



THE WOMEN AND WEALTH PROJECT

Empowering positive women through social enterprises

RESULTS ASSESSMENT



JAPAN
Official Development Assistance



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



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Resilient nations.*

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Although WWP officially ended in December 2011, it is hoped that the spirit, experiences and lessons from this pilot project will continue to live and assist those living with, affected by, and vulnerable to HIV.



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	Artisans Association of Cambodia
ACC	AIDS Care China
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
APRC	UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre
ART	Anti-retroviral therapy
BLS	Bamboo Ladder Survey
BTC	Bodoland Territorial Council
CBO	Community-based organization
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CCW	Cambodian Community of Women Living With HIV
CPN+	Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network
GFATM	The Global Fund on AIDS, TB and Malaria
GMC	Guwahati Medical College
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICW	International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS
INP+	Indian Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS
JD	Job description
MARYP	Most-at-risk young people
MDSF	Modern Dress Sewing Factory
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NACO	National AIDS Control Organization
NACP	National AIDS Control Plan
NGO	Non-government organization
NSP	National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS
PCW	Positive Candle Works
PDA	Population and Community Development Association
PPP	Positive Partnerships Programme
PWID	People who inject drugs
PWN+	Positive Women Network
SLC	Social Light Communications
TANSACS	Tamil Nadu State AIDS Control Society
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WD	Weaving Destination Project
WWP	Women and Wealth Project



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women and Wealth Project (WWP) has been supported by United Nations Development Programme Asia-Pacific Regional Centre (UNDP APRC) from 2006 until the present, as a pilot project in response to mitigating the impact of HIV on women in the Asian region. The WWP sought to empower and improve the well-being of women living with HIV through the development of social enterprises that would provide a livelihood and a safe working environment free of stigma and discrimination, build self-confidence and increase community acceptance. Specifically, the project had the following objectives:

1. To provide women living with HIV an opportunity to lead a life with hope, economic security and dignity through the development and operation of small social enterprises;
2. To reduce stigma and discrimination against women living with and affected by HIV through business interactions and raising their status and public perceptions as important income earners and social contributors;
3. To increase public awareness and understanding about HIV, leading to a greater acceptance of people living with HIV.

As originally conceived by UNDP, the WWP was intended to provide a sustainable livelihood for women and their families, to relieve the immediate issue of lack of income, and re-build women's self-confidence and self-esteem through individual and collective empowerment. As well as addressing these core issues, the successful implementation of a social enterprise approach had potential to fund activities of the mother organizations involved. Few other projects of this nature had been attempted in the region, and none on this scale, so the WWP constituted an important pilot project. However, this also meant there was little information to draw on to help in its planning and design and during implementation. UNDP, the Population and Community Development Association of Thailand (PDA – the implementing agency of the WWP) and the people living with HIV groups involved were in a constant process of learning and improvement.

Initially the project was implemented with groups of women living with HIV at four sites in three countries, Cambodia, India and China, in collaboration with networks of women/people living with HIV. PDA was responsible for overall implementation and management of the project, as well as capacity building activities, commencing with an initial training workshop and exposure visits in Thailand in June-July 2006. An additional site, in Assam, India, was added later under an NGO, the NEDAN Foundation. The model implemented in the Assam site differed from other sites in some important ways: it did not involve direct collaboration with a network of women living with HIV; the beneficiaries consisted of women living with HIV together with other vulnerable women, rather than only women living with HIV; and there was no PDA involvement.

At each site, the group involved was encouraged to start a sustainable business enterprise, based on market research and development of a business plan. The Phnom Penh group, consisting of members of the Cambodian Community of Women (CCW), affiliated with the Cambodian People Living with HIV/AIDS Network (CPN+), proposed a garment factory,

the Modern Dress Sewing Factory (MDSF). In Chennai, India, the Positive Women Network (PWN+) developed a plan for *Social Light Communications* (SLC), a communication design and print production business. In China, Women's Wing of AIDS Care China (ACC), planned two businesses, the *Positive Candle Works*, a candle making business based in Kunming, and the *Jasmine Online Exchange*, an online used goods seller, in Guangzhou. In Kokrajhar, Assam, India, the NEDAN Foundation supported the development of Weaving Destination (WD), a business that produced high quality hand woven textiles. The Chennai group was the first to commence operations, in August 2006, followed by Cambodia and the China groups at the beginning of 2007. Weaving Destination was the last activity to start, commencing in 2008.

In regard to monitoring and evaluation of WWP activities, the different sites provided regular reports to PDA, which were supplemented by information from field visits in compilation of six monthly and annual reports submitted by PDA to UNDP. Site reports included business and financial data that could be used to assess the success of the business aspect of the Project. PDA adapted its "Bamboo Ladder" monitoring tool for assessment of women's empowerment. However, there were no clear overall indicators for measurement of the expected outcomes of the project. In particular, the lack of defined indicators for the second and third objectives of WWP, related to empowerment of the women, and improvement in the social environment, meant that the outcomes in these areas proved difficult to assess. Bearing these considerations in mind, the different businesses experienced varying degrees of success.

To date MDSF in Cambodia has not been successful in creating a sustainable business model for livelihoods; however, it has achieved considerable success in empowerment of the women involved and building their self-confidence, and also seems to have improved community acceptance of women living with HIV. These two successes are, however, tempered to some degree by the fact that there are now fewer beneficiaries than previously. While MDSF has struggled to break even throughout most of its existence, the high sales that were seen at certain times during the implementation of the project and the annual net profit (despite being small) achieved for 2010 give a glimpse of the good potential of the project, and what could be achieved should MDSF be able to address some of the key challenges that have limited the success of the business. In particular, the management of MDSF needs to be strengthened in order to clearly define roles, responsibilities and accountability of all staff. The marketing component, which is crucial to the success of the enterprise, needs to be managed by skilled and experienced personnel and supported by a clear marketing strategy that exploits potential markets in the private and government sectors.

SLC in Chennai has not been highly successful as a business enterprise to continuously generate sufficient profits for its mother organization (Positive Women's Network - PWN+) despite strong initial successes; however, it has been successful in empowerment of the women involved, and increasing acceptance of women living with HIV in the community. SLC has made an important contribution to the empowerment of women living with HIV,

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