

Swedish-Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam

**Shashi R. Pandey
Darunee Tantiwiranmanond
Ngo Thi Tuan Dung**

Asia Department

Swedish-Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam

Shashi R. Pandey
Darunee Tantiwiranmanond
Ngo Thi Tuan Dung

Sida Evaluation 01/17

Asia Department

This report is part of *Sida Evaluation*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

Reports may be *ordered* from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8 690 93 80
Telefax: (+46) (0)8 690 92 66
E-mail: info@sida.se,

Reports are also available to *download* at:

<http://www.sida.se/evaluation>

Authors: Shashi R. Pandey, Darunee Tantiwiranmanond, Ngo Thi Tuan Dung.

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 01/17
Commissioned by Sida, Asia Department

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Registration No.: U 11 11/3
Date of Final Report: July 2001
Printed in Stockholm, Sweden 2001
ISBN 91-586-8813-7
ISSN 1401-0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Sveavägen 20, Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9
E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Table of Contents

Executive summary	1
Program context	7
1.1 Development Context of the Project.....	7
1.2 Gender Fund: The Project History	8
2. The evaluation.....	9
2.1 Reason for the Evaluation: Scope and Focus.....	9
2.2 Evaluation Approach	9
2.3 Limitations of the Study	10
3 Findings.....	11
3.1 Relevance of the Funded Projects	11
3.2 Impact of the Projects and the Fund	14
3.3 Functioning of the AG	17
3.4 Implementation, Monitoring, and Management of the Fund	18
4 Conclusions and recommendations	20
4.1 Conclusions	20
4.2 Recommendations	21
5 Lessons learned	23
1. The GF is a “good practice”	23
2. Grassroots development works.....	23
3. Donors’ successful cooperation is possible	23
References.....	24
Appendix I: Terms of Reference.....	25
Appendix II: Details of the 10 Projects Visited.....	30
Appendix III: Characteristics of the 151 Projects Funded by Gender Fund in 1999 and 2000	44
Appendix IV: Activities of the Advisory Group in 1999 and 2000	48
Appendix V: Comparison between proposed activities and budget vs AG’s suggestions and approved amount for the 10 projects visited during May 22 to June 15, 2001	50

Executive summary

In spite of being a war-damaged country, Vietnam has made impressive progress in economic development. It has also passed several progressive pieces of legislation for women, and has prepared a series of action plans for the advancement of women (Plan of Action 1, or POA1, and POA2). However, women are still disadvantaged for several cultural and historical reasons. Die-hard Confucian culture relegates women's place more to the private/domestic sphere than to the public sphere. Recent removal of socialist subsidies has taken away some of women's health care advantages. And current accelerated development processes sometimes have affected negatively on women's well being. There is a need to increase the capacities and resources for women and to heighten the gender awareness of communities in order to advance the well being of both women and men.

To promote gender awareness and grassroots organizations, the Embassy of Sweden started the Gender Fund (GF) in 1997. This Fund allocates small grants to grassroots projects in different parts of the country and is managed by an Advisory Group (AG). The seven members of the AG are Vietnamese experts from North, Central and South Vietnam. Based on the positive conclusions of the first external evaluation conducted in 1998, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has continued its support to the GF. In August 2000, the Danish Embassy joined the Gender Fund program. During the two years of 1999–2000, the Fund was able to support 151 projects, among which 39 were recipients of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) grants. This evaluation is carried out to find the relevance, impact and implementation of the Fund and the functioning/organizational structure of the AG, and to learn from the experiences of the past two years.

The Evaluation Team consisted of one international and one Vietnamese evaluator. The goal of the evaluation was to find if the Fund is meeting its twin goals of raising gender awareness and increasing the capacity of grassroots organizations working on gender. For these objectives, a sample of 10 projects with a geographical sample of 6:2:2 from North:Center:South was selected for field visits. The evaluation method included on-site observations, single and group interviews with stakeholders, and the study of relevant documents. All the interviews with project-related people and the AG members were written down and analyzed for their contents and patterns of contrasts and similarities.

The GF was found to be responsive to the needs of local women and local people in poor and remote areas of Vietnam where organized educational efforts hardly reach. We were told that, under normal circumstance, having a library or a bookcase at the hamlet level was almost impossible, therefore, the GF's funding for example for a bookcase or a library specifically meets women's need for education and information. The small amount allocated to the project was also appropriate to local farmers' ability to manage a small fund and run a modest administration. Since such an activity of grassroots gender awareness is not carried out by other donors, the GF does not compete with, but rather supplements, the activities of other donors. It meets the unmet-needs of local people, particularly of women in remote areas.

In project areas, both men and women showed increased knowledge, skills and confidence about gender. They said that they had earlier heard some discussions about gender, but this training opportunity clarified and deepened their understanding. They were able to translate that understanding into their daily practices by encouraging male family members to share the housework and by encouraging women to participate in public activities. Many projects were able

to form community discussion groups to continue this process of coming together, and to resolve social issues by group discussion.

By supporting successful gender training programs, the GF has increased gender awareness in communities. By funding individual-led initiatives as well as other mass organizations besides the Vietnam Women's Union (WU), the GF has supported and increased the number of grassroots groups working on gender. There is, however, a need to support more organizations (other than WU) that work on gender, reorient the focus of WU-initiated projects away from a women-only approach to gender, and increase the management capacity of all organizations. The networking and sustainability of funded projects also need to be strengthened by an orientation meeting and follow-up activities.

The AG consists of seven members (four women, three men) – three from the North, two from the Center, and two from the South of Vietnam. The AG members advertise the Fund, seek proposals, assist applicants in modifying their proposals, and sort out promising projects for possible funding. The members meet quarterly to discuss and finalize two separate lists of selected project proposals for the approval of the Swedish or Danish Embassy. Each AG member is supposed to follow up the progress of funded projects in his or her region. The representatives of Danish and Swedish Embassies invariably attend the AG's quarterly meetings. In addition, during the two annual meetings of 1999 and 2000, 34 selected project holders who had completed their projects were invited to share their experiences. The AG has been functioning well as a group, and most members are satisfied with their current responsibility and remuneration. Even with the addition of the Danish Embassy's participation, the members of the AG have been able to absorb the increased workload satisfactorily. The three parties – the AG, Danish Embassy and Swedish Embassy – have been satisfied with the division of responsibility related to the GF.

The funded projects have two other characteristics. (1) The majority of the projects (65%) are located in the North. This could be due to more advertisement or more media access in the North. (2) The majority of the project holders (59%) are WU leaders, since WU enjoys a reputation of having a strong and widespread network reaching to grassroots women.

The GF publishes a useful bi-annual Newsletter, but the number of copies is limited – 70 in Vietnamese and 50 in English. The Newsletter has not been distributed to all project holders, or to other embassies or NGOs that may benefit from the news about the progress of the GF. The Newsletter needs improvement in its appearance and in its contents. Stories extracted from personal experiences of various projects would be useful illustrations of how positive changes could happen with the GF's support.

Most projects have been implemented within their scheduled time. In fact some projects very "efficiently" completed the major part of their programs within a two-month period. The financial management of the projects with different community members on the management board appears to be more efficient than the management of those projects that have only one person (the project holder) on the board assisted by a treasurer and an accountant. Most projects tend to make changes at the implementation stage, sometimes deviating from the AG's recommendations in terms of frequency of training and number of beneficiaries. We were told that those changes were made to save time and resources often in consultation or agreement of the regional AG representatives. Overall, the AG has done a successful work in planning, preparing, sorting and approving the projects. But at the implementation level, which affects the outcomes, the AG seems to have less control and influence. Monitoring is a difficult exercise – the AG could visit only less than half of the projects due to limited resources, time, and distance. Most of the projects are in remote rural areas.

In all visited projects, participants showed great enthusiasm and eagerness to maintain and continue such projects. Their knowledge and confidence were high. The GF has certainly met the goal of increasing community awareness of gender, and the capacity of grassroots organizations to work on gender. Funding of individuals or other mass organizations (besides WU) is a significant social investment that may stimulate the emergence of more players in civil society.

The GF should continue its funding activities for at least another two years (2002–2003). The goal and the amount of funding is appropriate. Some additional funding for orientation/training exercises and for the publication of the Newsletter could be allocated. The following suggestions (some of them are already being discussed in the AG) for modifications may help improve the efficiency and impact of projects.

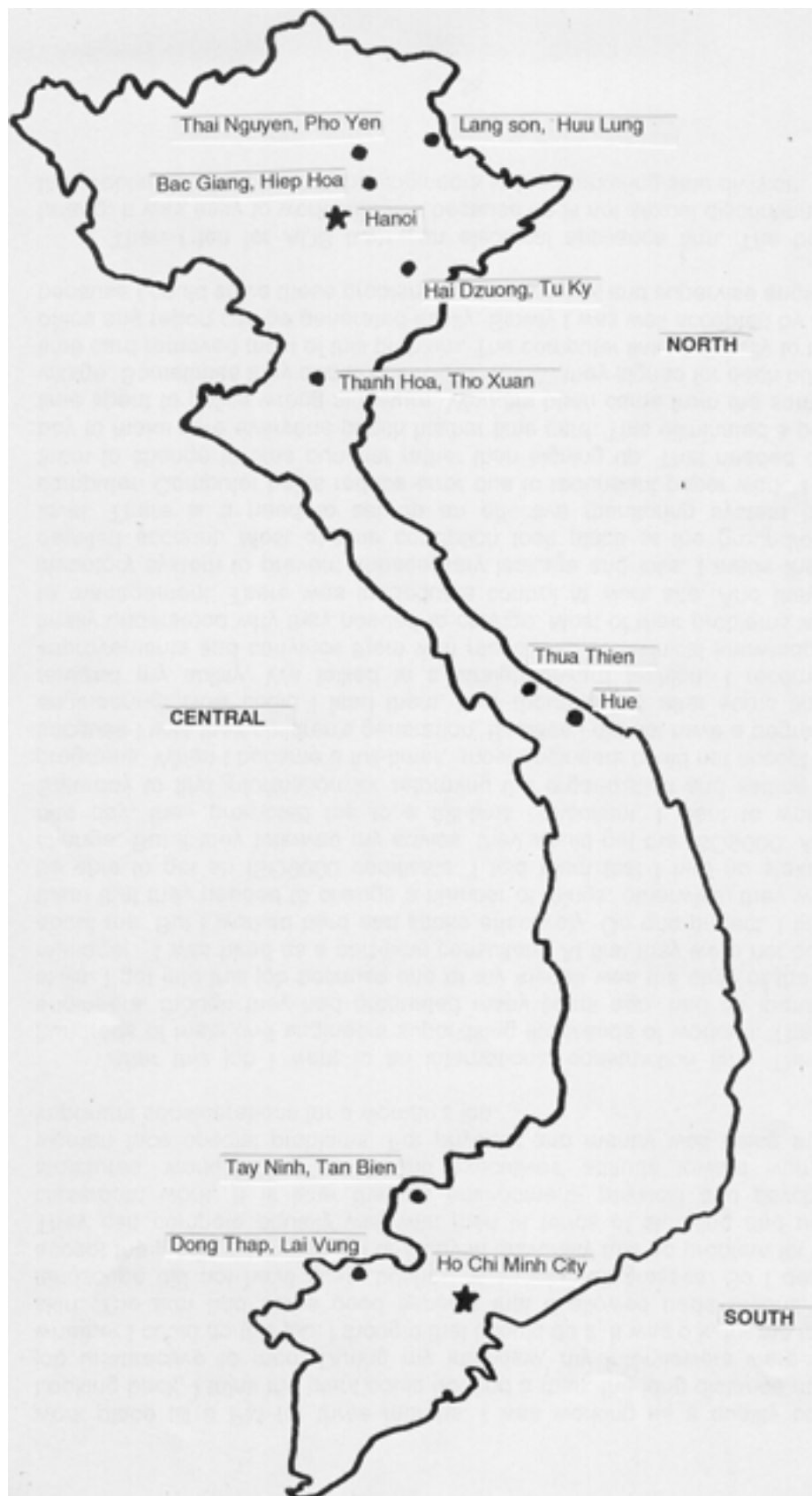
- Project proposals with only one activity, e.g., gender training, should not be funded. A project will have more social impact if it includes some other components such as clubs, contests, bookcases, health training, or economic activities.
- Among the district, commune or hamlet levels, the commune level seems to be most appropriate, and groups other than the WU should be encouraged and funded.
- SIDA and DANIDA have allowed a maximum budget for a project to be 5,000 USD and 7,000 USD, respectively. So far there has not been a project with enough activities to cost the maximum. The minimum approved budget should not be less than 2,000 USD, and a promising project could be granted as high an amount as 5,000–7,000 USD. As an incentive for project holders to put their best efforts into their projects, there could be a provision for a follow-up grant if a project performs well and shows further possibilities of expansion (such as building a network, or having a model to multiply training or activities).
- All the project holders of the newly approved projects should be invited to a two-day orientation that focuses on how to run a project as a social process rather than merely as an event. Such an orientation should describe how to create a management board to enhance community participation; how and why to network; and how to plan for sustainability and follow-up.
- A uniform understanding among the AG members (about a development project being a community exercise with gender integration in all activities aiming to meet gender strategic needs) is necessary so that the recommendations made at the approval meetings are carried out accordingly. A discussion cum training workshop for the AG members is recommended. The standing agreement between the two Embassies and the AG members is that each member will (1) visit at least 2 projects per quarter, and (2) write short reports to be included in the Newsletter. This agreement is very worthwhile and should continue with regularity. The AG should focus more on gender issues so that projects can move away from a women in development (WID) approach to gender and development (GAD) approach. There is a need to set up gender indicators not only as guidelines for project management teams but also for monitoring and evaluating the project itself.
- The report style of the Newsletter should be more reader-friendly, the design of the Newsletter should be improved, and the quantity of printed Newsletter should be increased (may be 300 copies each). The Newsletter should be distributed to all past and present project holders, other embassies, donors and NGOs.

