule was followed by almost thirty years of Indonesian rule. Independence established Portuguese and Tetum Prasa as national languages. The role of each of these languages has been influenced by the influx of a large international community bringing English into the language arena.

However, the majority of the island's inhabitants speak neither Tetum nor Portuguese, but any one of numerous local languages. A variety of local languages, (33, 20, 19 or 16, according to different sources) are spoken around the country as mother tongues (Hull, 2004; Grimes, 2001; World Bank, 2004). Most of these have not been well developed. Few have common-knowledge, written orthographies, and many terms to convey a range of complex ideas have not yet been fleshed out.

Tetum Prasa is understood at varying levels by the country's majority rural inhabitants. Various varieties of Tetum include: Tetum Terik, Tetum Ibadat, Tetun Belu and Tetun Nana'ek dialect (Hull, 2004; Grimes, 2001). Some estimate that Tetum Prasa is a lingua franca spoken by 70% of the population. Estimates differ on how many speak Tetum as a mother tongue, ranging between 16-50% (Grimes, 2001, World Bank, 2005). Some are fluent, some understand but most have difficulty responding, and some do not understand. The local language speakers interviewed in this study were sometimes monolingual, and in other instances, had a small body of knowledge in Portuguese or Bahasa Indonesia or Tetum Prasa. Efforts to develop and disseminate reading material in Tetum Prasa have striven to promote this language as a medium of national communication and produce more written material in this medium.

This diversity of language has led to a stratification of opportunities that correlates with languages spoken. This high prevalence of local language speakers, combined with the fact that the vast majority of learners had no previous formal or nonformal education, may reflect language stratification, in which those who speak local languages, usually tend to be the most illiterate, living in areas with the poorest infrastructure (like schooling and telecommunications) available. So, when speaking of literacy, the question is not just about learning to read and write, but in what language.

Numeracy Context

Most Timorese are economically active individuals and conduct business transactions on a regular basis, with enough efficiency to 'get by' and accomplish their everyday activities. However, few adults have had any formal training in numeracy and often find themselves cheated or unable to get ahead. The low level of mathematics achievement reflected in the adult population is mirrored in the child population in which 3rd graders could answer only 28% of math questions correctly (World Bank, 2004). A number of programs across the country have tried to teach economic literacy, but few have targeted and customized their materials to reach a newly literate audience. Therefore a great need exists to increase the numeracy and economic literacy skills of the population, so it can gain greater control of and influence over its economic activities.

Small Grants Program Background

The Timor-Leste USAID Small Grants Program (SGP) "supports communities, organizations, and government in their efforts to build a stable, economically robust, democratic country through USAID's strategic objectives: expanding economic growth, supporting good governance, and improving the health of Timor-Leste's people." The Small Grants Program provides grants through three categories of funding: 'Economic Growth,' offering grants in enterprise development and entrepreneurship development; 'Governing Justly and Democratically,' funding grants in civic education and public information, and the 'Investing in People' objective, issuing grants in literacy and numeracy and health.

A number of grants have been carried out via Investing in People through literacy and numeracy. However, this evaluation focuses specifically on grants issued to 8 NGOs to implement literacy and numeracy courses. Seven of the eight grants assessed linked to business development through the selection of economically active participants. Two of these grants (Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse and Fundacao Cristal) also engaged these same learners in business development through cooperatives or savings and credit groups.

Most grants lasted six months and targeted between 75 to 480 learners. The majority of the learners participating in these courses studied the Hakat Ba Oin literacy and numeracy materials developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The one grantee that ran prior to the release of this series used an assortment of general materials to teach literacy. Facilitators in most of the grants received 5 days of training, including training by the Ministry on how to use the manuals and supplementary training by USAID/DAI Small Grants Program staff. Classes are, for the most part, being held in informal settings: inside or outside of facilitators' homes, inside or outside of learners' homes, at the '*sede do suco'*-village administrative centers, primary schools, etc. Below follows an assessment of these programs.

METHODOLOGY

In advance of developing a methodology, the team met and discussed:

- What is it that we want to learn from this evaluation?
- What do we want to learn this information for?
- How will we use this learning?
- Who do we think can help us learn this?
- How will this information be disseminated to the users of the evaluation?

Following this preparation, the following methods were devised in order to obtain information: review of project documents, semi- structured interview with key informants, observation of learning activities, simple test of reading, writing and numeracy, and realistic numeracy interactions. Review of project documentation established and clarified information that has already been collected. Interviews and focus groups served to obtain further detailed information and allow for probing of qualitative data. On-site observation of learning activities provided an opportunity to independently qualify whether reported statements are verified or supported through direct observation. The reading, writing and numeracy test probed the visible evidence of what skills learners leave the course with. Numeracy interactions demonstrated to what extent women were able to use numeracy skills in their everyday numeracy interactions.

In sum, the evaluation team conducted interviews with 83 people (including nonformal education providers, facilitators, and learners); observed 4 classrooms, tested the reading, writing and numeracy skills of 53 current or former learners; and conducted 3 realistic numeracy interactions. Of the 53 learners interviewed, only 4 were male. Of the NGOs assessed, three were women-led. Nonformal education providers were usually interviewed in Dili or the district capital, whereas learners and facilitators were interviewed at or near the class sites.

Tools

The following tools were developed to guide the collection of data.

- Interview Template for Nonformal Education Provider
- Interview Template for Facilitator
- Interview Template for Learner
- Class Observation Tool
- Reading, Writing and Numeracy Test

For each NGO, the evaluators interviewed: coordinators and monitors of the nonformal education programs, facilitators, and a focus group of learners. Input from the Small Grants Program management level was sought for specific questions. A minimum of one manager at the nonformal education provider level and a minimum of one facilitator at the community level were interviewed. In terms of learners, focus groups of current learners or graduates were interviewed. The team also sought to track down drop-outs from the program to seek their input. However, these individuals were not easily located. Interviews were very detailed, usually taking 2.5-3.5 hours for program coordinators, and 1-1.5 hours for facilitators and learners. The class observation tool was employed only in sites where class was still ongoing. The reading, writing and numeracy test was administered to learners who had already completed the course, or who were in the final days of the course.

Criteria

Below follow criteria for evaluating effectiveness of nonformal education provision, quality teaching and learning processes, and impact of literacy and numeracy education on learners' lives. The criteria are described by indicators and methods of obtaining information.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NONFORMAL EDUCATION PROVISION

Criteria	***Indicator***	***Method of Obtaining Information***
Efficient and effective recruitment and deployment of facilitators	# facilitators hired	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Project documents, as available
	Average background level of education and experience of facilitators	- Interview with nonformal education provider -Interview with facilitator
	# facilitators commencing work	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Project documents, as available
	# facilitators that formally leave the job before completion of the course	- Interview with nonformal education provider
	# new facilitators recruited midstream	- Interview with nonformal education provider
Quality supervision and management of facilitators	Timeliness of facilitators' receipt of salary	-Interview with facilitator - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Facilitators' salary, as compared to others	-Interview with facilitator
	Frequency of monitoring or supervision visits	- Interview with nonformal education provider
	Feedback given during monitoring or supervision	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Follow-up or actions taken, in relation to monitoring and supervision	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Incentives or responses to reward desirable behavior	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Actions taken to rectify undesirable behavior	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Responsiveness to facilitators' concerns	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
Effective delivery of training to facilitators	Length of training	- Interview with nonformal education provider
	Frequency of training	- Interview with nonformal education provider
	Number of facilitators attended (and % of total)	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Project documents, as available
	Appropriateness of trainer's skills	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Appropriateness of content	- Interview with facilitators

	delivered to the facilitators' learning needs	- Interview with nonformal education provider
	Appropriateness of content delivered in terms of skills needed to teach	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Learner-centered training methodology utilized	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with program management
	Refresher training delivered	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Follow up on information learned during training	- Interview with facilitators - Interview with nonformal education provider
Mobilization and enrollment of target nonformal education participants	Mobilization of adequate numbers of target group	- Interview with program management - Interview with nonformal education provider
	Mobilization of appropriate profile of learner	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with facilitator
	Average percent of attendance	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with facilitator - Project documents, as available
	Percent of learners who dropped out (i.e. "withdrew")	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with facilitator - Project documents, as available
Quality Instruction Delivered	Adequate amount of teaching and learning materials	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with facilitator - Interview with learner
	Relevance and appropriateness of teaching and learning material	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with facilitator - Interview with learner - Observation
	Facilitator attendance rate	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Project documents, as available - Interview with learner
	Appropriateness and relevance to learners needs	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with facilitator - Observation
	Degree that facilitator makes class interesting and engaging	- Interview with learner - Interview with facilitator - Interview with nonformal

		education provider - Observation
	Degree of learner participation in class	- Interview with facilitator - Interview with learner - Observation
	Degree that class is linked to learner's daily lives	- Interview with learner - Interview with facilitator - Interview with nonformal education provider - Observation
	Degree that learning cycle is completed and learners demonstrate newly acquired learning	- Observation - Reading, writing and numeracy test
	% of learners that complete the course	- Interview with facilitator - Interview with nonformal education provider
Impact of Learning	Degree that learners are able to apply the knowledge into their daily life following the course	- Interview with learner - Interview with drop-out - Interview with facilitator
	Degree that learners are able to distinguish measurable changes in their life before and after the course	- Interview with learner - Interview with drop-out - Interview with facilitator
	Degree that learners have been able to apply what they learned to business or economic development	- Interview with learner - Interview with facilitator - Interview with nonformal education provider
Overall Impact and Ability to Scale Up	Degree that the project was able to meet its intended objectives	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with program management
	Degree that it was able to deal with the unexpected	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with program management
	Expression of interest in scaling up	- Interview with nonformal education provider
	Ability to analyze own strengths and weaknesses	- Interview with nonformal education provider - Interview with program management
	Ability to articulate elements needed for scaling up successfully	- Interview with nonformal education provider

Learning and Refining the Tools

After preliminary discussions with the team, a first draft of the tools was developed. These were then compared against tools and approaches from other projects and countries. Feedback was then sought from the team. The tools were then piloted with nonformal education coordinators, facilitators and learners. After each interview, the interview templates were refined to: better match the specificities of the local context; to address

"leads" or key points that began to emerge in the data; and to maximize the flow and effectiveness of the interview.

Logistically, it was possible to schedule the data collection visits in two intense rounds, with a two day respite in between. This allowed for tabulation and preliminary analysis of data between the visits. The following round of data collection was able to be refined in order to probe certain issues and answer unanswered questions.