The important lesson learned is that allocating funds especially for raising gender awareness at the grassroots level and administrating the funds through a local advisory group is a worthwhile and working model. This model should be adopted by other countries that are at a similar stage of development such as Laos, Cambodia, East Timor and Myanmar. The experience of the GF also shows that by emphasizing grassroots development based on the initiatives and creativity of local women, workers and officials, the GF can meet the needs for human resource development of the community as well as, if not better than, the macro models frequently used in development planning.

Acknowledgement

The Evaluation Team is thankful for the time spent with the Advisory Group members, project holders, villagers and project-related people who willingly and kindly offered their time and hospitality.

Ms. Le Phuong Lien translated the resumes of the 10 projects from Vietnamese to English, arranged the travels, and helped in drawing several tables and charts, and Ms. Nguyen Kim Quy and Ms. Hoang Thi Dieu Hang, gender focal points of the Danish Embassy and the Swedish Embassy, respectively, provided various supports and insights about the Gender Fund. All this help is sincerely appreciated.



1 Program context

1.1 Development Context of the Project

Vietnam is an agricultural country in the Mekong Sub-region of Southeast Asia. 80% of its total 80 million population (in 2001) live in rural areas. Forestry, agriculture and fishery products have made up to one third of the total GDP for many years. Vietnam has a great potential to develop into a robust economy even though it has undergone the hard experiences of prolonged wars.

After the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, the Vietnamese Government has implemented a series of reforms in the political, economic and social fields. All these changes have breathed new life into the country's restoration process. Thanks to various correct policies, a big leap forwards has been made in economic development over the last ten years. From a poor country that suffered chronic food shortage, Vietnam has become the third largest rice exporter in the world. However, poverty still prevails in remote and mountainous areas where diverse ethnic minorities live. The World Bank in July 2001 has approved one of its largest grants ever for poverty-alleviation programs in Vietnam.

Vietnamese women play a very important role in rural areas. They shoulder from 60% to 70% of the workload in national development. However, they have received insufficient social compensation. Rural women account for 51.2% of the national population, 52.6% of the rural population, and 89.8% of the working women in the whole country. Women make up 78.2% of the workforce in agriculture, forestry and fishery. That figure shows that women play a great role and contribute a large part to economic development and national reconstruction. Women are therefore a great labor source ensuring sustainable and long-term national development of Vietnam.

The Government's new land policy (that leases land to families) has created a positive opportunity for peasant households to manage their land properly. However, the abolition of the State subsidies in educational and health services has negatively and seriously affected peasant women. Increasingly the number of school dropouts is higher for girls than for boys. 40% of the rural women in childbearing age now suffer from malnutrition, anemia, and underweight due to prolonged work, no rest and insufficient food. Newborns also suffer from underweight and anemia that have long-term effects on the future labor force of the nation.

Farming is heavy and often hazardous because farm workers have direct contact with pesticides and chemical fertilizers. However, peasant women are not fully aware of the harmful effects on their health. There is no safe working condition for peasant women and men.

Vietnam has progressive laws to protect equal rights between men and women in all fields. But in reality there is a big gap between men and women in terms of implementation and in terms of empowerment. At all levels of local administration, men remain the decision-makers. Men, following the Confucian edict, still decide important issues in the household. Inequality between men and women can also be seen in terms of opportunity gaps in the fields of training, education and professional development.

For women in rural Vietnam to participate as women, farmers and workers in planning and decision making that shape their choices and opportunities, and for women to voice their aspirations for social and economic transformation, it is important to increase their knowledge and

skills, and to improve the gender awareness of men and women. It is therefore necessary to support grassroots development programs related to rural women in order to improve their roles and capacities as well as to help them face, with the assistance of men, the constraints and challenges of the current market economy. Such programs can enable rural women to be full partners in the development process.

1.2 Gender Fund: The Project History

Gender Equality has been a crosscutting theme in both the Swedish and Danish Development Assistance on line with the environment and consideration for democracy, human rights and good governance.

The Gender Fund (GF) was first established by the Embassy of Sweden in May 1997 with the name, “the Swedish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam”. The two general objectives of the Fund were then and still are to raise the awareness of gender equality, and to strengthen the capacity of organizations working with gender issues.

The Fund expected to raise the awareness of gender equality by supporting gender-related research studies, training courses/seminars, and spreading of information by publications, translations and data collection. It also expected to stimulate the formation of more organizations working on gender issues in Vietnam.

The first evaluation of the GF was conducted after one year of implementation in July and August 1998. The evaluation concluded that the Fund had fulfilled its duties in promoting gender equality in Vietnam and in strengthening the capacity of organizations working on gender issues. Based on this positive assessment, the Swedish Embassy agreed to continue its support of the GF for another two years (2000 and 2001) with a total budget of 2,500,000 SEK.

In August 2000 the Danish Embassy decided to join the Swedish Embassy in supporting the GF. As a one-year pilot effort, the Danish Embassy contributed 1,500,000 DKK (equivalent to 192,000 USD) for the operation of the GF. Since then the name of the Fund has been the “Swedish-Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam”. Except for some minor adjustments regarding geographical concentration and priority activities to highlight the Danish focus areas and sectors, the objectives, target groups, activities and management mechanism of the Fund remain the same.

2 The evaluation

2.1 Reason for the Evaluation: Scope and Focus

The Fund has been operating for four years (1997–2001) with the same approach and the same kind of activities. The Fund, however, has spread out to cover remote communities and has been adapted to various target groups. The present evaluation looks into the past two years (1999–2000) of activities and achievements, and assesses the relevance and impact of the projects that were approved during those two years. The evaluation also looks forward in light of the more overall impact on gender equality coming as a result of the Fund management. The purpose of this evaluation is to answer the following questions: What are the impacts of the projects' activities in relation to the stipulated objectives? How relevant were the types of activities carried out by the projects, the Advisory Group (AG) and the Embassies? What is the most effective way to achieve the goals of the GF?

The Evaluation aims to assess to what extent the GF has fulfilled its main objectives:

- To raise the awareness of gender equality
- To strengthen the capacity of organizations working on gender
- To provide recommendations on possible continuation, adjustments and improvements in the operation of the GF in the future.

The results of this evaluation will constitute the basis for possible continuation and adjustments and changes to the Swedish grant as well as for a possible continuation of the Danish grant to this Fund.

2.2 Evaluation Approach

In order to carry out the above-mentioned assessments, the Evaluation Team (1) assessed the AG's reports and other related documents such as the National Plan of Action, and news clippings, (2) held meetings with the AG members, and the GF-related staff of the Swedish and Danish Embassies, (3) made field visits to selected projects in the South, Center and North of Vietnam, and (4) at each field visit, interviewed the project holder, project management board, and beneficiaries. All the interviews with project-related people and the AG were written down and analyzed for their contents and observations, and for their patterns of contrasts and similarities.

Based on the Terms of Reference (Appendix I), initially, a minimum of three projects with at least one project having the income generating model as one of its activities in each region were planned to be chosen for an in-depth examination. But the projects selected for the field visits had a geographical spread of 6:2:2 for North:Center:South. The reason was that the number of projects in the North was much higher than the number in the Center and the South combined (Appendix II.1). Such a ratio was perceived as giving better representation of the overall projects. Appendix II.5 presents brief profiles of the 10 projects visited, and Appendix II.6 summarizes the projects' activities. The field visits were carried out during May 21–24, and June 7–15, 2001. Appendix II.2 shows the schedule of the field visits. During the field visits, in addition to interviewing the 10 project holders (6 women and 4 men), we met and interviewed 95 project-related people including the management board and the beneficiaries. Appendix II.3 provides the list of people

interviewed/met, and Appendix II.4 classifies these informants, including the AG, by region, sex and affiliation.

The Evaluation Team consisted of two consultants: one international, Dr. Shashi Pandey (Women's Action and Research Initiative, Bangkok, Thailand) and one Vietnamese, Dr. Ngo Thi Tuan Dung (Center for Family and Women's Study, Hanoi). The Team was accompanied by another international expert Dr. Darunee Tantiwiranond and by a full time independent interpreter.

2.3 Limitations of the Study

- The study is largely based on the field visits of only 10 projects from the total of 151 (Appendix II.1).
- The study is also based on interviews with only 3 AG members (two in the North and one in the South). The other four AG members were not available for interviews.
- Not all the resumes (with the AG's comments) of the 10 projects visited were available before the field visits. (The 10 resumes are rearranged by region and summarized in Appendix II.5) Nine out of the 10 projects have completed their activities and already submitted their final reports. The final reports, however, were not available to the Evaluation Team before the field visits.

Although the evaluation was constrained by the limit in the numbers of projects visited (because of time, distance and transportation), and the number of the AG members interviewed, it still has sufficient information to make reasonable judgements and conclusions about the relevance and impact of the GF. All field level observations and conclusions in this report are based on the experiences of the 10 projects visited. There is no intention to imply or generalize that all the 151 projects have the same or necessarily similar performances and outcomes as the 10 projects visited.

3 Findings

3.1 Relevance of the Funded Projects

Needs of Local Poor People

The GF has reached out to the poor and remote areas including mountainous, ethnically diverse, and border areas. Most of these areas lack development assistance. Depending mostly on agriculture, most people live in the vicious cycle of poverty due to low productivity, rain-fed cultivation, vulnerability to flood and drought, and off-season migration. In addition, hilly areas tend to suffer from soil erosion and deforestation leading to low soil fertility and low water retention capacity. Most people want to increase their productivity and have better knowledge of technology such as fertilizer or integrated pest management techniques. They need supplementary income-generating activities to their rice cultivation. Such felt needs are met in some of the projects visited. These projects have paid attention to promoting model farms such as fishponds, chicken raising, or mushroom growing, or organizing information/training sessions on farming techniques including integrated pest management techniques.

One project near Hue city has organized various small saving and loan groups with seed money from the GF. Apart from giving loans for economic activities, each group becomes a discussion and support forum for gender and other social issues. Such a process serves as a training ground for villagers to learn how to form and operate a neighborhood organization. The GF is not a poverty-alleviation or community development program as such, but it has been able to respond to some of the felt needs of the community including the needs of education, training and information.

Needs of Local Women

Village women specifically face three problems. They overwork at home, participate less in social activities (are underrepresented in community decision making process), and suffer more from health and education deprivation. Reproductive tract infection (RTI) is rather common among poor rural women. Gender awareness training directly deals with overwork at home and less public participation. Some projects have added health components such as providing medical checkups, and health education. Some projects were able to raise the importance of having toilets to meet women's needs.

We were told that in such remote areas, organized education efforts hardly reach the women, and having, for example, a library or a bookcase at the hamlet level was almost unthinkable. The GF allocating resources for a bookcase or a library thus specifically meets women's needs for education and information. Other people, men youth and children, also benefit from bookcases.

Project Recipients

Appendix III.2 and Graph 2 show that 58% of the GF recipients are Women's Union (WU)-Heads either at the district or the commune level, 28% are individual citizens, and a small percentage are the members of other mass organizations (e.g., 2% of the Youth Union, and 0.7% of the Farmers' Union), 4% of NGOs, and 7% of other social organizations. We found that some individuals – a retired army person, a farmer, or a community worker – were as efficient as member of the WU, if not more so. Members of other mass organizations such as Youth Union have carried out innovative activities – spreading gender message through drama contests. And one NGO, the

Center for Education Promotion and Empowerment of Women (CEPEW), produced some good written training material on gender.

WU projects, although they often include good outreach mechanisms to grassroots women, often tend to be “women-only” or “mostly women” projects. As one WU project holder said, “We still think gender is women”. All the WU-projects visited did not seem to have men in their management boards, although several men were involved as the training beneficiaries.

Since the WU has established staff and outreach of its own, it tends to do most of its work by itself. For example, in Thai Nguyen province, the project holder, the chairperson of district WU, designed and supervised the research survey (carried out by WU workers at the commune level); and did the gender training herself. There was no gender content or gender analysis in her survey on single women. During the interview, a single mother of six children (the only beneficiary we could interview) could not explain how gender relates to single women. Besides conducting the survey the project holder organized a course on making eyelashes for young girls (daughters of destitute single women). Although this is still a women in development (WID) activity – women-prone (repetitive and tedious work) and unstable (tied to an unstable subcontract), it was considered the most suitable for these young women since it does not require land or capital which many of the women do not have. While the WU need some retraining to extend their outreach to include men, they also need to rethink and refocus on gender and development (GAD) rather than simply continuing their WID approach (focusing on the practical gender needs of destitute women).

Other kinds of groups, especially those formed by individuals, need more encouragement and promotion. Among the visited groups, other groups performed as well, if not better than the WU groups. The larger share of the WU as project recipients is due to its historical and grassroots base, and the percentage of WU applicants being much higher than other applicants. Some AG members also believe that WU projects would be more sustainable because they have the strongest network on women’s issues. Therefore, it will take some time for the GF to balance its fund allocation to other kinds of organizations to accommodate the mandate of both Embassies set forth for the GF in encouraging initiatives of individuals' and other organizations.

Training Contents and Activities

The variation among projects is primarily in the number of project activities and kinds of training. About 1/3 of the projects (33%) have only one activity, i.e., training (Appendix III.3 and Graph 3). Over 1/3 (37%) have two activities in which training is the mainstay (96%). The other activities include establishing a bookcase (59%), followed by either carrying out an investigative research (16%) or an income-generation model (14%), and a few (4%) organized either a contest, printing or the combination of other activities besides training. The remaining projects (27%) have three activities. Only 3% of the projects have 4 activities. The most popular combination is having training and a bookcase and/or contest.

For those providing training, all included gender training with 21% of these projects offering only gender subjects. Other training projects included farming techniques (34%), health issues (22%), legal knowledge (14%), environment (4%) and vocational training (4%) (Appendix III.4 and Graph III.4).

One reason for having more projects on gender training, and very few on research or income generation model was that the latter model was introduced only in 1999 after the first evaluation of the GF as one means to ensure the sustainability of the project. The AG has also paid more attention to the commune level. But the research capacity at this level is still weak.

We found that the projects with one activity (largely on gender training) are often incomplete. They remain a few-day events (although project holders prepare for the event for a few months) rather than a “project” envisioned as an on-going activity and a social process. The advantage of gender training will have a greater and more far-reaching impact if there are other activities such as social clubs, or libraries that could continue the discussion and learning process. In most cases there was an additional training program such as on health, animal husbandry or pepper growing; however, there was hardly any link in those training programs between gender and these topics. For example, the project in Huu Long district, Lang Son province conducted a training on health issues before gender training. The health discussion was largely about women’s diseases and illnesses rather than on how gender factor influence the health access, needs and responsibility of both men and women. In spite of their lack of gender contents, various kinds of information such as on health and laws do help increase the knowledge of women who otherwise are deprived of information.

The concept of gender needs to be integrated in all project activities and training. The lack of integration was partly due to the project holders’ own difficulty in understanding gender concept (e.g., What does gender have to do with health?), and partly in their lack of capacity to implement.

Geographical Location

The GF covers almost all provinces in Vietnam. During 1999–2000 it covered 52 provinces out of the total of 58 (Appendix II.1). About 70% of the funded projects were in the North. The emphasis on poor remote or deprived areas (mountainous or ethnically diverse areas) has been maintained. We were told that, in Vietnam, the North has better access to the media and has more developed mass organizations than the Central and the South. Since the combined total of projects in the Center and the South (47 projects) is less than half of those in the North (103), an effort should be made to have more projects in the Center and South. In the year 2000, 39 projects were funded in the provinces of focus and interest of the Danish Embassy (Appendix IV.2; rows 7 and 8).

Division of Activities between Embassies

The Swedish and Danish Embassies share equally in the administrative cost of the GF. They maintain their preference for particular provinces and particular activities such as DANIDA emphasizing agriculture, water and fisheries. The activities in the areas of interest are decided by the Embassy concerned and are appropriated for the GF.

The division of labor/activities between the Danish and Swedish Embassies has been satisfactory. Since the Swedish and Danish Embassies are like-minded donors, they share several commonalities in their development assistance policies, values and points of view. In most cases they share the same points of view on how to orient, guide, implement and monitor the GF. On the administration costs, both Embassies have kept a memo that clarifies the division of costs. So far both Embassies have worked together smoothly on the GF.

National Plan of Action

The Five-Year Plan of Action 2001–2005 (POA2, 2001–2005) prepared by the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) in Vietnam has given priority to education, health, jobs, leadership and human resource development. All these areas are covered by the GF. The Plan aims to promote women in leadership and to create an enabling social and political environment for gender equality. The training support of the GF is in accordance with POA2.

Groups at Commune Level

We found that individual and commune level people were surprisingly capable of managing community projects. They often sought help from district level officials. The commune level is the most appropriate level for supporting the GF-type projects because the commune is rural (in contrast to the district level that tends to concentrate on district towns) and the structures of People's Councils and People's Committees are also present. But these commune-level projects should have a management board representing different sectors of the society. Most projects we visited either did not understand the role/composition/importance of the representative management board or did not follow the AG's advice in this regard. The AG requires the projects, including WU projects, to form a management board consisting of the project holder and two other persons. For example, if the project owner is a WU member, then the other two persons must be from other associations such as the Youth Union, the Farmers' Union, or individuals. However, while forming the management board, WU projects invariably tend to bypass forming a board representing different stakeholders. The WU tends to use their own WU workers as treasurers and accountants. The AG's detailed guidelines still needs more enforcement. In practice it is possible that a "close" team of 2–3 people can organize a successful gender training session. But the process (having community representation) is as important as the outcome (of a planned event).

Other Donors' Initiatives

Several international agencies ranging from UN organizations (e.g., UNDP and UNICEF), and bilateral organizations (e.g., the Dutch Embassy) to donor agencies (e.g., CIDA and AusAID) are funding gender-related work in Vietnam. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), with the cooperation of some of the above agencies, have also engaged in defining gender agendas and strategies for Vietnam. Some gender mainstreaming at the ministerial level such as that in the Ministry of Forestry and Fisheries is ongoing. But there is little if any gender-related grassroots education and training work. This the GF work does not compete with but rather complements the gender-related work done in Vietnam by other donors and at other levels.

We are not aware of other donors supporting grassroots development programs that also promote gender sensitivity in remote rural areas. Thus there is a special need and relevance for the GF. Donors such as CIDSE, CARE and other agencies with their micro-credit programs do reach out to rural women, but they invariably have a narrow economic focus and do not have a gender component or gender training in the larger social context.

3.2 Impact of the Projects and the Fund

Raising Gender Awareness

The beneficiaries of all projects visited showed great enthusiasm about gender. Most of them had a chance to demonstrate their knowledge and competency about gender during our visits. Both men and women said that they now knew more about gender. Women reported that they felt empowered by the new understanding. *"Before no gender equality in my thoughts, now I know I have rights, and I can claim them"*. Men talked about more appreciation of wife/women's reproductive roles. Realizing that *"women spend more time at home so they have little time for recreation or social activities"*, some men even vowed to *"create more opportunity and better conditions so that more women can participate in public work"*.

Gender training seemed to have enlightened the communities where gender training took place. "If a woman gave birth to three daughters in a row, the husband wanted to divorce her. But now

we know about chromosome theory that it is not a woman's fault". And "Investing in the people is more important because people can generate prosperity. Without good understanding on gender, we can't have happiness. If there are good relations in our family, there is peace. And that is better for building up economic status".

Such knowledge and understanding were not just at a theoretical level but have made a difference in people's life. Although the changes have not come entirely by this training alone, the GF-supported training has accelerated and deepened the pace of change – the winds of change – already blowing in Vietnam through the emphasis of the government and the media. Gender training broadens the perspective and brings discussion close to home, where it is available for daily scrutiny.

- Before young women did not get good treatment from their mothers-in-laws. Now they learned about their rights, they try to struggle against (unfair) customs by persuading others in the family. They discuss about son-daughter preference. Now they conclude that having either sex is o.k.
- Some men help women in daily work and ask their children to help their mothers. The incidents of wife beating or husband's drinking also decrease. We discuss these issues in our group, and talk to the problem family. Gender equality here has been improved.
- I learned from the chart about time use between men and women, and I agree that women spend less time for entertainment. So during the weekend I share more work with her so that she can have more leisure time.
- Women were shy before. Now we are more active and assertive after the cultural meeting and contest between hamlets. Before if women were asked to do social activities, they would be hesitant. Now they are more willing.
- Gender equality is important. I apply it to my work at the office. We men tend to think in men's way...a toilet is not important. I realize now that there should be toilets for men and women separately.

Raising Organizational Skills

Among the funded organizations, the organization skills of all participants that managed these projects have improved. The exercise in engaging in project writing, executing programs with the help of community members and government officials, and writing final project reports have given them new responsibility. Through this process they have learned more from their projects about their communities and about themselves.

There are largely two kinds of organizations that have been funded: (1), Mass organizations such as WU or Youth Union that gained new experiences of doing new things – conducting research, organizing for a contest, setting up a bookcase, or training at the commune level. (2), Individual initiated projects that gave common citizens a chance to run a program by involving other community members and seeking their support and approval. Not all the components of the funded projects are at their best level, but certainly the organization skills of these groups have increased. These groups are ready to run more projects.

Promoting Civil Society

Whenever a new community project is carried out, if it is managed well, it is a boost for participation and group activities. Many people told us that earlier people in the neighborhood rarely came together to deal with neighborhood problems in a systematic way. Now they have come together and have even designed some interesting ways for meeting. For example, one group has started a “question tree” where any one can put question on a tree. During the following group meeting, people will try to answer these questions. So indirectly civilians have gained experience in working together. Education and training on such issues as human rights and women’s public participation is slowly leading to the increased understanding of social issues. These examples of increased knowledge and the experience of coming together will promote citizen’s activities and indirectly the goals of civil society and democratic participation. Furthermore, the encouragement and support of the GF to individual-led but community-managed projects would contribute to the development of organizations other than the existing mass organizations.

Combining Gender and Civil Society

At the moment it is not necessary or even feasible to include the goal of promoting civil society directly, because Vietnamese society is still struggling to institutionalize, legalize or approve the procedure of starting local associations.

Recently, in April 2001, the Prime Minister issued two decision documents – one to establish a committee for forming international NGOs, and the other to outline regulations to utilize aid from international NGOs. A clear legislation on the registration of local NGOs in Vietnam is still pending. But GCOP (Government Committee on Organization and Personnel) has sponsored VUSTA (the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Association) that has 36 NGOs under its umbrella. It is possible that in the next two or three years some definite progress may be made by which it will be possible to register independent neighborhood or community organizations. However an emphasis on funding individual initiatives with community support could be increased because that will indirectly support the formation of civil society organizations that integrate gender issues.

As far as NGOs are concerned, all the 36 registered NGOs are city-based. But city-based NGOs could also be funded if they link or work in partnership with commune level citizen’s organization on the issues of research, documentation and training. About 80 to 90% of registered NGOs do academic research, collecting data from rural areas. Some have training activities and projects in rural areas. After two or three more years of the GF there will be enough “seeds” in terms of experiences gained and grassroots leaders generated that they can later germinate into clusters of independent organizations. The coming two or three years for the GF will provide time for gaining experiences with grassroots organizations and gender issues. After that it may be possible to run larger and bigger development projects that focus on gender and on the growth of civil society organizations. The orientation meetings proposed in the recommendation to improve the capacity of project holders will go a long way in facilitating the emergence of civic activities.

Continuing gender training and related activities with an emphasis on individuals or groups of individual-initiated projects for the next two or three years itself is a worthwhile goal for the GF. Besides the time for grassroots NGO work has not yet arrived. Later it will be possible to add explicit stress on civil society groups and to fund larger projects on gender empowerment and development in such areas as agriculture, water and fisheries.

At the commune level in Vietnam people are quite open and receptive and the structure is more decentralized than outsiders’ sometimes imagine. It would be excellent to have a law on NGOs, but

as long as there is no law, it is a “grey zone” a period where the GF-supported small grassroots grants can operate and play a vital role.

Networking

Along with the issue of sustainability, networking is also a weaker aspect of the projects supported by the GF. Networking is an essential and useful activity. But among the projects visited there is a lack of emphasis, information, or enthusiasm about it. (See the subheading “Networking” in the following section.) So the solution is to increase the emphasis, and to provide knowledge and skill for the projects to carry out networking. The goal of networking has to be strengthened in the proposal and dealt with specifically at the orientation time. A better and well-publicized Newsletter will also play a role in improving networking.

3.3 Functioning of the AG

Participation of Danish Embassy

The AG structure has worked well. The members are efficient and well qualified. The inclusion of the Danish support has given them more finances to distribute and more opportunity to contribute their time to the GF’s process. They are satisfied with their increased workload and remuneration.

Adjustment

The AG has seven members (Appendix IV.1). It has regularly held quarterly meetings and one annual meeting (Appendix IV.2, and IV.3). Most project holders praised the AG’s ability to guide and modify their proposals. According to our assessment the AG also made good judgement in their selection of projects and in giving suggestions while approving the projects. No adjustments in the regulations or administration are really necessary although monitoring process can be improved. The standing agreement between the two Embassies and the AG members that each member will (1) visit at least 2 projects per quarter, and (2) write short reports to be included in the Newsletter is very worthwhile and should continue with regularity.