Language Issues in Interviewing

The majority of interviews were conducted in Portuguese or English, with translation to Tetum, then to local language and back up the chain again. Bahasa Indonesia, English, and 8 different local languages were used when interviewees were not comfortable responding in either Tetum Prasa or Portuguese. This three step (and sometimes five-step) translation greatly lengthened the data collection process, but led to a much richer data set. Using Portuguese as the language for introducing questions sometimes sped up the process because a) directors and an occasional facilitator or learner had communicative proficiency in Portuguese and more commonly, b) many of the key issues discussed are represented by Tetum Prasa words in Portuguese, so hearers would get the gist in the first iteration, and fill in the gaps in the second iteration. The same process applied to Tetum Prasa/local language translation, where the learner might capture a vague sense of the topic in Tetum Prasa, then fully comprehend when spoken to in local language.

In many local class sites, it was found that program administrators or others would assume that it would be possible to skip the layer of local language translation. Facilitators tended to be more familiar with the local context, and make fewer assumptions that learners would be able to orally communicate in Tetum Prasa. When learners were interviewed in Tetum Prasa, they were much less forthcoming, would deliver answers unrelated to the question and this would effect quality of the data. One site said they felt just as comfortable being interview in Tetum Prasa as in their local language. However, when it came to the interview where conceptual questions were asked, and learners were required to go beyond just one word identification of items, interviewees needed translation and responded in the local language. When they were asked in Tetum Prasa directly they responded with answers that demonstrated they 'did not get' the question. Even in one site where Tetum Terik was used, learners had difficulty understanding questions if they were not translated from 'Tetum Dili' into Tetum Terik. In sum, it was clear in every single interview that language is a major issue affecting communication and the ability of diverse peoples to interact.

Individuals translating at all levels, tended to want to elaborate and weave in their own understanding, rather than just translating directly for learners. This was particularly true of facilitators, who were usually the only available proficient bilingual who could translate from the local language, but who tended to elaborate on their students' answers. Evaluation participants were continually reminded to translate directly and that their own comments would be explored fully in separate interviews.

Classroom Observation

The classroom observation tool turned out to be only slightly useful, because only one NGO (Moris Foun Maliana) had active ongoing classes in session. The other NGO with active classes (Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse) was visited on the last day of instruction. Therefore, new materials were not being introduced and learners were simply demonstrating knowledge they had previously gained over the last six months. Thus, it was hard to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning occurring in the class on a daily basis, through observation only.

In addition, a data analysis form was prepared to capture a summary of the data listed in the criteria section related to quality of instruction for each grantee. However, this was found to be less useful, because since actual classes from only 2 NGOs were visited, and 1 in which

teaching was not actively occurring, little could be generalized about the organization from the classroom observation. Therefore, the preparation of comparable sets of comparable data indicators across grantees was not pursued.

Classroom observation did reveal that learners could display only rudimentary development of literacy and numeracy skills. Many groups had not completed Book 4 before the termination of the course. Many learners were able to write the names of objects, and sentences like, "My name is…" However, only some of learners were able to write complete sentences on other topics.

Learner Examinations

Through the implementation of the reading, writing and numeracy test, it was found that in the majority of classes, a handful of readers could successfully read a sentence aloud and complete the written exercises. A great majority had difficulty reading aloud without assistance. All learners could write their name, even learners who had only been in class for two months. Many graduates could complete the written exercises, but only with assistance. Some demonstrated only the ability to successfully copy text that others had composed, meaning that they learned the ability to form and write letters, but did not possess either a) the ability to compose original text or b) the ability to comprehend written text and write in the Tetum Prasa language.

Many learners could not read the test in Tetum Prasa. When program organizers explained the lines (name, gender, NGO), learners could fill this in their own handwriting. If there was one strong student in the class, this person would often complete the test. Others would be helped by the stronger learner, or try to copy the stronger learner's text. Learners did demonstrate the ability to work together, and after 30-45 minutes, all tests were received.

In one class, some of the papers were received with identical handwriting and answers, meaning that the monitor or an advanced learner had filled out the tests. However, much more common was the receipt of tests with identical answers in different handwriting, meaning that learners were not able to independently fill out the test, but they were able to copy. Only a few could complete the test on their own, but many found it challenging with no instructions or help. They naturally helped each other.

Many learners did not distinguish between different usages of upper and lower case letters in their writing. It was visibly clear when learners had attended one year or more of primary school. This group's letters were more clearly shaped, they were able to write on the line, and with even spacing.

The test's numeracy question tested single digit addition, multiplication and the application of numeracy operations to daily life, all in one scenario. The multiplication element was included to test whether any learners would be able to reach this stage, though it was beyond where most learners had reached in the books. Some learners got the question correct, while others did not. However, the majority copied or "collaborated" with others, indicating that the calculation was too difficult for them to answer on their own. See the annexes for further information.

Women's Hopes for their Future

Many of the women answered the written question on the test about their hopes for the future by writing about other women or making general statements. However, below follow a few

of the noteworthy statements about women's hopes for their future after participating in the course.

"We want to work together and make a better life together."
Elsa de Jesus Soares, Former Learner in Bobo Meto Village, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse

"I want to learn to be able to become clever in order to speak and to count."
Anjelina Tus, Former Learner in Bobo Meto Village, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse

"My plan is to sell another kind of food, in order to increase my everyday income."
Helena Bobo, Former Learner in Bobo Meto Village, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse

"I want learn to sell products that I still don't know about."
Florenca da Silva, Former Learner in Dujung Village, Fundacao Cristal

"I want my children to go to school so they can be clever in the future."
Domingass Safe, Former Learner in Bobo Meto Village, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse

Numeracy Interactions

This strategy was not pre-planned as a methodological tool, but it was found that in several sites, graduates had operational economic activities sites nearby, where their numeracy skills could be tested. It was therefore incorporated into the formal strategy of the evaluation methodology.

Applied numeracy tests were conducted in three sites. In one site, the learners recorded every single transaction and made no mistakes in exact calculations. In another site, graduates demonstrated the ability to group, to calculate and to estimate. However, they made an error in which they would have lost 5 cents -- to the buyer's profit.

To describe an illustrative example, in one site, the evaluation team visited a kiosk run by a group of graduates from the program. One evaluator first chose to buy three wads of rubber bands for 5 cents each and gave them 50 cents. She then chose to buy 8 mints for 2.5 each. Course graduates were able to use addition to count the items. They counted mints, by grouping them in sets of 4 and counting 10 cents, 10 cents, 10 cents. There was a lot of involvement from multiple women graduates, as well as from two men who seemed to stand by, looking on and correcting errors. The women wanted to increase the number of mints in the purchase, so that it reached a rounded 50 cents. After some back and forth, the women delivered the goods, the exact value of which totaled 55 cents, while they asked only for 50 cents. It was not clear whether this grouping and estimation was based on hospitality and ease of purchasing or whether it was due to actual calculation error. The fuzzy line between these issues may be indicative of the way numeracy is actually functioning in their lives. Women sell to those with whom they have relationships so they are grouping and estimating all the time, to accommodate needs of the purchasers and a non-literate village context. Sometimes they may give a little more or a little less depending on the relationship. When one woman (not one of the participants in this particular interaction) was asked if she makes a profit since graduating from the course, she said "sometimes yes, sometimes no."

Many women interviewed through focus groups discussed their difficulty with multiple digit addition and in multiplying and division. In one site where women's daily business development activities were not near the interview site, a numeracy role play was conducted to probe this finding with a group of learners, albeit a particular advanced group. The women were given the task of calculating the cost of a purchase of many petty items. They completed the calculation quickly, although the final answer was about 10 cents off. They were then given the task of calculating the cost of a large value, multiple digit operation

involving the purchase of 7 *tais* scarves, 8 embroidered doilies, 1 hand sewn shirt, 1 fancy *tais* skirt and 5 standard *tais* skirts. They wanted to write down the subtotal of each set and first asked for a piece of paper. However, two of the women did not have their glasses with them, and the third woman did not write, so they gave the paper back to the former facilitator. They then verbally calculated totals and asked the facilitator to note down the subtotals for them. It took them about 5-10 minutes to figure out the whole calculation, but the women came out with the correct calculation. This example also demonstrates how women and others around do tend to help one another. With small calculations they can operate quickly, but with a small degree of inaccuracy. With larger purchases, the task is more challenging, but graduates were able to 'correctly' calculate a purchase.

The numeracy interactions also tested not only individual numeracy proficiency as in the written test, but group proficiency, i.e. the ability of a group of women to put the sum total of their knowledge and reasoning capacity together and come up with an answer which is as close to "correct" as possible and as necessary. This is the way numeracy often occurs in their daily lives, with a variety of people in the range of their kiosk or selling activity.

The written test was found to be useful tool to measure individual capacity and specific skills that the course sought to develop. However, the written test medium, in particular, the numeracy question, was foreign to women's use of newly acquired skills in an everyday context. For this reason, the numeracy interaction gave a much better indication of how women are using their numeracy skills in every day interactions. In sum, women seem to feel more comfortable with numeracy concepts after having participated in the course, but in day-to-day exchange, they tend to still rely on verbal calculations while using writing to supplement their skills.

The findings of each of the methodologies described has been integrated into the findings presented below.

FINDINGS

Below are presented the findings of the evaluation in three areas:

I. Local-level impact of literacy and numeracy courses
II. Findings and recommendations on teaching and learning
    - the learning process
    - the teaching process
    - the management process
III. Assessment and recommendations on organizations' provision of nonformal education

LOCAL-LEVEL IMPACT OF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM LITERACY AND NUMERACY COURSES

The assessment was able to identify the following changes in learners' lives after completing the literacy and numeracy course. Many of these were applied to economic activity, with spin-off changes also occurring. These changes have been grouped into categories for the ease of the reader. However, in actual practice, many changes overlap multiple categories.

Changes in the Ability to Read

- Learners are able to read short pieces of information in magazines, newspapers or letters from school about their children. However, they read slowly, word by word (TA, FC). *"We can read in the books, but not fluently like you. We can very simple sentences. It goes slowly, but we can read." -Florenca da Silva, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal*
- Learners are able to read receipts and invoices (FPWO).
- Parents, older brothers and sisters are able to read Lafaek magazine with children, when the children bring the magazine home (TA, FC, FXG).
- Learners can, to some degree, decipher letters. Young men reported being able to read letters from their girlfriends and family members (FXG).

Changes in the Ability to Write

- Learners formerly signed with their thumb. Now they are able to sign with a signature (TA, FCF).
- Learners used to have to travel all the way to the district capital when they needed to inform the NGO of information. Now when they need to send information, "instead of wasting time and money," they simply write down the information in a letter and send it (FPWO).
- Learners are able to weave writing into their traditional crafts. *"Before I did not put the letters, only after the class. Now I can put letters on the tais [scarf]–depending on what people want." - Cecilia Nenan, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*
- One group of learners said they make a list of materials needed and take it with them when they go to purchase items in the market (FC).

Changes in the Ability to Communicate Orally in Tetum Prasa

- Many learners cite the greatest benefit of the literacy/numeracy course in their lives as the ability to communicate orally in Tetum language (FPWO, FCF).
- Learners were better able to interact with visitors from Dili or other Tetum-speaking visitors (FPWO, FXG).
- Being able to communicate in Tetum Prasa language has impacted the economic activities of learners (FPWO). *"The most significant thing is that it changed our*

business activities. When they ask a question, we can understand and answer."- Rocina Tapu, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse

- The Ministry of Health often sends a mobile clinic from village to village. The people who work with this mobile clinic speak Tetum Prasa, and learners find themselves better able to communicate with them about their health after having participated in the course (FXG).
- When families have children who have married people from Dili, they are better able to communicate with relatives (FCF).
- Learners find it to be of value that they can extend themselves and their hospitality to Tetum speakers from Dili (FPWO, FCF). *"The new Tetum they learned helps them to extend themselves to other people when they meet them." -Albino Amaral, Timor Aid. "We can communicate with any people or welcome guests to our home in Tetum." -Domingo Safe, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse* This may have an impact on inter-ethnic relations.

Changes in the Ability to Apply Numeracy Skills

"Everything is related to numbers in our daily life."
.-Paulina Baros, Former Learner, Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru

- Learners used to be able only to recognize money by its color or other signs. Now they are able to read the value on the dollar bill (FC, FXG, MFM). *"Before we knew by just memorizing it. But we didn't know how to write. Now it's faster. We know which one is 20 and which one is 6." – Domingo Soares, Former Learner, Fundacao Xanana Gusmao*
- Learners can count up to the 100s and can recognize the value of dollar bills up to the 100s. However, they have difficulty recognizing numbers in the thousands. (FBM)
- Learners are better able to exchange currencies of money (FXG).
- Learners demonstrate proficient use of calculators (FBM).
- Women are able to read a clock and understand the exact time of day with more precision (FCF).

Change in the Ability to Apply Skills to Business and Economic Activity

- Learners make fewer mistakes when conducting small transactions (FXG, FPWO, MFM). *"Before the courses, I sometimes made a mistake. If someone gave me 10 dollars, I was supposed to give them 1 dollar back, but sometimes I gave more. Sometimes, even more than 10!" Mariano Dorego, Former Learner with Fundacao Xanana Gusmao*
- Learners are better able to prevent themselves from being cheated and "lied to" (FC-3 sites, FPWO). *"Before I knew the numbers orally and I could hear it. But now I can look at them in writing. If people lie to me about numbers, I don't tolerate it, because I can use numbers now." - Rocina Tapu, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse "We wanted to know how to read and write so people would not lie to us. In the past when we would sell, we said 'this is 1 dollar' but they gave us 75 cents. We wanted to sell corn and we said it was 75 cents, but they gave us 50 cents. In the past, kids took everything and they ate it and we couldn't tell. We did not manage our business well. After the course, we can manage our business better because we know what kind of things we are selling, and how much we earn." - Cristina Sarmento Soares, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal*
- Learners are better able to write down how much they earn and expend (TA, FC, FPWO). *"Now we are trying to calculate how much money we use to buy all of these things, how much we earn, and how much we get as income." - Cristina Sarmento Soares, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal*
- Learners are better able to manage and keep track of their cash (FPWO).
- Participants can write down if they loan something, noting what they took and when they should pay it back (FPWO). Learners also report being able to track money

owed to them when people bought goods on credit. *"Now our income has increased because business is under our control. We can write down what people borrow. They would borrow and pay the next time. But we didn't write it down and we would forget and people didn't pay. So if we were increasing or decreasing in our income, we didn't know."-Florenca da Silva, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal*

- Learners report being able to save more (FPWO, FXG). *"For instance, there is Mariano. Before he said he earned a lot of money. But he didn't use it well. He just spent his money. After the training, he has been able to save up his money. He was recently able to buy his own radio." Herman Danile, Facilitator with Fundacao Xanana Gusmao*
- Women are engaging in increased borrowing from micro-credit institutions (FCF).
- Because of increased vocabulary and communication skills, learners are better able to sell their goods to visitors from Dili, or other Tetum-speaking visitors. *"Now we can say 'selling tais, selling tais' in Tetum." -Cecilia Nenan, Former Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*
- Women exhibit the ability to make better business decisions following the course (FCF). *"We make profit, but we eat the profit. I sell banana chips. If there are leftover bananas, it's better to give them to the children to eat. But that's why we lose business. After the class, we decided to close this business and we started another business that the children cannot eat!"- Maria Elena Amaral, Former Learner, Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru*
- Following the course, learners have begun to form cooperatives (FC).
- Previously men handled bookkeeping for women's cooperatives. However, the balance of power has shifted so that women are now able to record, manage and maintain the financial activities of their own groups (FPWO).
- Women's cooperative groups have experienced decrease in accusations about false recording of finances and resulting arguments (FPWO).
- Completers of the course have been linked to the Ministry of Agriculture. They received seeds, grew vegetables, and formed a cooperative. They were better able to manage their money and achieve success in selling vegetables, after participation in the course (TA).
- Young men who were drivers found the course particularly relevant. "*Now I'm driving but I don't have a license yet. If you want to organize a driving license, you have to be able to read and write. If you can't read, you will make mistakes. There are also traffic signs you have to read. This course is helping to prepare myself to organize my license, because I need to read and write, or else I will fail the test." Antonio de Carvalho Soares, Former Learner with Fundacao Xanana Gusmao*

Mushroom Benefits of Participation in the Course

- After describing more specific changes, learners cited a general improvement in the quality of life and facilitators witnessed a change in mentality of learners (FC, FBM, FPWO) *Our life is better after the course. - Cristina Sarmento Soares, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal "The training helps us to better manage our business because it changes our mentality." - Rocina Tapu, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*
- Participating in the course has encouraged more intergenerational learning in the home. "*When have time, we take our books and learn together with our children." Maria Elo, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse "The big change from this training is our custom. We always sent our kids to school. But now our children also tell us, 'You have to prepare for the course.'" Maria Beto, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*
- Parents can better help children with homework and understand children's book reports and exams from school (FPWO, FC). However, learners said of children's homework, *"It's difficult!"* and specified they could only help children during their first year of their child's school.

- Women report better ability to access health information. *"Our life style is just the same as before, but at least we understand things that relate to our health." - Florenca da Silva, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal* Various facilitators also noticed improvement in the personal hygiene of learners and the cleanliness of their home environments after participating in the course (FC, MFM).
- Graduates are seen as 'literate women' and are selected for training and other opportunities for which literate women are sought (FPWO). In Oecusse, UNIFEM chose to involve program learners in their training.
- Being seen as 'literate' has changed learners prestige and status in the community. *"People recognize us. Our status has changed since we started this program and we are participating in women's groups." - Rocina Tapu, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*
- Learners are better able to express their ideas in the community and in public meetings. *"Before when we had a meeting in the community, the women were shy. Now they are more comfortable to speak and bring up their ideas in the community meeting." - Monica Liliana Cardozo, Director, Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru*
- Learners exhibit change in demonstrating a sense of pride and more positive attitude about themselves. When learners visit the office of the implementing grantee, they are asked to fill in the guestbook. After attending the course, they proudly sign in to the guest book (FPWO). *"We feel proud because at an age like ours, we are able to read and write after Timor's independence. That is something to bring proud of." - Paulina Baros, Former Learner, Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru*
- Women who have graduated from the course are seen as conduits for communicating information to other illiterate women in the village. *"The chief of the village counts on them, that they can help others, that they can advise others on health, literacy or other topics." - Augustino Santos Goncalves, Program Manager, Fundacao Cristal together with Zaime da Costa, Suco Chief* However, when the women in question were asked, they felt they were able to teach the Tetum they had learned to other illiterate women in their cooperative groups, but they were not able to pass on skills of reading and writing because they were busy working, when interacting with other women from the cooperatives.
- Women experience a decrease in violence when they bring more income and economic activity into the home (it is not clear whether this is correlated solely with participation in women's cooperatives, or the interaction of cooperatives simultaneous with numeracy skills development) (FPWO).

Lack of Change

"They don't need a, b, c, to know a how to improve the quality of their life."
- Hipólito Aparício, Director, Fundacao Buka Matenek

- Many graduates were very enthusiastic, but not all learners attributed the same value to the course, in particular, elder learners. *"There is nothing changed in our lives. What can we read? We are always in our farm. We have to clean our farm. We just started to learn numbers. We need to get money to support ourselves. What is changed? There's nothing changed. Who will respect us? We are just illiterate people. There are many people who graduate from high school and university and they have not even gotten a job yet." - Odete Rosa, Elder woman who has been enrolled in class for two months, Moris Foun Maliana*
  "As fishermen, we don't need this training. We just get fish and we sell them… but we do still need to count and sell the fish. So that's why we need this training." Mariano Dorego, Former Learner with Fundacao Xanana Gusmao
- When asked what they had learned after six months, women entrepreneurs responded, *"We learned the alphabet a-z, 1-10, some numbers more than 10, and also how to look at pictures and write the name of the picture. We can write our name and we can count money, but there are many things we haven't learned yet." "We write the*

price of the things we are selling, not the names." - Florenca da Silva, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal

- During realistic numeracy interactions, it was noted that women continued to rely on their mental faculties to calculate. When a calculation became complex, they would ask an advanced learner or another bystander to note down figures for them, while women continued to compute the calculation mentally.
- When asked, only some learners were able to report an increase in income following the time they had engaged in the literacy and numeracy course. However, those that did report increase income cited this as being due to their ability and control their finances, and being better able to track money that owed them by buying goods on credit.
- Not all learners had reached desired competency in literacy and numeracy to be able to help their children. *"Teachers gave homework to our children and asked parents to help them. We want to learn more counting so that we can help our children." Maria Beto, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

The assessment identified a number of findings and recommendations, in the areas of the learning process, the teaching process and the nonformal education management process. These are summarized as follows:

The Learning Process

Finding:	*Recommendation:*
The significance of learning in a second language has been overlooked.	Second language needs to be addressed as a subject in and of itself.
Lack of clarity exists regarding what language learners comprehend as a medium of instruction.	Facilitators need training on how to mediate the issue of language of instruction in the classroom.
Lack of adequate terms for numeracy in local language means that 'math talk' is being communicated in a variety of languages that are understand at varying degrees for different participants.	The training of facilitators needs to pay specific attention to terms for numeracy.
Learners were confused at the point of transitioning from the naming of nouns to reading and writing phrases.	Facilitators need to pay more attention to teaching Tetum as a second language and to giving each learner more time to practice.
Learners did not master more than counting and single digit addition, in the area of numeracy.	More attention needs to be focused on developing and elaborating the numeracy skills of participants.
Participants are practicing interdependence in literacy and numeracy interactions at the village level.	Facilitators should encourage collaboration in the classroom, but ensure that each learner has the opportunity to master learning tasks on their own.
Learners are not gaining full competency skills in literacy and numeracy after six months.	It is recommended that the literacy/numeracy grants be allotted, coupled in two six-month sequences.