Division of Responsibility among the AG and the Two Embassies

The division of labor/activities between the Danish and Swedish Embassies and the AG has been satisfactory. When the GF members assess the proposals and make a list of recommended projects to the two Embassies, those projects in the DANIDA-focus areas are to be submitted to the Danish Embassy and the rest to the Swedish Embassy. So far, the division of projects is often 50% Danish funded and 50% Swedish funded, and this suits perfectly the Danish and Swedish budgets.

Regarding the cooperation between the GF and the two Embassies, there is a very good cooperation where both the Fund or the two Embassy representatives can at any time ask for a meeting to discuss necessary issues or raise issues on how to improve the implementation of the Fund. The AG members are always very willing and open to discuss these issues with the two Embassies and vice versa.

Newsletter

The Newsletter is very useful but it is printed in limited number (50 copies in English and 70 in Vietnamese) and reaches only selected people/agencies. The presentation of the Newsletter has improved from No.1 to No.6, but still the contents are not attractively produced in an easy-to-read style, partly because so far the Newsletter has acted mostly as a six-monthly report of the AG to the

Embassies. Changes in the contents, style and number of copies printed are necessary. These changes are discussed in the recommendations.

Networking

Networking among project holders has varied from non-existing to quite weak. In Hue, the two projects that we visited are only 10 km apart, but they did not know about each other. Therefore they had not been able to utilize or multiply each other's experiences and expertise. Part of the problem seemed to be that there was no clearly "vocalized" goal on networking set for project holders to achieve, so project holders did not think that it was part of their duty or something that they should have attempted to. When asked, "Do you know about other projects?" the answers were invariably "No" with a surprised look, as if to say, "Are we supposed to know?" On further discussion, the project holders did see the point and agreed that networking would be useful. For the last three annual meetings, the AG has invited selected project holders to share their implementation experiences. But it had only a limited impact, since these project holders had already finished their tasks. Inviting some of them to the orientation meeting for new project holders will be more useful.

3.4 Implementation, Monitoring, and Management of the Fund

Time Schedule

Among the 151 projects, 60% of the projects have already completed their activities, 12% are in the middle stage, and 28% are in their final stage (Appendix III.1 and Graph 1). Almost all projects were running on schedule. Most projects visited seemed to have followed the time schedule proposed. Some were so efficient that they finished the projects in two or three months. Only one case, a WU-based project in Huu Long district, Lang Son province (approved in September 2000), intentionally delayed the gender training. The reason was that they wanted to include those new women leaders who would be elected in the upcoming Women's Congress of August 2001. The project, however, has completed its health awareness campaign. It is trying to set up a bookcase and is in the process of acquiring books. The project is in the middle of training, villagers in integrated pest management techniques.

Financial Management

Financial management in the projects that had different community members on the management board appeared to be more efficient than in those projects having only one person (the project holder) assisted by a treasurer or an accountant. All projects are required to submit all the receipts of their expenditure, and to involve several people including local officials in financial management.

Utilization of the Grant

Although most projects followed their original proposed outlines, not all could duly follow the AG's advice (Appendix V compares proposed activities of the funded projects with the AG's comments and actual activities carried out). The differences are in terms of the training frequency and number of beneficiaries. We were told that those changes were made to save time and resources often in consultation with, or agreement of, the regional AG representatives. Cost effectiveness seems to be a more pressing criterion than maximizing the project's goals or conducting the project as a "social process" – an ongoing activity that continues to involve people for a longer period of time.

It appears that most projects visited did have a project staff as management board but did not follow the AG's suggestion of forming a management board with community representation or having plans for a long-term action.

First Evaluation

The changes in the AG's policies (promoting remote areas, releasing 80% of the grant at the beginning, and the remaining 20% at the end) and the Embassies' discussion document show that recommendations from the first evaluation were taken into consideration, although not sufficient progress has been made on all aspects. Some projects still did not combine gender equality issues with other activities. Some progress in increasing the contact between project holders by sharing of experience in meetings has been made, but more needs to be done.

Risks of Influence, Narrow Focus, or Fund Misuse

Even though all the projects evaluated were either linked to mass organizations that are part of the government structure or to individuals who have the support of persons on local councils and committees, the risk of bureaucratic influence was not found. At the commune and hamlet levels there was such a dearth of resource for community activities that in fact all officials we met welcomed the opportunity to receive grants and conduct such activities. Two factors – (1) that the project provided some monetary support and needed human resource development, and (2) that the project directly benefited these areas – seemed to have overcome any bureaucratic hurdles there might have been. The issues of having too narrow perspectives and beneficiaries being linked with people in power were dealt with in the AG's recommendations. The requirement for project holders to form the management board and to submit the receipts was a checking mechanism for possible fund misuse. The amount being small and being managed by a group has helped to minimize any possible misuse of the fund.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Meeting the objectives

To a large extent the overall objectives of raising gender awareness and increasing organization capacity have been achieved. The achievement in raising gender awareness, however, is at a higher level than the achievement in capacity building of community organizations. The reason is because while the resources and inputs of training and experts are available and directed to achieve the first objective, the second objective is to be achieved by one's own creativity, or by following the given oral or written advice of the AG. Building the capacity of project staff in understanding gender and managing projects will help to achieve both objectives at a higher level of efficiency.

Effects

Gender training has affected villagers, officials and project holders positively and differently. Villagers' skill, knowledge and confidence on gender have improved. Commune officials talk about recruiting women in management positions, and constructing separate toilets for women and men staff. Project holders are ready to plan for other activities and to use their organization experience in future projects.

Sustainability

Project sustainability is visible in some projects where social clubs or libraries were formed. Most projects, however, were not planned well *particularly on gender integration and involving community women in planning and organization*. Most project holders still perceived the lack of money as a hurdle for having follow-up activities. Sustainability is a somewhat weaker aspect of most funded projects that we visited. Since September 1999, the GF has introduced a new type of activities, i.e., income generation models, as one way to ensure the sustainability of the projects. Together with other activities such as the promotion of clubs, libraries, this new types of activities may have positive effect toward the sustainability of the funded projects.

Small Fund through the AG

The model of the GF in providing small grants to grassroots level projects through a team of local/Vietnamese experts or the AG is an exceptional, worthwhile and working model. It should continue.

Overall

The GF meets people's needs and is effective in meeting its twin objectives. With the promotion of gender awareness and grassroots organizations, the GF is assisting rural men and women in their human resource development, and thereby in improving their potential of labor force for more sustainable economic growth in the new century.

4.2 Recommendations

The following adjustments regarding the choice of groups, the amount of funds and the kinds of activities would make the GF function better – more efficient and sustainable. *We strongly recommend the AG's planning for an orientation meeting to provide organizational support for new project holders. A refresher workshop-cum-training for the AG members is also suggested.*

Group choice

Besides the WU, other mass organizations and especially individual initiatives should be encouraged to form groups and seek funds. City-based NGOs could work with local level workers in such activities as research, training, preparing documents and sharing information. If a WU group is funded, the AG should require the project holder to reorient the focus to gender and move away from a women-only approach.

Amount

Each project should be funded with no less than 2,000 USD. Some projects, if they show more promise, could be considered for 5,000 USD in order for there to be a visible development impact. The Swedish Embassy allows a maximum of 5,000 USD while the Danish Embassy 7,000 USD. And some projects could be given, if performing well, a follow-up grant as well.

Activities

All projects should have gender training plus other activities. Project holders should realize the importance of making their projects a social process (a continuing program) rather than as an exercise in planning an event. To sustain such a social process requires committed participation, meeting the beneficiaries' needs, and developing local leadership. Projects could be informed that the Fund is expecting the project holders to form a project management team that represents various interest groups in their areas.

Planning after Approval

After a project is approved, the project holders should be advised to form a management board and send detailed plans of action to the AG indicating how they are going to incorporate the AG's suggestions.

Orientation after approval

There should be an orientation for new project holders at the quarterly meetings. The purposes of the meetings would be not only to explain administrative procedure and project management team, but also to explain about the need for gender integration, the importance of networking and building sustainability. Funds for the orientation meeting should be estimated and included in the budget for the next two years of the GF.

Uniformity of the AG and a Refresher Course

The AG members do not seem to have the same understanding about gender, about the priority of the GF and about the desirable quality of a model project. There is a need to create a uniformity of understanding so that when a regional AG member is advising/approving a change requested by a local project holder, those AG guidelines are kept in view.

The AG members should have a meeting among themselves to discuss gender issues that are arising in the process of their operation. Any changes different from the AG's comments after projects' approval should be communicated to the whole AG, even though the local AG may have agreed to make adjustments after the request. Since the AG members play very important advisory and monitoring roles, a discussion/training session or a refresher workshop for the AG members is suggested to get a clear and uniform understanding of topics such as gender integration, gender indicators, gender monitoring, running a development project, and writing reader-friendly reports.

More Active Role of the AG

Around the middle of the ongoing projects, the AG members should visit projects in their regions to see their progress and advise the rest of the course of the project. According to the standing agreement with the two Embassies, the goal of the AG members' visiting two projects per quarter is very worthwhile. Thus at least half of the projects (14) could be visited every quarter (assuming about 25–30 projects are approved quarterly). The AG members should monitor projects more carefully on community management and gender integration aspect, and also write a one-page reader-friendly summary of the project to be included in the Newsletter.

Wider Distribution and Better Presentation of the Newsletter

At least 200 to 300 copies of the Newsletter should be produced. A part-time editor could be hired to give the Newsletter a professional and easy-to-read format. The Newsletter could also be advantageous to the GF for encouraging networking and resource exchange.

Better Organized GF office

The GF office plays a vital link role. It has rich resources of information on projects and resources (both printed and visual media) generated by various projects. These materials need to be organized and circulated among project holders. Developing a document/resource center will also be helpful for future research and evaluation.

5 Lessons learned

1. The GF is a “good practice”

One important lesson learned is that the concept of allocating funds especially for gender, and administrating those funds through a local advisory group is a worthwhile and working model. It is an example of a “good practice” that could be adopted fruitfully by other countries that are at a similar stage of development such as Lao PDR, Cambodia, East Timor and Myanmar.

2. Grassroots development works

The experience of the GF also shows that the emphasis on grassroots development based on the initiatives and creativity of local women, workers, and officials meets their needs and works as well as, if not better than, the macro models of human resources development planning.

3. Donors’ successful cooperation is possible

The experiences of the GF also demonstrates that like-minded donors such as the Swedish and Danish Embassies can fruitfully pool their resources, run a program together, and make it a success.

References

Term of Reference for Evaluation of the Project 'Swedish and Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam, Danish Embassy and Swedish Embassy, Hanoi, May 2001

Danish Vietnamese Fund for Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam (Background paper), Danish Embassy and Swedish Embassy, Hanoi, May 2001

Decision of the Prime Minister of the Government: On the issuance of the regulation on the management and utilization of aid from international non-governmental organizations. (Decision No. 64/2001/QĐ-TTg). April 26, 2001

Decision of the Prime Minister: On the establishment of the Committee for Foreign Non-Governmental Organization Affairs. (No. 59/2001/QĐ-TTg). April 24, 2001

Working Group on Civil Society and Community Participation (Status as of October 2000), The World Bank, 2000

Standard Project Document for the Establishment of the Danish Gender Fund signed between the Danish Embassy and the Advisory Group, August 2000.

Guidelines for Governing and Operation of Gender Fund, Swedish Embassy and Danish Embassy, Hanoi, August 2000

Assessment Memo on the Swedish - Vietnamese Gender Fund, July 26, 2000

Agreed Minutes between the Swedish Embassy and the Danish Embassy on the co-operation in this Fund, July 2000

Report on Evaluation of the Swedish Fund for Promotion of Gender Equality after one year of implementation, SIDA-Hanoi, August 1998

National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam by the Year 2000, Women's Publishing House, Hanoi, 1997

Appendix I

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of “Swedish and Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam”

1. BACKGROUND

Gender Equality has always been a cross-cutting theme in both the Swedish and Danish Development Assistance on line with the environment and consideration for democracy, human rights and good governance.

“The Swedish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam” was established in May 1997. The two general objectives of the Fund agreed when it was established are:

- To raise awareness of gender equality;
- To strengthen the capacity of organizations working with gender issues.

The Fund is expected:

- To raise awareness of gender equality by support to research, studies, training courses/seminars, spreading of information on international gender activities among Vietnamese women by publications, translation and data collection etc.
- To stimulate the increase of organizations working with gender issues in Vietnam.

The first evaluation of the Fund in July and August 1998 concluded that the Fund had clearly fulfilled its duties to promote gender equality in Vietnam and strengthen the capacity of organizations working with gender issues. Such a good assessment has led to the Swedish approval of a 2 year (2000 and 2001) continuation with the total budget of 2,500,000 SEK.

In August 2000, the Danish Embassy decided to join in this Fund for one pilot year and allocated an amount of 1,500,000 DKK (equivalent to 192,000 USD) for the one-year operation. The name of the Fund has thus been changed to “Swedish Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam”. Except some minor adjustments regarding geographical concentration and priority activities to highlight the Danish focus areas and sectors, the objectives, target groups, activities and the management mechanism of the Fund are maintained the same.

The results of this evaluation will constitute the basis for possible continuation and adjustments and changes to the Swedish grants as well as for a possible continuation of the Danish grant to this Fund.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

2.1. Scope and purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation will look on the past and assess relevance and impact of the project carried out with support from the fund. The evaluation will also look forward in light of the more overall impact on gender equality coming as a result of the fund management.

The co-operation has been going on for four years with the same approach and the same kind of activities however spread out to cover and be adapted to the various target groups. There is a need

to assess the impact of the activities in relation to the stipulated objectives. There is also a need to assess whether the types of activities carried out were relevant, appropriate and the most effective way to achieve the goals.

The Evaluation aims to evaluate to what extent the Fund has fulfilled its main objectives:

- To raise awareness of gender equality
- To strengthen the capacity of organizations working with gender
- To provide recommendations on possible continuation, adjustments and improvements in the operation of the Fund in the future.

3. ISSUES TO BE COVERED IN THE EVALUATION

*3.1 Analyse the **relevance** of the projects carried out with support from the Fund*

- * Have these types of support/training responded to the needs of the local poor people in general and the women in particulars in the areas?
- * Is the selection of the recipients appropriate? Should there be any adjustments/changes regarding target recipients?
- * Are the proportions of the training contents, of the support given to different activities (training, research, income generating models...) appropriate?
- * Are the geographical locations of the activities in accordance with the Fund's general focus on poor and remote areas and with the Danish particular focus areas?
- * Is the division of activities/areas to be supported either by Sweden and Denmark Embassy appropriate? Should there be any adjustments?
- * Are these types of training/support in accordance with the objectives specified in the Plan of Action (2001–2005) for the Advancement of Vietnamese women?
- * Are the members of the communal women's union or the individuals capable enough to implement and manage the support?
- * What is the need and relevance of the fund in relation to other donor supported initiatives in remote rural areas?

*3.2 Analyse the **impact** of the projects and the fund*

- * To what extent the expressed objectives of the Fund, to raise awareness of gender equality and to strengthen the capacity of organizations working with gender issues, have been reached?
- * How far has the indirect objective to promote civil society, democracy and human rights been reached?
- * Is it possible to mix the two objectives of the Fund or is it to take on "too much"?
- * Can the Fund be geared to further support the "civil society" and development of NGOs?
- * To what extent has the fund led to increased networking on gender equality in Vietnam and in the region?

*3.3 The functioning of the **Advisory Group** (AG)*

- * With the Danish participation in the Fund, is the AG capable to manage both the Swedish and the Danish supported activities?
- * Should there be any adjustments/changes/improvements regarding the Fund's regulations, organizational set up, administration/monitoring procedures... to fulfil the revised mandate?
- * Are the divisions of responsibilities among the AG, the Swedish Embassy and the Danish Embassy appropriate?
- * Has the Newsletter proved to be useful and efficient in disseminating information and knowledge and lessons learnt? Should there be any adjustments/improvements regarding the forms, the content, the distribution... of the Newsletter?
- * How has networking and information activities been carried out and what improvements can be made?

3.4 The Implementation/monitoring/financial management/cost effectiveness of the Fund

- * How many projects have been implemented in accordance with the time- schedules?
- * Is the financial management of the Fund efficient?
- * Is the utilization of the grants in accordance with the approved activities/ budgets?
- * Have the recommendations from the last evaluation been taken into consideration?
- * To what extent has the Fund dealt with the risks such as possible interference from local authorities, too narrow project perspective or beneficiaries only among those in power and possible misuse of project funds.

4. BASED ON THE ABOVE ANALYSIS MAKE CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON

- * To what extent have the overall and specific objectives been achieved?
- * What effects for the target groups, professionals and individuals can be traced?
- * To what extent is there any sustainability of the activities carried out – have there been any own initiatives?
- * Whether the support to small scale project through an advisory group should continue?
- * If the project should continue, should there be any adjustments/improvements regarding the beneficiaries/kind of projects/administration/procedures/ activities/ways of support in the future?

5. METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Methodology

In order to carry out the above-mentioned assessments, the consultants should

- * Assess reports from the AG and the projects and other related documents such as overall Vietnamese policies

- * Hold meetings with the members of the AG, staff at the Swedish and Danish Embassies
- * Make field visits to south, center and north Vietnam and during these field visits:
- * Hold meetings with project leaders
- * Interview individual beneficiaries project participants and organisations/ institutions of the Fund.

It is suggested that a minimum of three projects in each area are examined in depth of which at least one project has the income generating models as one of its activities.

5.2 Composition of the team of evaluators and time schedule

The evaluation will be carried out by one international and one national qualified consultants. The team shall have the following qualifications:

- Extensive competence and knowledge of policies and methods of promoting gender equality based on international human rights standards
- Experience from developing competence and practices in the area of gender equality and women's rights
- Experience from evaluation of gender equality projects
- One of the consultants must have documented skill in evaluation methods
- The team shall have knowledge and experience of working with NGOs/mass organizations at local level, conducting evaluation studies, be familiar with Vietnamese conditions and especially be sensitive with gender issues.

A full time independent interpreter shall be appointed to the team.

The Evaluation will be carried out during May/June 2001.

Man weeks shall be organized as follows:

	work in country of residence	work in Vietnam
Team leader	20 days	15 days
Local Consultant	5 days	15 days
Interpreter		15 days

The team leader shall have the main responsibility to compile the final report. The local consultant shall have to send his/her report to the team leader not later than 7 days after the completion of the field trips.

Contracts with international consultants and with the local consultant/ interpreter will be signed by the Embassy of Denmark.

The work in Vietnam shall start with a preparatory meeting with the Embassy of Denmark and Sweden, and there after that with the Director of the AG. Also there will be a sum up meeting with the AG and the Embassies upon leaving Vietnam.

The evaluation is carried out upon request of the Embassies of Denmark and Sweden and the team report to Embassies. The role of AG is to facilitate the evaluation in all aspects by providing written and oral documentation and also organizing meetings and workshops. The AG will have the main

responsibility to in preparing the program and practical arrangements but in close consultation with Embassies.

6. REPORTING

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 20 pages, excluding annexes. Format and outline of the report shall follow the enclosed guidelines in *Evaluation Report-A Standardized Format* (see Annex 1). 2 copies of the draft report shall be submitted to the Embassies of Denmark and Sweden in Hanoi no later than 10 July 2001. Within 2 weeks after receiving comments on the draft report, a final version in 2 copies and on diskette shall be submitted to both Embassies.

Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 97 for Windows (or in a compatible format) and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

The evaluation assignment includes the production of a Newsletter summary following the guidelines in *Sida Evaluations Newsletter – Guidelines for Evaluation Managers and Consultants* (Annex 2) and also the completion of *Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet* (Annex 3).

List of references

The Report on Evaluation of the Swedish Fund for Promotion of Gender Equality after one year of implementation – SIDA August 1998

Assessment Memo on the Swedish – Vietnamese Gender Fund dated 2000-07-26

The Agreed Minutes between the Swedish Embassy and the Danish Embassy on the cooperation in this Fund–July 2000

The Standard Project Document for the Establishment of the Danish Gender Fund signed between the Danish Embassy and the Advisory Group – August 2000

The guidelines established by the Swedish Embassy and the Danish Embassy governing the operation of the Fund, e.g.: Activities for possible support from the Fund, Regulations of the Advisory Group, Criteria to apply for the support from the Fund, Application for support, Estimated budget for the Fund...etc. – August 2000

Appendix II

Details of the 10 Projects Visited

II. 1 Geographical distribution of the 151 GF-funded projects by region and province, and Location of the 10 project visited

	Province	# Projects	Visited
	North		
1	Bac Giang	2	1
2	Bac Ninh	4	
3	Cao Bang	4	
4	Hanoi	7	1
5	Ha Giang	3	
6	Ha Nam	3	
7	Ha Tay	3	
8	Ha Tinh	6	
9	Hai Duong	3	1
10	Hoa Binh	6	
11	His Phong	2	
12	Hung Yen	3	
13	Lai Chau	1	
14	Lang Son	2	1
15	Lao Cai	5	
16	Nam Dinh	1	
17	Nghe Anh	4	
18	Ninh Binh	3	
19	Phu Tho	6	
20	Quang Ninh	4	
21	Thanh Hoa	5	1
22	Thai Binh	4	
23	Thai Nguyen	6	1
24	Tuyen Quang	6	
25	Vinh Phuc	2	
26	Yen Bai	3	
27	Son La	5	
		103	6

	Province	# Projects	Visited
	Central		
1	Binh Dinh	2	
2	Dak Lak	3	
3	Da Nang	2	
4	Gai Lai	2	
5	Khanh Hoa	3	
6	Kon Tum	1	
7	Phu Yen	2	
8	Quang Binh	2	
9	Quang Nam	3	
10	Quang Ngai	2	
11	Quang Tri	3	
12	TT Hue	5	2
		30	2
	South		
1	???	1	
2	An Giang	1	
3	Ca Mau	2	
4	Bac Can	1	
5	Binh Thuan	1	
6	Dong Nai	2	
7	Dong Thap	2	1
8	Kien Giang	2	
9	Lam Dong	1	
10	Long An	1	
11	Ninh Thuan	1	
12	Tay Ninh	2	1
13	Tra Vinh	1	
		17	2

II.2 Schedule for field visits and key persons interviewed during May 21–June 15, 2001

Date	Key Persons Interviewed	Province, District	Commune, Hamlet / (Place)	Code (Appx II.2)
5/21	Prof. Le Thi Chair, AG	Hanoi	(Gender Fund Office)	
5/22	<i>Royal Danish Embassy:</i> Mr. Torben Bellers, Counsellor Ms. Nguyen Kim Quy, Program Officer <i>Embassy of Sweden:</i> Ms. Christine Johansson, First Secretary Ms. Hoang Thi Dieu Hang, Progm Officer	Hanoi	(Royal Danish Embassy)	
		NORTH		
5/23	Mr. Nguyen Linh Hoat (Farmer)	Hai Duong, Tu Ky	Tien Dong, Quan Loc	7/2/1
5/24	Ms. Ly Thi Van (Chair, commune WU)	Lang son, Huu Lung	Tan Thanh	6/8/2
6/7	Mr. Ha Van Dong (Farmer, Retired soldier)	Bac Giang, Hiep Hoa	Ngoc Son, Quyen	3/18/3
6/8	Ms. Vuong Thi Hanh (Chair, NGO)	Hanoi	(CEPEW office)	3/10/4 8/5/4
		SOUTH		
6/9	Ms. Nguyen Thi Hue (Chair, district WU)	Tay Ninh, Tan Bien		6/9/9
6/9	Mr. Nguyen Xuan Nghia AG (S)	Ho Chi Minh City	(Rex Hotel)	
6/10	Ms. Le Thi Tam (Chair, district WU)	Dong Thap, Lai Vung	Hoa Long (subdist)	4/4/10
		CENTRAL		
6/11	Mr. Tran Quan Lap (Provincial Youth Union)	Hue, Thua Thien		3/20/7
6/12	Mr. Pham Van Toan (Chair, hamlet anti-illiteracy group)	Hue, Thua Thien	Thuy An, Ngu Tay	2/5/8
		NORTH		
6/12	Ms. Haong Thi Lich AG (N)	Hanoi	(Gender Fund Office)	
6/14	Ms. Nguyen Thi Hieu (Chair, dist. WU) Ms. Hoang Thi Loan (Chair, com. WU)	Thanh Hoa, Tho Xuan	Tay Ho	8/2/5
6/15	Ms. Nguyen Thuy Lam (Chair, district WU)	Thai Nguyen, Pho Yen	Trung Thanh	5/2/6
	Debriefing: Ms. Quy, Ms. Hang, Md. Le Thi	Hanoi	(Gender Fund Office)	

II.3 Names and positions/affiliation of people met and interviewed at 10 project sites

Date	Province (Place)	Name	Position, Affiliation
5/23	Hai Duong (Tien Dong com.)	Mr. Nguyen Linh Hoat Mr. Pham Van Y.. Mr. Lam Van Khanh Mr. Dinh Hung Trang Mr. Nguyen Van Luc Mr. Phung Van Ba Mr. Phung Duy Dan Mr. Lam van Hung Ms. Pham Thi Hoa Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Ms. Dinh Thanh Tho Ms. Nguyen Thi Tam Ms. Nguyen Thi Toan Ms. Doan Thi Loc	Farmer, Project Holder Commune Chair YU Secretary Farmer Union Standing Committee Mem. WU Vice Chair WU Standing Committee Member WU Member
5/24	Lang Son (Tan Thanh com.)	Ms. Li Thi Van Ms. Nong Thi Siu Mr. Nong Van Then Mr. Phuong Van Va Mr. Li Binh Mr. Dam Cao	WU-Commune Chair, Project Holder WU-Distr. Chair, District PCC. Member, Project Adviser CP Secretary PCm. Chair PCm. Vice Chair PCC. Vice Chair
6/7	Bac Giang (Ngoc Son com.)	Mr. Ha Van Dong Mr. Nguyen Ba Nghi Mr. Nguyen Thang Mr. Tinh Mr. Chien Mr. Binh Ms. Buc Ms. Thoan	Farmer, Retired soldier, Project Holder CP Vice Secretary, PCm. Chair CP Secretariat Member, PCC. Vice Chair PCm. Vice Chair Commune Police Chair Culture & Information Division Chief WU Chair WU Vice Chair
	(Quyen hamlet)	Mr. Den Mr. Tai Ms. Thoi +3 men, 11 women	PCm. Unit Secretary Hamlet Chair WU-Hamlet Chair
6/8	Hanoi	Ms. Vuong Thi Hanh	Director CEPEW (NGO), Project Holder
6/9	Tay Ninh (Tan Bien distr.)	Ms. Nguyen Thi Hue Ms. Phan Thi Diep	WU-District Chair, Project Holder WU-District Vice Chair
	(Tan Bien Town Club)	Ms. Luu Thi Chiem Ms. Le Thanh Hong Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Man Ms. Thuy Thanh	Club Chair Club Member Club Member WU Town Unit Chair