Older learners do not learn literacy and numeracy as quickly or as effectively.	Facilitator training should cover specific methods for reaching older adults.
Few males attended SGP literacy and numeracy courses.	It may be beneficial to assess the interest of young males in business-oriented literacy and numeracy programming.
Drop-out in the Small Grants Program is not as high as other programs in Timor-Leste or in other countries.	It would be valuable to share lessons learned between different nonformal education implementers in Timor-Leste.
A scarcity of reading material for neo-literates exists.	Grantees should encourage the production of learner-generated materials and also distribute a small set of learning materials to each class.
The use of stimulants among learners is common, and facilitators occasionally promote this as a method of enhancing concentration.	Facilitators can be trained to encourage other means of enhancing concentration during the class.

The Teaching Process

Almost all NGOs are recruiting facilitators from the village in which they teach.	This practice should be actively reinforced and encouraged in upcoming grants.
When facilitators visit the homes of participants this sets good patterns of attendance early on in the class.	This practice should be encouraged across literacy and numeracy programs.
Facilitators are using a variety of languages as media of instruction in the classroom.	Facilitators need specific training and instruction on how to use language in the classroom.
Most facilitators are able to communicate in Tetum language, though with varying degrees of fluency.	Grantees should select facilitators well and then guide them on language use in the classroom, in accordance with local needs.
The training of facilitators does not adequately prepare teachers with the pedagogical preparation they need to teach.	Improving the effectiveness of facilitator training and support will result in higher quality learning.
Facilitators did not always comprehend the medium of instruction used in the pre-service training.	Medium of instruction of the facilitator training needs to match the language that trainees comprehend.
The classes are only as good as the facilitator.	Facilitators need ongoing support to maintain and improve the quality of their teaching.
Flexible class timing has positive effects, yet class contact time and class effectiveness is reduced by learners' 'flexible' arrival time.	Facilitators need training in order to equip them to manage class time effectively.
Facilitator absenteeism or attrition was not found to be a significant issue affecting class operations and effectiveness.	NGOs should continue monitoring, supervising, and providing salaries on time as they have been doing.
Monitors are not always well-trained enough to give constructive feedback to the teachers.	Invest in further training of those who monitor the performance of the teachers. Develop a standard monitoring tool across literacy and numeracy programs.

Some monitors performed actual teaching of the class during monitoring visits.	Model teaching should be accompanied by feedback and discussion between supervisor and facilitator.

The Management Process

The organizations' logistical arrangements to support the teaching and learning process were found to be satisfactory.	Strong systems should be maintained, but logistics responsibilities should gradually be turned over to implementing grantees.
Attendance levels varied in classes, but many facilitators noted an average absence of 2-4 persons in each class.	Increase class size to compensate for expected absence and maximize efficiency of investment.
Various NGOs mention transport as an impediment to being able to monitor classes adequately, provide support and conduct monthly facilitator reviews.	Budgets should reflect appropriate costs for regular and consistent monitoring.
Grantees faced many common challenges in implementation of nonformal education courses.	Provide common nonformal education capacity building inputs to all grantees.
Translation of project documents, according to donor requirements, has cost and time implications.	Providing capacity-building in report-writing, concurrent to grant implementation has the potential to enhance program efficiency and build longer lasting capacity.
Capacity of organizations varies in terms of comprehension of literacy, numeracy, pedagogy and how to run an education program, as well in the details and mechanics of project conceptualization and implementation.	Intimately involve grantees in the crafting of their project design document. Giving more training to NGO grantees on how to manage a project, and how to manage nonformal education projects specifically, can have impact the quality of the project outcomes.
Many indicated a great need to scale up programming.	SGP should scale up literacy/numeracy grant activities, reaching a much larger cohort of participants in the next rounds of grants.
Linkage between literacy/numeracy and economic development varies, depending on the talents of the facilitator.	Adapting entrepreneurship and economic literacy materials for neo-literates will help facilitators make linkages between literacy, numeracy and economic development.
A plethora of unutilized opportunities exist in terms of linking the literacy and numeracy more tightly to business and economic development activities.	Better results and greater capacity building could be achieved through greater synergy between USAID SGP programs.
The terminology used in SGP for nonformal education differs from terminology used in the field.	Some adjustment of terminology is recommended.

The Learning Process

Finding: *The significance of learning in a second language has been overlooked.*

17 local languages are spoken by learners in the sites where USAID SGP delivered literacy and numeracy courses. These languages include: Fala, Tucu, Makasai, Nawete, Wamaa, Mindiki, Makalero, Sa'ana, Fataluku, Tokodede, Baikenu, Mambai, Nana'ek, Bunak, Kemak, Tetum Terik and Galole. In one area, 7 languages were being used in the vicinity of three districts. Most of these were mutually unintelligible, which would place them in the category of being distinct languages, whereas a dialect is usually defined as communication that is mutually intelligible by speakers of the same language.

Of 53 learners interviewed, from 5 different organizations, none spoke Tetum Prasa as a native language. One site did speak Tetum Terik, but referred to the manuals as being written in 'Tetum Dili' and had difficulty understanding and communicating in 'Tetum Dili.' When Tetum Prasa was used as a medium of interviewing, learners were not very involved, responsive or able to articulate answers to questions. Yet, when interviewing switched into local language translation learners immediately became more involved, more verbose and more able to answer questions completely and coherently.

Learners are studying in Tetum Prasa as a second language, while the book treats the teaching of literacy in Tetum as if it were a first language. In some classes, learners described the most significant impact of the literacy and numeracy course, as being better able to communicate orally in Tetum. Some even described the goal of "understanding people who speak Tetum" as one of their expectations prior to the course.

> *"We really want to learn our national language, but before this class there was no one to teach us. We are just learning from the book, because there are not other things we have to read in Tetum."- Hermenezila da Costa, Former Learner, Malo'o Village, Fundacao Cristal*

Recommendation: *Second language needs to be addressed as a subject in and of itself.*

Literacy in Timor-Leste needs to be taught without assuming that the learner already understands the meaning of what she is learning to write. Second language instruction need not be addressed through additional books, but can rather be addressed in the methods that facilitators are trained to teach, as well as in the presentation of materials. In addition, it would be useful to communicate and provide further information on the depth of this issue to the designers of the nonformal education curriculum at the Ministry of Education so that it can be addressed in future revisions to the manuals and through training for all nonformal education instructors.

Finding: *Lack of clarity exists regarding what language learners comprehend as a medium of instruction.*

However, the distinction of what language learners understood was not always consistent. For instance, in one class, some learners knew the names of letters in Portuguese, and other new letters in Indonesian-- except 'h' for which they used a Portuguese name. Some knew the names of numbers in Indonesian, but not number names higher than 1,2,3. Some learners had learned from their children, but they also mixed up letter names, number names and other terms. In sum, what language facilitators used in class was sometimes confusing, but assessing what language the participants understood for literacy and numeracy terms also seemed confused. Without further direct observation of more classes in session, it has not been assessed whether the language way facilitators spoke about alphabet and number terms clarified concepts for learners or left them with a patchwork of terms in a variety of different languages which they didn't fully comprehend.

Some education experts have spoken of Timor-Leste's children of today as the 'lost generation' as they are not learning any one language well. This scenario could apply to the adult generation of literacy learners receiving instruction in 3-4 languages. On the other hand, this mixed usage of language in the class may reflect the participants' everyday reality, in which they have to use different languages for different contexts and purposes.

Recommendation: *Facilitators need training on how to mediate the issue of language of instruction in the classroom.*

Facilitators need training to become conscious of how they are using language in the classroom and to make deliberate choices, based on sound pedagogical practice. Use of local language in class should not be discouraged. Yet, facilitators should be conscious of introducing new concepts in a second (or third) language in a manner that can be understood. Addressing this through facilitator training will allow facilitators to adapt their skills to their own contexts, as necessary, because the language situation is so diverse as the local level. (see teaching process section for further details on training facilitators in language of instruction issues)

Finding*: Lack of adequate terms for numeracy in local language means that 'math talk' is being communicated in a variety of languages that are understand at varying degrees for different participants.*

Learners commented on how they found mathematics difficult, because they did not have words for this in their own local language, nor in Tetum Prasa. It was found that facilitators in various project sites used Bahasa Indonesia to describe numeracy and calculations because they did not know adequate terms in Tetum Prasa or the local language to describe calculations.

In terms of ways of speaking about numeracy, adequate terms do not exist for mathematical operations in most of Timor-Leste's local languages. In Tetum Prasa as well, very few terms for math exist, and so individuals tend to turn to Bahasa Indonesia. To comprehend the depth of the language issue, interviewees would sometimes communicate in local language or Tetum when communicating meaning and forming sentences. When they wanted to speak of numbers and calculations, these terms did not exist, so they used Bahasa Indonesia. However, unbeknownst to the speakers, the Bahasa Indonesia terms used were derived from pure Arabic terms. For abstract concepts to be communicated, a multitude of layers of language are being used. The meaning is sometimes clear to the speaker who is drawing on various references and past experiences, however the audience of the speaker sometimes has completely different terms of references. So one audience may capture one third of the meaning being conveyed, another may capture a distinct and different third being conveyed, etc.