		<i>Ms. Le thi Diu</i> <i>Mr. Nguyen BaThuy</i> <i>Mr. Tam</i> <i>Mr. Hieu</i>	WU Town Unit Vice Chair Administration-District Chair Cultural and Information Division Youth Union
6/10	Dong Thap (Lai Vung distr.)	Ms. Le Thi Tam <i>Ms. Phuoc</i> <i>Ms. Mi Thanh</i> <i>Ms. Bach Phuong</i> <i>Ms. Be Bay</i> <i>Ms. Dong Thi Bich Loan</i> <i>Mr. Hai</i> <i>Mr. Nam</i> <i>Mr. Le</i>	WU-District Chair, Project Holder WU-District Vice Chair WU-District Member WU Member Fatherland Front-Distr., Social Advoc. Div. Fatherland Front-Commune Chair Dong Thang Commune Chair Youth Union-District Administration Division-District
6/11	Hue (City)	Mr. Tran Quang Lap <i>Mr. Minh</i> <i>Ms. Loan</i>	Youth Union, Communic. Cent. Population Health & Environ. Director, Project Holder: Youth Union-Province Vice Secretary Youth Union Ward Club Chair
6/12	Hue (Ngu Tay hamlet)	Mr. Pham Van Toan <i>Mr. Khoi</i> <i>Mr. Sinh</i>	Anti-Illiteracy Group Chair, Project Holder Hamlet Chair Farmer
	Hamlet grp meeting	6 women, 1 man	
6/14	Thanh Hoa (Tho Xuan distr.)	Ms. Hoang Thi Loan Ms. Le Thi Hieu <i>Ms. Sinh</i> <i>Ms. Thinh</i> <i>Ms. Hong</i> <i>Ms. Lan</i>	WU-Commune Chair Project Holder WU-District Chair, Project Advisor WU Vice Chair WU Vice Chair WU Standing Committee Member WU Standing Committee Member
	(Tay Ho com.)	<i>Mr. Khanh</i> <i>Mr. Hung</i> +6 women, 4 men	CP Committee Member PC Officer
6/15	Thai Nguyen (Pho Yen distr.)	Ms. Vu Thuy Lam	WU-District Chair, Distr. PCc. Law Division Member, Project Holder
	Vocational Training Unit	5 village girl: 1 trainer, 4 trainees	Eyelash-making class
	Chua hamlet	<i>Ms. Nghia</i>	Divorced, Farmer

CP = Communist Party
PCc = People Council
PCm = People Committee

II.4 Analysis of persons interviewed/met (AG, Project holders, Management board, and Beneficiaries) by region, sex and professional status/affiliation

Interviewee	Total	Region		
		N	C	S
Advisory Group (AG) Total	3	2	-	1
Women (researcher & retired)	2	2	-	-
Men (university lecturer)	1	-	-	1
Project visited Total	10	6	2	2
Project holder				
Female	6	4	-	2
Male	4	2	2	-
Women's Union	5	3	-	2
Youth Union	1	-	1	-
NGO	1	1	-	-
Individual	3	2	1	-
Others (Project team, Beneficiaries, and Observers)				
Female	58	39	7	12
Male	37	27	4	6

II.5 Brief profiles and AG's comments of the 10 projects visited arranged by region (based on project resumes)

NORTH

1. Project in Hai Duong province code: 7/2/1

Project holder: Mr. Nguyen Linh Hoat

Position: Farmer

Address: Quan Loc hamlet, Tien Dong commune, Tu Ky dist, Hai Duong prov

Project name: "Fresh water fish raising and gender equality improvement for men and women in Tien Dong commune"

Rationale: Tien Dong is a rather large but low area of Tu Ky distr. There are ponds, small rivers but they are not yet used for farming purpose. So they cause submersion to the rice crops in rainy days. Poor households are 54% of the total, and 50% of them are always in hunger. Farmers (mostly men) often go out to look for other jobs because the main occupation in the commune is rice planting. So the women have to live a hard life when they have to do all the farming work. Besides, they also do not have any chance to access to any necessary knowledge.

Objectives:

1. to raise gender awareness for men and women in commune
2. to create supplementary jobs for male farmers like fish raising, then to improve the right of decision making for women in household economy.

Activities:

1. to build 10 models of fresh water fish raising in 5 hamlets
2. to open 3 training classes: 2 gender classes and 1 class of fishery technique and husbandry
3. to set up a bookcase for the commune

Beneficiaries: both men and women in commune

Amount requested: USD 7,020 (VND98,280,000)

Amount approved: VND 40 million for 1 year

AG's comments:

1. This is the second proposal from Hai Duong prv. The activities are various—training classes, development of models of fish raising, and husbandry in order to raise the income and to promote the women's right, bookcase.
2. AG agreed with the three activities proposed. However, training classes should be 2 with the 2 integrated contents: gender and technique of fish raising and husbandry. There should be 3 days for each class. The total number of learners should be 120-150. The fund will not support the activity of pond digging. The project management board should have a representative from the commune women union

2. Project in Lang Son 6/8/2

Project holder: Ms. Ly Thi **Van** (member of People Council of Tan Thanh c.)

Address: Tan Thanh com., Huu Lung dist., Lang Son prov

Tel: 025-825-523 (0)

Project Name: "Improvement of knowledge on gender, network of people to disseminate farming technique, and a bookcase establishment for women in Tan Thanh commune"

Rationale: Tan Thanh has 4 ethnic groups: Tay, Nung, Hoa and Kinh. People do manly agric. work and forestry. The education level is low. Women do not have the chance to learn. It is popular that women get the disease of goiter because they do not have enough salt for the lives.

Objectives: to provide gender and household economy knowledge for women, to set up a bookcase and a network to disseminate framing technique

Activities:

1. to open classes on gender for 200 people
2. to set up a network to disseminate the knowledge of husbandry and farming: to choose 8 people
3. to set up a bookcase for women and to choose 2 people to manage the bookcase.

Beneficiaries: key officers and women in Tan Thanh commune

Amount requested: USD 4,295 (VND 60,130,000)

Amount approved: VND 32 million

AG's comments:

1. This commune is mountainous and poor, where many ethnic people are living. Women are the most disadvantaged groups.
2. The AG agreed on the activities. However, 200 learners should be divided into 3 or 4 classes. Each class should last for 2 days with 2/3 women and 1/3 men. There should be concrete plan of dissemination for 8 people who learn farming technique.
3. There should be a long-term action plan for the project.

3. Project in Bac Giang 3/18/3

Project holder: Mr. Ha Van **Dong**

Position: A retired army officer in Quyen hamlet, Ngoc Son commune, Hiep Hoa district, Bac Giang province (mountainous commune)

Project name: Training of gender knowledge and bookcase setting- up for people in the commune.

Rationale: Ngoc Son is one of five mountainous communes of Hiep Hoa district. Women account for 52% of the population in the commune. The cultivated land is limited. The number of children that drop out of schools is high, especially the number of girls. The situation of early marriage is popular. Women there lack of knowledge and information.

Objectives:

1. To raise gender awareness of men and women in the commune

Activities:

1. To open 2 training classes for 80 people in the commune on gender and health care for women and children.
2. To set up a bookcase for young people in the commune.

Beneficiaries: Both men and women in the commune.

Amount approved: USD 2,000 (VND 28 million)

AG's comments:

1. The training classes: the number of learners should be increased up to 50 or 60 people in each class. The time for each class should be 3 days.

2. For the bookcase, there should be records for buying and lending books. After a period of time there should be meetings for readers to exchange their opinion.
3. There should be a long- termed action plan for this project.

4. Project in Hanoi 3/10/4 & 8/5/4

Project holder:	Dr. (Ms.) Vuong Thi Hanh
Position:	Director, CEPEW (NGO, main activities are for gender equality, favour condition giving to women to access to information of gender, S&T.
Address:	D1-113- Trung Tu, Dong Da district, Ha Noi
Tel.:	572-6789
Project Name:	Printing training document of gender for rural women in communes.
Rationale:	Women are of the most disadvantaged group. At the grassroots level, women are unaware of gender issue. Moreover, their educational level is very low. Besides, in remote areas, women also do not have access to information (radio, television, newspapers)
Ojectives:	To raise gender awareness of men and women in the commune
Activities:	1. To design the illustrated training documents 2. To print 2,000 thin books and 3,000 leaflets 3. To open a class for teachers on how to use this training documents
Beneficiaries:	Everyone in the commuee (men, women and children)
Amount approved:	USD 2,000 (VND 28 million)
AG's comments:	There should be a long- termed action plan for this project.

5. Project in Thanh Hoa province 8/2/5

Project holder:	Ms. Hoang Thi Loan
Position:	Chair WU Tay Ho commune
Project consultant:	Ms. Nguyen Thi Hieu, Chair WU of Tho Xuan district
Address:	Tay Ho commune, Tho Xuan district, Than Hoa province
Tel.:	037. 833167
Rationale:	Tay Ho is an agricultural commune of Tho Xuan district. There are 1,030 households. Poor women account for 203. Among them 201 get many diseases. 495 women and children get the disease of goiter. Women are the main labour force in the family. The educational level is very low. The inequality in the family still exists.
objectives:	To raise awareness of gender for men and women in the commune

Activities:

1. To open 8 training classes for 220 people, 3 days for each class. The training content: gender and farming technique
2. To organise a contest on gender topic in the commune (including 3 hamlets)
3. To set up a bookcase for women

Beneficiaries: Farmers (both men and women) in the commune

Amount approved: VND 30 million

AG's comments:

1. The training classes: the number of learners should be divided into 4 classes, 3 days for each class. The health issue should be included in the training prog.
2. For the contest, the questions and answers should be prepared carefully. The questions should be not only theoretical but also practical.
3. For the bookcase, there should be records for buying and lending books. After a period of time there should be meetings for readers to exchange their opinions.
4. There should be a long-term action plan for this project.

6. Project in Thai Nguyen province 5/2/6
--

Project holder: Ms. Nguyen Thuy **Lam**

Position: Member of People's Council of Pho Yen district and Chair, district WU

Address: Trung Thanh commune, Pho Yen district, Thai Nguyen province

Project name: "An investigation on the life of single women and training classes for single women on gender and occupation.

Rationale: Pho Yen is a mountainous district of Thai Nguyen province. People live on husbandry and farming. In the French war, Pho Yen was like a door to the shelter of the Communists. In the Vietnam war against US Army, Pho Yen was bombed severely. In Pho Yen, there are two military companies of women voluntary soldiers, 400 women as military workers and 800 women as state farm workers. At present, there are 1930 martyrs and 662 women suffering from toxic chemicals of Orange Agent with 420 disable children.

Activities:

1. To investigate the living conditions of 120 single women in 5 communes: Hong Tien, Ba Hang, Bai Bong, Bac Son, Trung Thanh.
2. To open a gender training class for 180 people for 1 day.
3. To train jobs like: the making of Soya cheese, rolled girdle- cake for 40 single women. They are divided into 4 classes, 10 days of learning for each class.

Beneficiaries: 120 single women in 5 communes, 60 officers from all offices of 5 communes.

Amount requested: USD 3,800 (VND 53,200,000)

Amount approved: USD 2,200 for 1 year (VND 30,800,000)

AG's comments: The AG proposes Sida to approve this project:

1. The target group is single women of 5 communes. They are poor and they have to suffer from the war consequences, living in a mountainous district of Thai Nguyen province.
2. Three activities are agreed by the AG. However, time for the job training classes should be reduced.
3. There should be a long-termed action plan for the project.

CENTRAL (Hue)

7. Project in Hue 3/20/7

Project holder:	Mr. Tran Quang Lap
Position:	Youth Union of Thua Thien, Hue
Address:	14 Tran Thuc Nhan St., Hue
Project name:	Contest organising on gender equality among young women and men in rural and mountainous areas of Thua Thien Hue province.
Rationale:	Thua Thien Hue is a poor province, in the central of Vietnam. The population of the province is more than 1 million. Among them, young people age 15 to 35 account for 25% of the provincial population. Among those young people, many in remote and mountainous areas are unaware of gender equality.
Objectives:	-To raise awareness of gender equality for men and women candidates. -To raise awareness of gender issue for the whole community.
Activities:	-To organise a contest on equality between men and women through dramas, poems, dances... for 48 young candidates from 8 mountainous districts
Beneficiaries:	Young people (both men and women) in communes of Thua Thien Hue province.
Amount requested:	USD 3,880 (VND 54,320,000)
Approved amount:	USD 1,500 (VND 21 million)
AG's comments:	There should be a long-termed action plan for this project.