Recommendation*: The training of facilitators needs to pay specific attention to terms for numeracy.*

Facilitators needs to be made aware of how confusing it can be to hear new terms that are already hard to understand, in a third language. This is especially if certain members are already familiar with Bahasa Indonesia terms and catch on quite quickly, while others are left behind, comprehending only a patchwork of what is being said and not able to articulate what they don't understand. Training can help facilitators explore what terms do exist for numeracy in local language. The training can also help them understand how to assess what language their participants will best understand numeracy in, and how to introduce the concepts (be it in local language or Bahasa Indonesia) and then transition about how to talk about the ideas in Tetum Prasa.

Finding: *Learners were confused at the point of transitioning from the naming of nouns to reading and writing phrases.*

When asked if about the level of difficulty of the books, one group of women responded at once, *"Difficult!! In Book 4, there are many sentences and many words!" Group of Learners, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse.* Learners felt thrown off and confused when they encountered longer words and longer sentences. They found the transition Books 3 and 4 (in particular, Book 4) much more difficult than Books 1 and 2, because of the length of the sentences and digits of numbers. The issue of longer sentences may be affected by the fact that longer sentences require more comprehension of a second language than simple recognition of substantive nouns. Learners also demonstrated difficulty in comprehending the complete sentences encountered on the examination form.

Recommendation: *Facilitators need to pay more attention to teaching Tetum as a second language and to giving each learner more time to practice.*

When literacy manuals introduce sentences, learners need to be taught the accompanying sentence structure and underlying grammar that needs to be understood in order to comprehend meaning. Learners need more concentration on lessons that are introduced in the later parts of the course. Learners also need more written practice. At this stage in the development of the literacy classes, written practice consists of women going up to the board, one by one, and writing a word or short phrase, while the rest of the group of learners watches on. Facilitators can be trained to use time more effectively so increase the contact time between the hand and pen of each individual learner during the hours of the class.

Finding: *Learners did not master more than counting and single digit addition, in the area of numeracy.*

The courses focused much time on recognizing numbers and counting. Instruction in calculation tended to focus mostly on single digit addition. Many learners expressed their difficulty with math that extends beyond single digit calculations. They expressed feelings of being confused, thrown off or intimidated by numbers with multiple digits. Learners did indeed demonstrate competency in basic counting skills with small digits. However, when numbers became large, they were not always able to correctly complete the calculation.

Recommendation: *More attention needs to be focused on developing and elaborating the numeracy skills of participants.*

Facilitators need more training in the specifics of how to teach numeracy, per se. They need to learn how to make these calculations engaging, showing the usefulness in daily life. Some facilitators were dynamic, asking students to bring in chili peppers and coconuts to the class for numeracy purposes. Yet, others lacked this skill. This may require further numeracy or business-oriented material and training than what is currently delivered in the Ministry of Education's nonformal education manual and training course, for facilitators who do think tend to think of innovative ideas on their own.

Finding: *Participants are practicing interdependence in literacy and numeracy interactions at the village level.*

The involvement of many community members close to the kiosk during numeracy interactions, as well as the tendency for anyone with higher literacy skills, and the women themselves, to help one another with the written test activity, reflects the way literacy and numeracy are being practiced at a local level. They are not being carried out as independent activities. Rather they involve a host of people with different levels of knowledge, different levels of education and varying degrees of comprehension of a number of languages. Helping one another is a part of the context. Bystanders give input and a resolution is negotiated through consultation. Thus, both literacy and numeracy operations may not be as speedy or as technically correct, but the objective of the activity is achieved, according to the level of "correctness" necessitated by the context. However, this high level of interdependence means that many times learners are not actually able to complete literacy and numeracy tasks independently, when tested.

Recommendation: *Facilitators should encourage collaboration in the classroom, but ensure that each learner has the opportunity to master learning tasks on their own.*

It is not healthy or fruit-bearing to try and divorce the teaching of literacy and numeracy from the interactive way in which they are practiced. Despite having becoming literate, graduates will continue to rely on strong performers, and as they develop increased knowledge, others will in turn lean on them. Literacy and numeracy should be taught in the way they will be used in a rural context. This concept of respect for local processes should be woven into the facilitator training. However, facilitators should be trained to ensure "group-work" does not become "one-works, group-watches." Facilitators should be trained to encourage collaboration in the classroom while giving each learner the opportunity to practice learning tasks independently. This is particularly important in light of the fact that most learners were not fully competent in basic literacy by the end of the six month course.

Finding: *Learners are not gaining full competency skills in literacy and numeracy aftersix months.*

"I can write my name and the alphabet. I can write by looking at an example, then I can copy. But I can't write just by thinking about it." – Domingo Soares, Former Learner, Fundacao Xanana Gusmao

Class after class stated that six months was not enough to learn literacy and numeracy. Every single group of learners, facilitators or program managers questioned, except for one group of elderly female learners, felt that six months was not enough time to become "fluent" in reading, writing and numeracy. In some cases, this was affected by the crisis, but independent of the crisis, most learners had just begun to read and write at the end of this time and were not fully competent before the class finished. Some recommended 8 months, 9 months, 1 year or 3 years. The anomaly group cited that they wanted to learn more but six months was enough, because other illiterates would become jealous if they did not also receive the opportunity to learn.

"The time that is allocated to finalize 4 books is not enough. If we want to finish the book in time, we have to jump to the next section [before mastering the current section]. If we only focus on the materials, the time is not enough."

- Celestino dos Santos Elie, Facilitator, Fundacao Cristal

Recommendation: *It is recommended that additional literacy/numeracy grants be allotted, coupled in two six-month sequences.*

"You learn something in a short time and it's easy to forget. If we continue and learn a lot, we will become fluent in reading and writing. It's like a child learning to walk. We want to stand up and then learn to walk and then run. We don't want to stand up and sit down again." – Domingo Soares, Former Learner, Fundacao Xanana Gusmao

Based on learners' feedback, 8 months to one year seems to be the average amount of time that literacy learners identified as absolutely necessary to acquire basic literacy skills. International benchmarks in adult literacy suggest investing $50-$100 over three years (Global Campaign for Education, 2005).

The Ministry of Education and Culture plans to introduce basic literacy and numeracy in 6 months through the Hakat Ba Oin series, followed by a second section of 6 months to strengthen basic skills in which learners can choose from a selection of modules related to topical areas (e.g. economic development, health, human rights, mathematics, etc.). Multiple benefits arise from coordinating with the national literacy strategy. It is recommended that grants through USAID SGP follow-on project be granted for a period of one year, composed of two six month nonformal education sequences. In the first six month session, learners study Books 1-4. If they do not fully complete this series in the first six months, they can carry the last book over into the second six month sequence, after which they can choose modules most related to their topical interests. The Ministry's series contains one module on

economic development and it is advised the USAID SGP combines the study of this module with other business development materials (see suggestion below on adapting entrepreneurship and economic literacy materials).

Since the SGP program will need to have closed out all grant operations for this project by June 30, 2008, it is recommended that grantees who have already run a Hakat Ba Oin class, run a follow-up second series 6 month module with the same learners from January 1 - June 30, 2008. It is also recommended that these same grantees be scaled up to provide the first-six month series to a new cohort, a much larger numerical base of participants, from January 1 - June 30, 2008. Ensuring that a large numerical base of new learners receive training before SGP project close-out will maximize the capacity building that has occurred in terms of organizational systems and human resources to carry out nonformal education. When the project is disbanded, grantees will have to fire staff who will be impelled to find jobs in other places. Recruiting the same people at a later date would prove difficult and the human resources built would be drained. In addition, maximizing the numbers of participants who have completed the first round of nonformal education in early 2008, will make it very easy for the follow-on project to start with these learners introducing more specific, in-depth entrepreneurship and economic literacy materials at a much earlier period in the follow-on project than if these participants did not receive literacy/numeracy training before SGP close-out.

The Ministry of Education's Nonformal Education Department is currently revising the materials for its second six-month course, 'Iha Dalan.' The revised materials should be available in December 2007. It is suggested that the various grantees implement the follow-on using these course materials. An electronic copy could be available for photocopying or low quality printing by the time of grantee start-up. If the grantees were to begin operations from January to June 2008, the course could utilize the module on economic activity developed by the Ministry of Education, while a concurrent grant could adapt existing materials in other business development programs for the neo-literate level, and pilot these materials with this cohort.

Finding: *Older learners do not learn literacy and numeracy as quickly or as effectively.*

"When we start first to learn to write, sometime the notebooks get holes, because our hands are so rough and not smooth"- Odete Rosa, Elder woman who has been enrolled in class for two months, Moris Foun Maliana

Numerous facilitators and program organizers report that older learners do not progress as fast as other learners in the class and tend to need to repeat content again and again. There are also problems reported of elder attendees not being able to attend classes that are scheduled at night. Even women who were participating in a class and would cooperate when they were chosen to write on the blackboard, said they needed glasses when it came to reading a piece of paper. Some facilitators are dealing with elders' need by providing extra time and tutorial support outside of class. One facilitator helped his students get glasses from the nearest hospital. However, in some cases, the slow progress of adults has a demoralizing effect on facilitators and who talk among themselves saying that "teaching children is better."

Recommendation: *Facilitator training should cover specific methods for reaching older adults.*

Facilitator training or regular facilitator meetings can provide a time for facilitators to share techniques that they have found to be useful. One facilitator described how, for the older learners, he would physically hold their hands until they could understand how to grasp the pen to teach them control and the detailed dexterity needed to form letters when someone has been doing agricultural work all their lives. When speaking of time, he explained how six months is not long enough for the young learners alone, yet, *"for those who have just started*

writing, we have to help them by holding their hands one by one. We have to help each student to make their hands soft so they can start to write. Imagine if we hold each hand of each person one day. There are 15 participants and that becomes 15 days just to be able to write letters." - Celestino dos Santos Elie, Facilitator, Fundacao Cristal Elder learners should be expected to move with the flow of the group, so as not to slow the group or lose group cohesion, but they should be given special time for repetition and practice. Facilitators can chose to make different level-groups in one class. Alternatively, if they reach the end of the six month course and feel they want to repeat the course, this option should be made available.

Finding: *Few males attended SGP literacy and numeracy courses.*

Only 4 of 53 learners interviewed were male. It was found that the majority of classes were designed for women, with a male learner sprinkled here and there. The three male youth who were interviewed had the lowest performance of any graduated learner tested.

Recommendation: *It may be beneficial to assess interest of young males in business-oriented literacy and numeracy programming.*

It is excellent that classes focus on women because women comprise the majority of illiterate persons on the island. However, the proportion of women participating in SGP courses was far higher than the proportion of illiterate women as compared to men. It warrants investigation to assess illiteracy among male youth. This population is the most volatile, usually responsible for instigating security incidents. Data may be available on illiteracy among male youth and it may be useful to target some programming to youth who are old enough that they do not feel comfortable attending the primary school but who do seek some higher level of education. Income generation or business-oriented programming coupled with literacy and numeracy may be the most effective method of reaching this population. *"For us, we think this course is important. For them, learning is just a small advantage for them. The most important to them is working, feeding their family and getting something to eat." -Virginia Ana Belo, Director, Fundacao Xanana Gusmao* Alternatively, the primary school equivalency program may be the most viable mechanism for reaching this population.

Finding: *Drop-out in the Small Grants Program is not as high as other programs in Timor-Leste or in other countries.*

On the whole, high drop-out did not seem to be a major issue affecting the Small Grants Program courses. This is in contrast to problems experienced in many countries, as well as in contrast other programs, in which only 2-3 learners were attending or the program had completely stopped in almost every village visited. Of those who did drop out from the Small Grants Program courses, the majority did so because they had moved to Dili or another location for the purpose of business. In a few locations, some dropped out when they were late to class or absent 3-4 times. When this occurred, they fell behind, could not keep up with other members in the class and felt ashamed, so they stopped coming.

Recommendation: *It would be valuable to share lessons learned between different nonformal education implementers in Timor-Leste.*

Considering the crisis that occurred during the period of many classes, the experience of other programs operating in USAID SGP sites, and the international polemic of high drop-out from adult education programs, the SGP low-level of drop-out achieved is an accomplishment. When seeking to analyze the reasons for hugely different levels of drop-out between SGP and other existing literacy programs, facilitators, monitors, coordinators and village chiefs commented that a) others programs are conducted completely in Portuguese in an accent that is hard to understand, b) the teaching methods of mixing numbers and letters were confusing and c) facilitators were young and not able to teach older learners. In contrast, the SGP program is still conducted in a second language, but it may be easier to understand and facilitators also use local language for explanation. Facilitators are using the Hakat Ba Oin

method of introducing letters and numbers, and facilitators receive some standard training from the Ministry, with supplementary training from SGP staff in certain locations. Since any investment in literacy is valuable and crucial for the country, and it may be useful for Small Grant Program grantees to meet with other programs to a) share lessons learned, b) collaborate and c) maximize return on the investments to literacy in Timor-Leste.

Finding: *A scarcity of reading material for neo-literates exists.*

"On our farm, we just use our fingers to write in the soil. If we don't practice, we'll forget. Even when we are working, we are just like crazy people, walking around saying 'ba be bi bo.'"-Madalena da Cunha, Elder woman who has been enrolled in class for two months, Moris Foun Maliana

After learners obtain nascent literacy skills, there is little for them to read. The only significant reading material mentioned was Lafaek Magazine. Some parents and elder siblings read this with younger children. Women in cooperatives also had an immediately applicable way to use their reading and writing skills. However, for many who did not have supplementary materials available, the result was that they were able to read their own literacy primers, but not able to comprehend other types of reading materials. "*I can't read if they write in very small letters but I can read if it's written in my book."- Rocina Tapu, Learner, Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse*

Recommendation: *Grantees should encourage the production of learner-generated materials and also distribute of a small set of learning materials to each class.*

"We look at Books 1, 2, and 3 and we read, read and read them again, just to remember."- Florenca da Silva, Former Learner, Fundacao Cristal

In order to ensure that participants do not only learn to read the manuals, they should also be given lots of practice to write their own material and produce their own "learner-generated texts." Facilitators can be encouraged to hang these on the walls of the classroom. Along with the manuals, it would be helpful if each class received a small handful of books that form the basis of a library. These books need to be handled in an organized way, with facilitators receiving an orientation about how to manage the resources along with systems and tools for tracking usage already developed. In each community it should also be clarified exactly who, how and where the library is managed and systems should be put in place to manage the usage of the library following the termination of the class. This should be coordinated with the *suco* so that the efforts feed into longer term efforts and capacity building at the village level. Efforts to obtain neo-literate literature may well be coordinated with Timor Aid that operates a printing initiative to produce literature in Tetum language. It may be beneficial to distribute a copy of the set of 14 modules of the Ministry's second six month course, Iha Dalan. It might also be helpful to discuss with the organizers of Lafaek magazine to include a page for parents and elder brothers and sisters of young readers.

Finding: *The use of stimulants among learners is common, and facilitators occasionally promote this as a method of enhancing concentration.*

When participants felt bored, sleepy or tired from farm work, most facilitators sang songs, told funny stories, or used local language in a humorous way. However, some facilitators were reported to encourage students to use beetel leaf chewing to keep them alert. Numerous learners reported chewing beetel leaf and associated stimulants in order to stay awake and alert during the class. This phenomenon of using stimulants to be able to concentrate in adult literacy classes is not uncommon and has also been witnessed in Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

> *When speaking of the influence of local language and how it affects pronunciation, a little old man name Innocencia sticks out his tongue and points to it explaining, "We chew beetel leaf a lot, so that's why our tongues don't work. It's hard to pronounce things"- Inocencia Govea, elderly man who has been enrolled in class for two months, Moris Foun Maliana*

Recommendation: *Facilitators can be trained to encourage other means of enhancing concentration during the class*

The class can be used as a medium for conveying a multitude of beneficial development messages. Facilitators should be educated about the effects of using stimulants and should be trained and equipped with a 'toolbox' of classroom activities for keeping participants engaged during difficult moments or after heavy farm labor.

THE TEACHING PROCESS

"The teacher is the bridge between the experience of the students and the alphabet."
- Hipólito Aparício, Director, Fundacao Buka Matenek

Finding: *Almost all NGOs are recruiting facilitators from the village in which they teach.*

All except one grantee has recruited facilitators from the site where they are teaching. Almost all facilitators are conversant in the local language. Organizations are reporting that it is easier for facilitators to manage the class when they know the people, their culture and their characteristics. Learners have also appreciated this, noting that their facilitators understood their local characteristics. Grantee organizations also demonstrated the ability to flexibly adapt to local conditions. *"Sometimes they are farmers and have their own activities. The big challenge is that we want to implement based on our schedule and curriculum. Based on the conditions, we have to adapt ourselves to the situation, so we don't bring all of our rules to implement. There, we have to go by their rules." – Virginia Belo, Director, Fundacao Xanana Gusmao*

Recommendation: *This practice should be actively reinforced and encouraged in upcoming grants.*

Encouraging recruitment of facilitators locally is important because it decreases the incidence of facilitators leaving their post, it usually means that the facilitator speaks the local language, and it results in closer relationships between facilitator and learners (often blood or ethnic ties). When issuing grant applications, this aspect of program design should be written into the request for proposals document.

Finding: *When facilitators visit the homes of participants this sets good patterns of attendance early on in the class.*

Various NGOs found that their facilitators were more effective than other nonformal education programs when the facilitators visited the home of the participants to call them to class in the early days of the course operations. This encouraged more regular and prompt attendance from the beginning days of the class, when habits and patterns are being formed. Facilitators in other Timor-Leste literacy programs spent a lot of time waiting for students and only 2-3 would show up to the class.

Recommendation: *This practice should be encouraged across literacy and numeracy programs.*

This practice could be written into orientation and training programs for facilitators as well as facilitator manuals. Experience may also be shared with other nonformal education implementers.

Finding: *Facilitators are using a variety of languages as media of instruction in the classroom.*

Facilitators tend to cover content of the book in Tetum, while giving verbal instructions and explanations in the local language. Numeracy was usually conducted in Tetum but sometimes Bahasa Indonesia was used to discuss calculations and for the alphabet, sometimes

Portuguese or Bahasa Indonesia were used. This means that learners speak a local language as their first language, study materials in Tetum, a second language, and hear explanation of instructions in a third or fourth language.

Recommendation: *Facilitators need specific training and instruction on how to use language in the classroom.*

Facilitators need further training on how to address the issue of medium of instruction in the class, including when to use local language, when to use Tetum, how to introduce new concepts and new language, and which language to use to describe numeracy calculations and the names of letters. Training can a) sensitize facilitators to the issues of local language b) train them in specific methods and techniques of how to teach a second language and c) teach them how to link this teaching to literacy.

Finding: *Most facilitators are proficient in communicating in Tetum language, though with varying degrees of fluency.*

Most facilitators were witnessed to be proficient in speaking Tetum, while others exhibited only basic abilities. If the teacher speaks a language 'incorrectly' or incompletely, learners will pick up the same incorrect usage of the language or they will not absorb learning at all. Correspondingly, the World Bank also found that the issue of lack of proficiency in the language of instruction affects children's achievement in Timor-Leste's formal schools. "Students studying under teachers who themselves are not proficient in Portuguese are less likely to attain mastery of the language. Since language governs thought and the cognitive process, less than full proficiency in the language of instruction must impede the teachers' mastery of concepts and undermines their performance" (World Bank, 2004).

Recommendation: *Grantees should select facilitators well and then guide them on language use in the classroom, in accordance with local needs.*

As much as is possible, grantees should make communicative proficiency in Tetum Prasa a requirement of facilitator recruitment. Grantees should then pay attention to what language facilitators feel competent communicating in for different purposes, and what language learners comprehend in different contexts and for different uses. It is recommended that grantees should make decisions and guide facilitators according to what they find as local needs and exigencies. Facilitators should not be forced to speak a language they do not comprehend. This will result in drop-out, seen in other literacy programs in Timor-Leste.

Finding: *The training of facilitators does not adequately prepare teachers with the pedagogical preparation they need to teach.*

Program managers, coordinators, supervisors and even facilitators articulated that the current training focuses on the usage of the ministry's nonformal education modules and "how to introduce abc, 123." Facilitators, many of whom have never taught in a classroom before, never received any preparation about how to approach a class, what type of pedagogy to use, how to teach adults and how to link the materials to learners' every day life and to economic development. The incidence of these methods actually occurring in the classroom seems to depend on the facilitators own individual initiative and analytical capacities they have developed through university education or through previous experience. Various facilitators mentioned developing their own methods. Therefore, sometimes engaging teaching is occurring --and sometimes not. In addition, most organizations noted the need for more than 5 days of training for a person with no teaching background to be able to adequately teach.