8. Project in Hue: 2/5/8

Project holder :	Mr. Pham Van Toan
Position:	Head, voluntary group of anti-illiteracy in Ngu Tay hamlet, Thuy An commune, Hue city
Address:	Ngu Tay hamlet, Thuy An commune, Hue
Project name:	"Solutions to strengthen the ability of economic master for women in Ngu Tay"
Rationale:	Ngu Tay hamlet, Thuy An commune is in the suburb of Hue city. It is a hilly area. 40% of the area is virgin land, 30% is cultivated land and 30% is forest land. The population is 1600 including 225 households who are doing gardening and husbandry. The hamlet is very poor, only 4 householders are state-workers. The transport system is paths made of hilly land. There has not been electricity yet. The rate of illiterate people in the hamlet is 10% (about 160 people). Among them, 123 people are women. They do not have knowledge of science technology to develop their family economy. The situation of early marriage, early giving birth and having many children does exist. Women are treated badly, even are battered in the family. Thus, Mr.Toan would like the Fund to support the organisation of seminars to improve the understanding of the community (both men and

women) about the role and the right of women, about the marriage and family law, about gender equality. At the same time, the people there will be trained with knowledge of gender, health care. Mr.Toan also proposes the Fund to support activity of establish good models of doing gardening that can increase the income, improve the economic life for people and create craft work for women.

Activities:

1. To open seminars (in the evening) for the community on the topics like: the role and function of women in the family and in the society with 100 participants, the law of marriage and family, the women's right and gender equality with 100 participants.
2. To talk about hygienic health for the community for one evening with 100 participants.
3. To train for 2 days about technique of raising livestock, gardening for 40 people.
4. To provide breeds of farm animals and seeds of plants to apply technique learned into reality.
5. To provide tools for some families to develop craft work: palm-leaf hat making, rush broom making.

Project duration: One year after the project is approved and funded.

Expected results:

- Nearly the whole community (75%) will have the right understanding, attitude and behavior toward women.
- 100% women at the age of marriage understand the basic knowledge of health protection method for them and their children.
- 15 models of gardening economy are set up.
- There will not be any illiterate people till the year 2000.

Beneficiaries: All women in the hamlet and some families that are trained and are chosen to be experimenting models for gardening and husbandry.

Amount requested: USD 2,944 (VND 41,216,000)

Amount approved: USD 2,200 (VND 30,800,000)

AG's comments:

1. This is a project carried out in a poor hamlet, near Hue city with backward social and economic situation. The right of women is violated. The women have the difficulty in approaching to family economic development and improvement of educational level. The project has a good idea to open seminars, talks to improve knowledge for women and men. Beside, the project tries to give out some solutions to help women in their lives by specific training classes and building models. It is necessary to support this initiative.
2. There are some points that the project manager should pay attention: in the seminar of gender equality, women should participate and freely give out their opinion. It should not be a project of hunger and poor elimination form because that would be not in line with the Gender Fund. The anti-illiteracy issue is referred in the objective of the project but its activities are not clear.
3. The Manager of the project and the voluntary group of anti-illiteracy of Ngu Tay hamlet are capable to implement the project well.

SOUTH

9. Project in Tay Ninh province 6/9/9

Project holder: Ms. Nguyen Thi **Hue**

Position: Chair, Women Union of Tan Bien district

Address: Women Union of Tan Bien district, Tay Ninh province

Telephone: 066. 874609 (Off.)

Project name: "Improvement of knowledge on gender, technique of pepper tree growing and cow raising for rural women"

Rationale: Tan Bien is a remote and rural commune, near the border with Cambodia. People live mainly on agriculture and pig raising. There are many religions in the district: Cao Dai, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism. Religious people account for 47%. There are also many minority groups living there: Khmer, Cham, Hoa and Stieng. The educational level is limited. Women are the most disadvantaged group in the community.

Objectives: To provide gender and household economy knowledge for women, in order to raise the status of women in the family

Activities:

1. To open 3 classes of gender for 150 people: 1 class for people at the district level, 2 classes for people in 2 communes with the time of 3 days/class. The learning content: gender, cow raising and community development.
2. To organise a club for the advantage of women.
3. To set up a bookcase for women.

Beneficiaries: Many women in Tan Bien district.

Amount requested: USD 3,050 (VND 42,700,000)

Amount approved: VND 33 million

AG's comments:

1. This is a district which has the border- line with Cambodia. People follow different religions. The educational level is low. Women have to suffer from backward habits.
2. The AG agreed to support all activities. However, the time for the class at district level should be 4 days. 2/3 of learners in each class should be women, 1/3 should be men. There should be a very clear plan of action for the club.
3. There should be a long- termed action plan for the project.

10. Project in Dong Thap province 4/4/10

Project holder: Ms. Le Thi **Tam**

Position: Chair, Women's Union of Lai Vung district, Dong Thap province.

Address : Hoa Long sub district- Lai Vung district- Dong Thap province

Telephone: 067 848258 (Off.)

Project name: "Improvement of Gender and Community Development Techniques"

Rationale: Lai Vung is a remote, along the Hau river. People live mainly on agricultural work. The educational level is low. Some of its communes are of Catholic Church. The rate of women in the People's Council is low (at district level is 8.82% and that at commune level is 6.9%).

Activities: To open 1 training class of 5 days for 60 officers from all officers at commune and district level. The training content relates to gender and technique to develop the community.

Beneficiaries: Officers from all offices and in the Women's Union in Lai Vung district.

Amount requested: USD 2,500 (VND 35 million)

Amount approved: USD 1,300 (VND 18,200,000)

AG's comments:

1. The project will be carried out in remote area in which many people follow Catholic Church.
2. Dong Thap is the province that asks for support of SIDA's Gender Fund for the first time.
3. The Fund should support training, but there should be 2 classes: 1 class of 3 days in the district, and 1 class of 2 days in a commune. The content of technique to develop the community should be reduced and integrated gender issue. The project head have paid attention to the action plan after the class.

II.6 Summary of activities of the 10 projects visited

No.	Location	Training						Contest	Model	Bookcase	Study	Seminar	Others
	Province	Gender	Gender+ Farming	Gender+ Health	Gender+ Law	Gender+ Environment	Vocational						
	NORTH												
1	Hai Dzuong		X						X	X			
2	Lang Son		X	(?)						X			
3	Bac Giang	X								X			
4*	Hanoi	X											Print
5	Thanh Hoa	X						X		X			
6	Thai Nguyen	X					X				X		
	CENTRAL												
7	Hue							X					
8	Hue								X			X	
	SOUTH												
9	Tay Ninh		X							X			Club
10	Dong Thap	X											
	Total	5	3	0	0	0	1	2	2	5	1	1	2

* Funded twice. First, gender training and printing. Second, printing only.

Note:

As interpreted by Ms. Lien (GF office) based on submitted documents (proposal, resume, final report), 5 did training on Gender only; 3 offered training on farming techniques following gender training, and one added job training. All kept gender and other issues separate, not integrated. None took issue on health, laws, and environment (although in field visit, health was much talked about, and #2 reported to have a health campaign, but we are not sure if it was funded by GF or somewhere else).

Appendix III

Characteristics of the 151 Projects Funded by Gender Fund in 1999 and 2000

III.1 Current implementation stages of the 151 funded projects

Implementation stage	Percentage
Initial	0
Middle	12
Final	28
Completed	60

III.2 Professional status or affiliation of the project holders

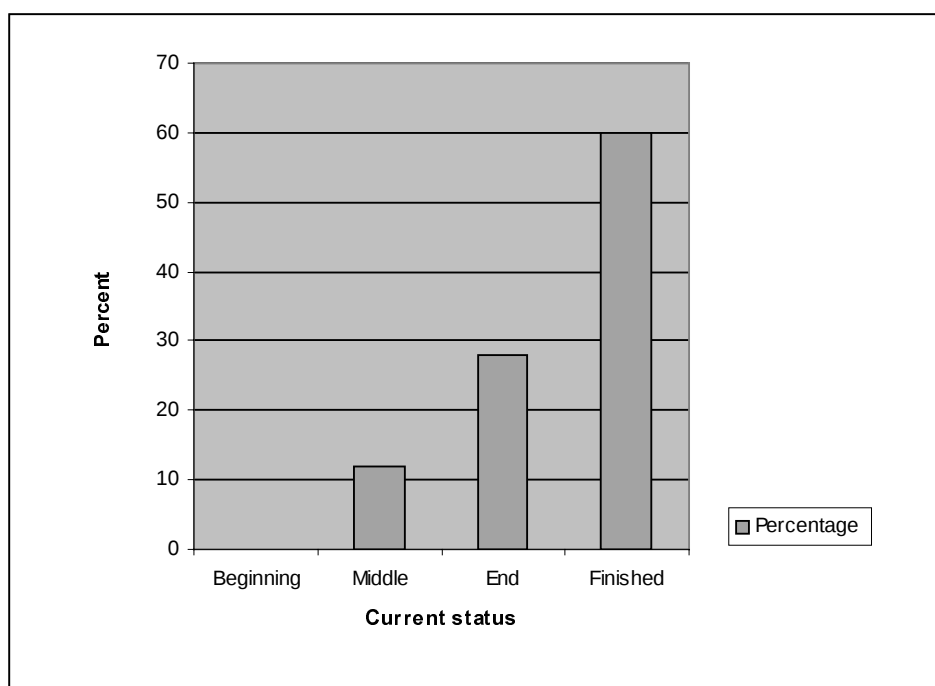
Status	Percentage
Women's Union	58.0
Youth Union	2.0
Farmers' Union	0.7
NGOs	4.0
Other social organizations	7.3
Individual/citizen	28.0

III.3 Classification of activities per project

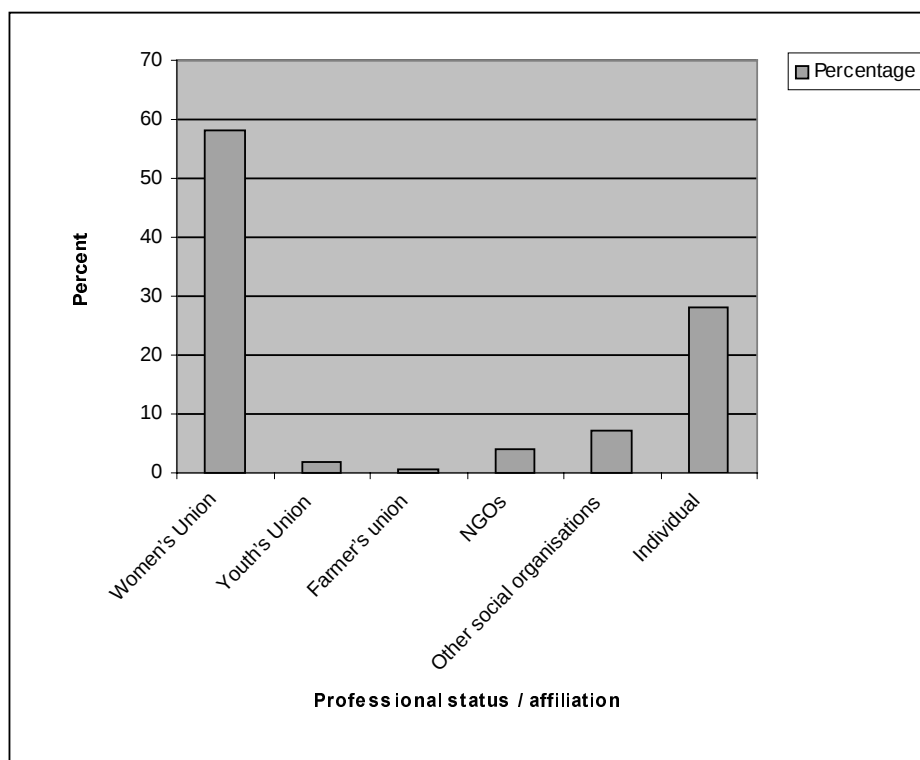
# Activity / project : % of 151 projects	Details of activities	%
One: 33%	Training only	90.0
	Other (contest, or bookcase)	10.0
Two: 37%	Training + bookcase	59.0
	Training + research (investigation)	15.7
	Training + model (income generation)	13.7
	Training + contest (gender topics)	4.0
	Training + printing	4.0
	Others	3.6
Three: 27%	Training + bookcase + model	34.0
	Training + bookcase + contest	15.6
	Others	50.4
Four: 3%	Training + contest + bookcase + model	50.0
	Training + contest + bookcase + club	25.0
	Training + contest + seminar + model	25.0