Recommendation: *Improving the effectiveness of facilitator training and support will result in higher quality learning.*

The initial training should be revised to include: methods of good pedagogy and active learning, how to teach adults, how to approach elders, and how to manage time in the village

context. Training should be provided just before the course, as is currently done, but there should be refresher training mid-way through the program, or regular facilitator experience-sharing sessions throughout the course. According to budget and logistics, it may be cost-effective to carry this out within districts. However, if NGOs were to bring facilitators to Dili for a large mid-point refresher training, it would be programmatically effective to have a joint refresher session among facilitators of different grants.

Finding: *Facilitators did not always comprehend the medium of instruction used in the pre-service training.*

Most facilitators received training in Tetum with key education terms referred to in Portuguese, while studying Tetum materials. Some training sessions were delivered in Portuguese or delivered in Tetum with Portuguese materials. Facilitators were reported to have not understood the Portuguese language itself. In addition, they reported that they did not understand key education terms in Tetum that were actually Portuguese words.

Recommendation: *Medium of instruction of the facilitator training needs to match the language that trainees comprehend.*

The training should be delivered in a language that facilitators understand. In particular, key words and terms need to be defined and explained.

Finding: *The classes are only as good as the facilitator.*

When organizations have been able to recruit facilitators with higher levels of education, in particular, university graduates, these individuals brought additional skills to the class including the ability to plan ahead and make longer term lesson plans, the ability to be more articulate in communicating with the class, the ability to speak Tetum more fluently and coherently, and greater confidence in conducting the class.

Recommendation: *After choosing facilitators with the highest level of capacity, these facilitators then need ongoing support to maintain and improve the quality of their teaching.*

When possible, facilitators with the highest level of education and qualifications should be recruited. Some attendance of university-level education, previous teaching experience and previous work experience with other NGOs seemed to be the factors that led to greatest change in the quality of teaching. However, when persons with these attributes are not available at the village level, facilitators need to be invested in. First they must participate in dynamic and transformative training. Following this training, they need ongoing support from the organization.

"As a teacher you receive 4 years of training, but you don't learn to teach in one week."- - Hipólito Aparício, Director, Fundacao Buka Matenek

Facilitators need contact with other facilitators in order to learn how others are dealing with the same problems and to refresh and give energy to the quality of the teaching. Some NGOs had attempted to hold regular meetings between facilitators teaching in different sites, but these were interrupted by crisis, transport problems or other factors. Those NGOs that were able to follow through on with ongoing meeting of facilitators witnessed greater quality in the teaching. Intra-district monthly meetings would allow facilitators to join together after having been immersed in practice, share problems and learn how others have addressed them and then get feedback on how to employ solutions.

Finding: *Flexible class timing has positive effects, yet class contact time and class effectiveness is reduced by learners' 'flexible' arrival time.*

On a positive note, class timing is being adjusted to meet the need of the learners and facilitators. This timing is taking into consideration work schedules, harvesting, crisis repercussions, NGO monitoring convenience, holidays and facilitators' outside work

schedules. While flexibility has been found to be internationally positive for nonformal education classes, however, sometimes in the village context, timing becomes so flexible that hours are lost from the class time and learners trickle in to class at their own pace. In many of the programs, class time was lost not only due to crisis interruptions and the difficulty of making up classes in a concentrated manner, but also through "transit time," i.e. time waiting for learners to show up. The number of class contact hours as reduced by the waiting around and adjustment time caused by adjustment to new schedules and general tardy arrival. The facilitators' ability to manage time is exacerbated by the fact that often the learners are their elders and many times, their own family members. Some NGOs had instructed facilitators to wait until all learners were present, so that they did not have to repeat the first lesson or so that learners would fall behind. This practice of waiting may gradually lead to longer and longer delays, encouraging other learners to also come late. In addition, though most classes had terminated class activities by the time of the evaluation, some classes in session were monitored at random times, and in one class, half of the participants had left an hour before the termination of the class.

Recommendation: *Facilitators need training in order to equip them to manage class time effectively.*

Facilitators will benefit from discussion and skills-building on how better to manage and discourage student tardiness. In Ethiopia, some women's groups who simultaneously studied literacy and numeracy, as well as conducting savings and credit operations, have developed self-imposed fines. When one member of the group is late, she must pay a small amount of cents into the groups' savings coffer. This has greatly decreased lateness and increased the women's adherence to cooperative regulations. According to cultural context, NGOs may wish to dialogue with classes so that they develop their own culturally appropriate and locally innovated solutions to curbing class tardiness. In addition, if learners are consistently leaving before class termination, monitors and facilitators should discuss with the class to change the schedule and/or adjusting the timing so that the class meets for short periods of time more frequently.

Finding: *Facilitator absenteeism was not found to be a significant issue affecting class operations and effectiveness.*

From early review of monitoring reports, conducted by SGP during the implementation of project activities, the researcher was alerted to the fact that facilitator absentees had occurred in some places and that this question should be probed. However, in probing the issue of facilitator absenteeism, with learners, facilitators, and program managers, this was not found to be a serious issue affecting implementation. Facilitator attendance was, for the most part, regular, and when facilitators did have to miss a class due to absence, they made the course up at alternative times. In addition, few organizations reporting hiring facilitators and losing them midstream. This helps to ensure greater consistency in retention of investments in facilitator training. Few facilitators had raised any concerns to the organizations and no facilitator had complained of late salary. These are the issues are often associated with high absenteeism in other countries and in government programs.

Recommendation: *NGOs should continue monitoring, supervising, and providing salaries on time as they have been doing.*

Most grantees seem to have set up functional systems for monitoring facilitators and providing salaries. However, as described blow, logistics responsibilities for direct administration of facilitator salaries should gradually be handed over from USAID SGP to NGOs. Handling this responsibility is important for developing grantee capacity.

Finding: *Monitors are not always well-trained enough to give constructive feedback to the teachers.*

In some organizations the coordinators and monitors are capable, but in other organizations, they are not strong. This impacts the feedback they are able to give to teachers on the class site. Monitors in some instances are able to give constructive feedback to teachers. However oftentimes the level of their feedback stays at the level of discussing how to address learner attendance issues.

Recommendation: *Invest in further training of those who monitor the performance of the teachers.*

Monitors themselves should receive training in the pedagogical methods that are to be used in the course. Ensure that monitors themselves are present at the first facilitator training. During one of the concurrent sessions, provide them specialized session on how to appropriately recognize quality and lack of quality teaching, how to appropriate give feedback and how to monitor teacher's conduct.

Recommendation: *Develop a standard monitoring tool across literacy and numeracy programs.*

Because much of the necessary tasks to be performed during monitoring are similar between the programs, grantees could benefit from the development of a standard monitoring tool. This tool will help orient what monitors need to look for in the field, but it must be accompanied by effective initial training. There has been discussion with the Ministry of Education's Nonformal Department on the development of such a tool and it may be useful to coordinate with them on development, or if not, then to provide a template of this tool to them.

Finding*: Some monitors performed actual teaching of the class during monitoring visits.*

In one some cases, coordinators and supervisors tended to teach a class for the facilitator when visiting the classes and finding that the content was not clearly understood by participants. This method of feedback can be very beneficial for teachers, because they see a precise example of a specific topic they were teaching and a model of how it could be taught differently or more effectively. The danger of this approach is if supervisors practice it without giving feedback to teachers, but rather come in, "reteach" participants, leave and come again to do the same thing the next week. In this case, a dependency model will develop and facilitators will not improve practice.

Recommendation: *Model teaching should be accompanied by feedback and discussion between supervisor and facilitator.*

Model teaching can be a useful demonstration of good teaching. But in order for this technique to be fully effective, the monitor needs to hold a follow-up feedback discussion, distinguish the two approaches to teaching and how the facilitator can modify their approach to include better practice.

THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Finding: *The organizations' logistical arrangements to support the teaching and learning process were found to be satisfactory.*

All enrolled learners received learning materials, at the start of class and some auditing participants received materials, in a few cases. No facilitator complained of receiving late salary and few had any noteworthy complaints that they had raised during the course of project implementation.

Recommendation: *Strong systems should be maintained, but logistics responsibilities should gradually be turned over to implementing grantees.*

This finding is significant, because participants' receipt of learning materials and facilitators' receipt of salaries are huge challenges to quality in nonformal education in many countries. The USAID Small Grants Program is currently the party responsible for procuring materials, delivering goods and paying salaries itself. This may account for the smooth operations of systems. When local NGOs begin procuring goods and paying salaries, the complexity of nonformal education provision increases, as does the opportunity for corruption and inefficiency. Considering that it is not sustainable for a US contractor to handle such operations far into the future, it is good to begin developing local grantees' capacity to handle these activities in a gradual way. Otherwise, if the responsibilities suddenly land in the grantees' lap, they will be overwhelmed, will experience inefficiency in the system --or worse, corruption. If the current USAID contract does not provide for such gradual transfer of responsibilities, it may be useful to have an end of project training/orientation to logistics, procurement and other issues that will be necessary for grantees to carry on and sustain their current activities.

Finding: *Attendance levels varied in classes, but many facilitators noted an average absence of 2-4 persons in each class.*

These absences mean that average class size may range between 11-15 individuals. Though this increases individual attention from facilitator to participant, it reduces the efficiency of investment. It can also lead to dampened enthusiasm among remaining participants.

Recommendation: *Increase class size to compensate for expected absence and maximize efficiency of investment.*

DAI and UNICEF experience in Timor-Leste, as well as international experience in education shows that very large class sizes can lead to reduced quality of education. However, in this case, the average attendance of SGP classes is far below that threshold. It is recommended to increase recommended class size to 22 in the next round of funding, with the expectation that 18-22 students may be attending class at any one time, so as maximize the efficiency of investment. However in locations where all classes occur in teachers' houses, rather than in the *sede do suco* community center, primary school or outdoor location, this may be difficult, and should be adjusted according to the space constraints. Yet, many classes are held in outdoor shaded locations, so exact dimensions of a room may not be an issue.

Finding: *Various NGOs mention transport as an impediment to being able to monitor classes adequately, provide support and conduct monthly facilitator reviews.*

Transport was found to be an obstacle to monitoring. Monitoring, per se, is not the obstacle, but rather the high expense involved in movement. Some organizations discussed the trade-offs involved. Through hiring monitors and project officers at the district level, they could cut costs and ensure more regular monitoring of programs. Yet the quality of such personnel was often much lower than was desirable, in contrast to hiring someone from Dili or a more central location in the district.

Recommendation: *Budgets should reflect appropriate costs for regular and consistent monitoring.*

It is recommended that organizations be encouraged to budget appropriately for transport and that this section not be placed on the alter for carving during the budget negotiation stage. If capital investments need to be made, grantees should be advised to budget for motorcycles, not vehicles.

Finding: *Grantees faced many common challenges in implementation of nonformal education courses.*

Though capacities and difficulties vary, many challenges and needs encountered by one grantee were common to many of the organizations implementing literacy and numeracy

courses. Some of these challenges include: little teaching experience of facilitators, little background in pedagogical methods, difficulty in making linkages to business, tardy arrival of participants, etc.

Recommendation: *Provide common nonformal education capacity building inputs to all grantees.*

It is good to foster creativity and adaptability to the local context, however each of the programs could benefit from some of the same inputs. It may bring useful coherence to the literacy and numeracy program by treating the grantees as a unit. Some of these inputs may include:

- Revised training methodology that focuses more on pedagogical approach to teaching, specific methods for teaching of adults and orientation of how to broach language issues
- Training of monitors in how to better guide the development of facilitators' skills, manage facilitators and address absenteeism or poor performance.
- Common monitoring and assessment tools, especially for classroom monitoring
- Materials that make a direct and clearer link to business and economic development activities.

If these inputs are provided to all, while still allowing organizations the flexibility to adapt their programs to their own specific needs (i.e. targeting woman, linking to savings and credit groups, etc.), program effectiveness will be enhanced.

Finding: *Translation of project documents, according to donor requirements, has cost and time implications.*

Some NGOs reported that with various donors having different kinds of reporting requirements, in different languages, this contributes to the overall budget implication of the project. One NGO had field level staff write documents in whatever language they felt proficient to write, usually Bahasa Indonesia. This document is then sent to Jakarta for translation. Once converted into the donor's language, it has to be edited for content by a staff member who feels competent in the language of report submission. This process is time consuming and costly. Some NGOs specifically requested English language training so that they could better perform on grant activities. However, this problem affected NGO who worked more with multiple donors. DAI accepts documents in multiple languages, Bahasa Indonesia, Tetum, Portuguese, etc.

Recommendation: *Providing capacity-building in report-writing concurrent to grant implementation has the potential to enhance program efficiency and build longer lasting capacity.*

Since language is such a huge issue in Timor, it would be useful to provide training in report writing and use of language in reports to active grantees. By supporting capacity building simultaneous to grant implementation, the Small Grant Program has the potential to make a valuable and longer lasting contribution to development in Timor-Leste.

Finding: *Varying capacity of organizations varies in terms of comprehension of literacy, numeracy, pedagogy and how to run an education program, as well in the details and mechanics of project conceptualization and implementation.*

The detailed organizational assessments reflect how grantees are comparatively stronger and weaker in diverse areas of implementation.

Recommendation: *Intimately involve grantees in the crafting of their project design document.*

Organizations could produce better outcomes if, after they submit their project document, they are intimately involve in the rewriting and re-conceptualizing of this idea into USAID

framework. This could be applied to the point of making them sit side by side with DAI staff, until the concept is completely revised, working with them to ensure that they have explicitly clear conceptual frameworks, before handing the document over for translation. Their being involved in the process of reframing an idea so that it makes sense to the donor, a) builds their capacity in project design and b) gets them much more thoroughly acquainted with the project itself, so that they will be more soundly able to implement.

Recommendation: *Giving more training to NGO grantees on how to manage a project, and how to manage nonformal education projects specifically, could impact the quality of the project outcomes.*

A sizeable investment was placed in evaluating the programs, but it is suggested that some of these resources be allocated to capacity-building inputs at the front end, including building NGOs' capacity to train, monitor, and adapt to changing or challenging circumstances. This front-end investment may be followed by ongoing support.

Suggestions for management training include:

- How to design and implement a coherent conceptual framework with goal, inputs, outcomes, and results.
- How to monitor and evaluate and how to use information gathered to improve quality
- How to manage the full project cycle

The opportunity for applied training is immense. For instance, if SGP provides training in monitoring and evaluation while they are in the course of evaluation, or trains them in project development and project cycle management just before they develop a course, their learning will be applied immediately. This will also ensure that the funding and all of the activities leave a lasting impact once the "pot of money" dries up.

Finding: *Many indicated a great need to scale up programming.*

"In our village, we have 450 illiterate people. According to the UN, we have to end illiteracy by 2015. If we teach one class of 15 people at a time consecutively, we will not reach the goal in time. We have augment the efforts. We have to hold two or three classes at a time." - Celestino dos Santos Elie, Facilitator, Fundacao Cristal

It is not only directors and supervisors that demonstrate an awareness of demand. Facilitators themselves are able to cite statistics as well as local development plans. Another facilitator reported that that the *aldeia* (village) had conducted a survey and found more than 50% illiterate, but he was only able to reach 16 of these people through the course.

Another group felt they needed to extend their learning longer than the six month course, but they did not want to deprive others of the opportunity to get literacy education. *"For us we want to learn more. But there are a lot of others who want to attend the course. If it is only us, we are afraid others will miss the opportunity to learn. We are afraid others will feel jealous of us."- Maria Elena Amaral, Former Learner, Fundacao Comunidade Ba Futuru*

Recommendation: *SGP should scale up literacy/numeracy grant activities, reaching a much larger cohort of participants in the next rounds of grants.*

It is recommended that SGP build on the experience developed in area of literacy /numeracy by participating programs as well as on the efficiency of operations that has matured through time, and use this opportunity to maximize the scale of learning. In the next round of literacy/grants, SGP should greatly increase the numerical numbers reached. It would be good to set a target of say, 500-600 learners per grantee, but allow them to adjust this target according to their felt capacities. If 8 grants were awarded reaching an average of 600 learners, 4800 illiterates (or more) could be reached in the next round of grants. The reason for scaling up is two-fold. On the one hand, clearly more learners are reached. On the other hand, nonformal education civil society organizations build the capacity to reach larger populations more effectively. This will better equip them in partnering with the government to reach the tremendous size of the unreached population.

Finding: *Linkage between literacy/numeracy and economic development varies, depending on the talents of the facilitator.*

"I use more use examples of fisherman and agriculture in teaching instead of very general examples in the book. When I talk about something specific to their lives, it becomes interesting."

Herman Danile, Facilitator with Fundacao Xanana Gusmao

Some facilitators were excellent at making the link between nonformal education and business activity, asking participants to bring in local products they sell and making reference to the everyday occupations of learners. In other cases, facilitators who were usually younger or less experienced were not skilled and made only rudimentary linkage. In different classes, the level of linkage being made to business activities depends on the ability of the facilitator to innovate**,** as well as that person's familiarity with business development activities. Various learners expressed interest in receiving more information on business management so that they could augment their businesses, and various groups suggested the need for materials that make this linkage, since the facilitators may or may not have this ability on their own. Without prior knowledge, books guide them to make the link.

Recommendation: *Adapting entrepreneurship and economic literacy materials will help facilitators make linkages between literacy, numeracy and economic development.*

"We have training materials for business people, for weavers groups, carpenters groups, and youth groups. These are very good materials, but they are not at their level. We need to convert the materials we have so that they are at understandable level, so that they are digestible. Plus there are many existing foreign materials that need to be translated to Tetum." - Jojo Padilla, Project Development Advisor, Timor Aid

Such materials could be adapted to the first six month courses, and enhanced for a second six month course. An excellent opportunity exists to build on synergies between different arms of the SGP project. DAI could issue a call for solicitations for one of the more skilled organizations to develop materials that link literacy and numeracy to business and economic development. Fundacao Buka Matenek demonstrated the capacity and willingness to develop materials. Materials from other SGP existing business education activities could also be adapted for a neo-literate audience. The Junior Achievement is one such possible resource. If materials for a primary school audience are adapted, an adult education advisor and Timorese advisor should be involved in adaptation to ensure the materials are appropriate for an adult Timorese audience.

Finding: *A plethora of unutilized opportunities exist in terms of linking the literacy and numeracy more tightly to business and economic development activities.*

The literacy and numeracy programs have operated as a stand-alone section from other SGP economic development grants.

Recommendation: *Better results and greater capacity building could be achieved through greater synergy between USAID SGP programs.*

These may include:

- providing the list of participants with literacy and numeracy training, to projects that are in the process of site selection for business and economic development activities
- reaching the participants in other SGP business grants with the literacy/numeracy education (learning from the FPWO experience in which the organization initiated the pilots, believing that its basic money management experiences could be more effective if participants has basic literacy and numeracy)
- awarding one organization two grants – one in economic development and one in literacy/numeracy, so that this organization designs the activities to be compatible with one another from the outset and so that target beneficiaries are chosen

accordingly. Particular success was evident when the literacy program was held simultaneous with savings, credit and cooperative activities. Learners without these outlets had very little opportunity to practice their newfound skills, whereas learners in these programs were able to directly apply their skills in their savings books and book-keeping

- developing a standard supplementary curriculum for the second six-month course that partners with the Ministry's curriculum, but has a specific focus on entrepreneurship and economic literacy
- coordinating SGP's activities with others active in the literacy and numeracy arena

Finding: *The terminology used in SGP for nonformal education differs from terminology used in the field.*

The current program uses the terms training, trainer and trainee to refer to the various players in the literacy and numeracy program. This may cause confusion when liaising and communicating with other literacy and numeracy programs.

Recommendation: *Some adjustment of terminology is recommended.*

The current terms in use, training, trainer and trainee, conjure up the image of short-term skills and output-based activities. However, developing the cognitive process of interpretation of symbols through literacy and numeracy in a class that occurs over six months and lasting three or more hours a day is more often called nonformal education. The Ministry's Department of Nonformal Education envisions this process as continuing over the period of a year or more. To avoid the images that teacher and trainer conjure up, the field often uses the term, facilitator. To avoid the formal school child stereotype, the term student is usually replaced with learner.

The following terminology is suggested:

CURRENTLY IN USE AT SGP OR IN OTHER LOCATIONS	SUGGESTED USAGE
Training, Schooling	Nonformal Education
Trainer, Teacher	Facilitator
Trainee, Student	Learner