III.4 Contents of the training projects

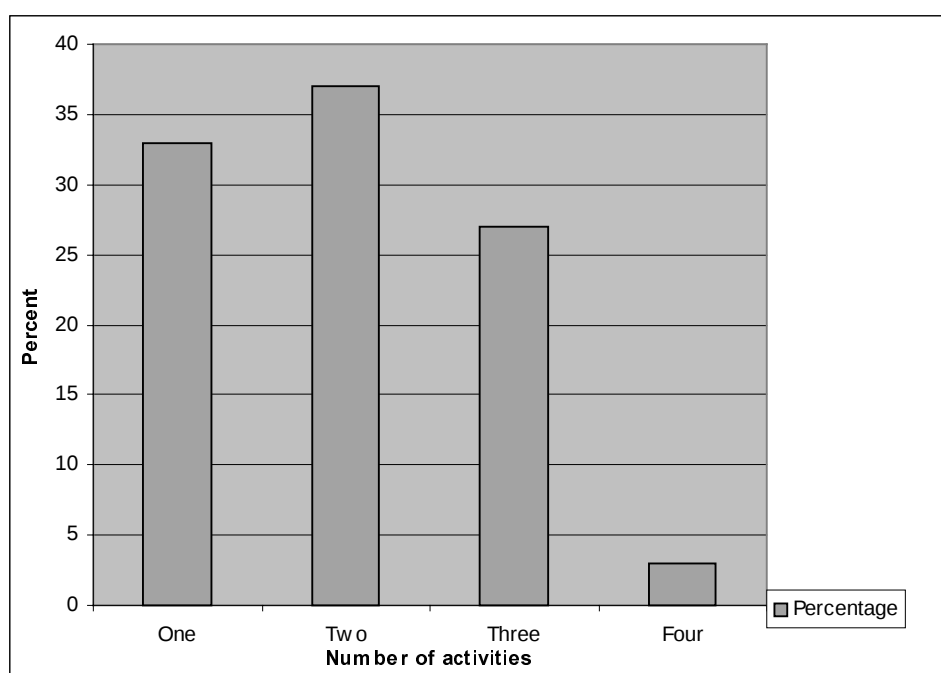
Contents	Percentage
Gender only	21.0
Gender and Farming techniques	34.0
Gender and Health	22.5
Gender, Law and related issues	14.0
Gender and Environment	4.0
Gender and vocational training	4.5



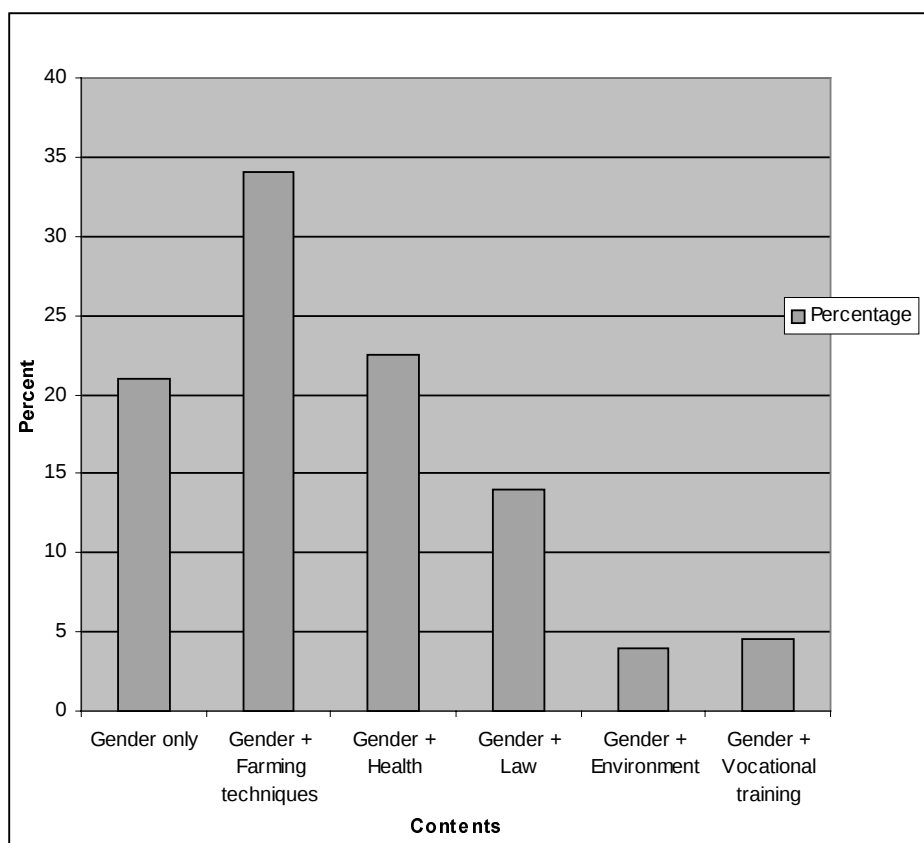
Graph III.1 Current implementation status of the 151 funded projects



Graph III.2 Professional status / affiliation of the 151 project holders



Graph III.3 Distribution of the 151 projects by number of activities



Graph III.4 Contents of projects offering training

Appendix IV

Activities of the Advisory Group in 1999 and 2000

IV.1 List of members of the Advisory Group (AG)

North

1. Prof. Le Thi
Professor in philosophy; Former Director of Center for Family & Women Studies (CFWS)
2. Mrs. Hoang Thi Lich
Former Deputy Head of CFWS
3. Mr. Quyet
Forestry Engineer, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Tuyen Quang province;

Center

4. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Dan
Lecturer in humanity, Hue University
5. Dr. Vu Van Toan
Lecturer, Binh Dinh Pedagogic College, Hue

South

6. Mr. Bui Van Nghia
Deputy Head of Women Study Department, Open University, Ho Chi Minh city
7. Mrs. Truong Thi Minh Duc
Expert, Social Development Research and Consultancy Center, Ho Chi Minh city

IV.2 Quarterly meetings: Dates, Number of approved projects, and Amount recommended to Swedish Embassy or Danish Embassy (in USD)

Quarterly meeting	No. projects approved	Amount allocated (USD)	Number (& Code) pf projects under this evaluation
1. March 13, 1999	10	29,900	–
2. June 7-8, 1999	16	39,300	1 (2/5/8)
3. Sept 27-28, 99	30	62,800	3 (3/10/4, 3/18/3, 3/20/7)
4. March 17, 2000	20	42,000	1 (4/4/10)
5. June 15-16, 00	18	38,300	1 (5/2/6)
6. Sept 25-27, 00	18	39,860	2 (6/8/2, 6/9/9)
7. *Sept 25-27, 00	18	37,640	1 (7/2/1)
8. *Dec 21-22, 00	21	44,800	2 (8/2/5, 8/5/4)
Total	151	334,600	10**

*Only projects in category 7 and 8 were recommended to DANIDA. Others (1-6) were recommended to SIDA.

**One group was funded twice: 10/4 and 5/4, therefore, 10 groups were visited for 11 projects funded.

IV.3 Annual meeting: Date, Place, and Number of project holders invited in 1999, 2000 and 2001

No.	Date	Place	No. project holders participated
1	March 12, 1999	Hanoi	14
2	March 16, 2000	Hanoi	20
3	April 9-10, 2001	Da Nang	22

Appendix V

Comparison between proposed activities and budget vs AG's suggestions and approved amount for the 10 projects visited during May 22 to June 15, 2001

(arranged by dates of approval as in Appendix IV.2)

Project holder's name Province	Activities proposed	Re- quest	Ap- proved	AG's comment	Actual implementation / Current status
Toan / Hue	-Evening seminars for the community on the topics like: the role and function of women in the family and in the society with 100 participants, the law of marriage and family, the women's right and gender equality with 100 participants -One evening talk about hygienic health for the community for 100 participants -2-day training on technique of raising livestock and gardening for 40 people -Provide breeds of farm animals and seeds of plants to apply technique learned into reality -Provide tools for some families to develop craft work: palm-leaf hat making, rush broom making.	2,944 USD	2,200 USD	-In gender equality seminar, women should participate and freely give out their opinion. -Shouldn't be a project on hunger & poverty alleviate. -Objective & activity of anti-illiteracy are not clear.	-technical training on agric, livestock -evening talks on gender -set up neighborhood groups for revolving fund—loan (continue till today)
CEPEW / Hanoi	-Print 3,000 leaflets to introduce gender issue to rural women -Publish 2 thin kits of gender training documents (20pp) for classes for rural women in gender training courses -Print 200 guideline documents and to train	3,588 USD	2,000 USD	-There should be a long-termed action plan for this project.	completed

	teachers of gender how to use documents in the best way (sample of 20 teachers in 4 communes in Hoa Binh)				
Dong / Bac Giang	-2 gender training classes for 80 people -bookcase for young people	3,850 USD	2,000 USD	-Training classes: number of learners should be increased to 50 or 60 in each class. The time for each class should be 3 days. -For the bookcase, there should be records for buying and lending books. After a period of time there should be meetings for readers to exchange their opinion. -There should be a long- termed action plan for this project.	-2 gender training classes (2x40 officials from commune and hamlet levels for 4 days=2 d on gender + 2 d on health) -later villagers demanded so applied more fund to hold 2-day training -bookcase
Lap / Hue	-To organise a contest on equality between men and women through dramas, poems, dances... for 48 young candidates from 8 mountainous districts.	3,880 USD	1,500 USD	-There should be a long- termed action plan for this project.	-one day public event with series of contests -before that they sent material to districts for various youth groups to study and finally to prepare for the contest -events were video taped
Tam / Dong Thap	-One training class of 5 days for 60 officers from all officers at commune and district level. The training content relates to gender and technique to develop the community.	2,500 USD	1,300 USD	-Should be 2 classes: 1 class (3 d.) in district, 1 class (2 d.) in a commune -Reduce content on community development & integrate gender issue -Should have action plan after the class	-combined to 5 day training for both district and commune officials, total 60 people. -only gender training
Lam / Thai Nguyen	-Investigate the living condition of single women in 5 communes (120 people) -Gender training classes	3,800 USD	2,200 USD	-Time for the job training classes should be reduced -Should have a long- term action	-she did research on single women -she gave gender training

	for 180 people for 1 day -4 classes of job like: making soya cheese, rolled girdle cake for 40 women and for 10 days/class			plan for the project	-gave series of income-generating training but not practical, beneficiaries are too poor to invest -eyelash-making for daughters of these women is the only one left (-visited a divorced mother)
Van / Lang Son	-Gender class for 200 people -Dissemination network on husbandry and farming (select 8 persons) -Bookcase for women, choose 2 person to manage	4,295 USD	35 mil VND	-200 learners should be divided into 3 or 4 classes. Each class should last for 2 days with 2/3 women and 1/3 men. -There should be concrete plan of dissemination for 8 people who learn farming technique. -There should be a long-term action plan for the project.	-Delayed gender training till after WU election in August 2001 -activities carried out... -health campaign for hamlet WU rep (want to be a model dist in having toilet) -farming technique course for 41 women on pig raising and rice seed selection -13-d course on IPM for 34 women (hamlet) -sent 3 for train in mushroom growing future plan: -GT for commune leaders, party committees, union leaders both men and women [trainer from Hanoi WU]
Hue / Tay Ninh	-Three 3-day classes for 150 people (1 for district, 2 for commune) on gender + cow raising -Club for women -Bookcase for women	4,295 USD	35 mil VND	-Class at district level should be 4 days. 1/3 learners should be men -Club should have very clear plan of action -Should have a long-term action plan for the project	-2 training (gender + cow raising) to district officials -bookcase

Hoat / Hai Duong	-3 training classes: 2 gender, 1 fishery and husbandry -Bookcase for commune -10 model ponds of fresh water fish raising in 5 hamlets	7,020 USD	40 mil VND	-Training classes should be 2 with the 2 integrated contents: gender and technique of fish raising and husbandry. -Should be 3 days for each class; & total learners 120-150 . -No pond-digging support -Project mgt board should have a representative from the commune WU	-3 GT (total 345) -bookcase -visited model farms: -fish pond -chicken raising
Loan / Thanh Hoa	-8 training classes for 220 people, 3 days for each class. The training content: gender and farming technique -a contest on gender topic in the commune (including 3 hamlets) -a bookcase for women	35.68 mil VND	30 mil VND	-Training classes: the number of learners should be divided into 4 classes, 3 days for each class. The health issue should be included in the training prog. -Contest, the questions and answers should be prepared carefully. The questions should be not only theoretical but also practical. -Bookcase, there should be records for buying and lending books. After a period of time there should be meetings for readers to exchange their opinions. -There should be a long-term action plan for this project.	-she did gender training for district and commune officials+commune women -bookcase
CEPEW** / Hanoi	-Print 2,200 training documents on gender and 1,000 leaflets on gender topic. -A class for people to use those documents	26.64 mil VND	20 mil. VND	Not available	Completed

Source: Appendix IV.4

* Projects funded by DANIDA

**CEPEW was funded twice

Recent Sida Evaluations

- 01/04** **Learning from Experience. Evaluation of UNICEF's Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme in India, 1996–1998.** Pete Kolsky, Erich Bauman, Ramesh Bhatia, John Chilton, Christine van Wijk.
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/04:1** **Learning from Experience. Evaluation of UNICEF's Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme in India, 1996–1998. Annexes.** Pete Kolsky, Erich Bauman, Ramesh Bhatia, John Chilton, Christine van Wijk.
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/05** **Resource Centre for Panchayat Training and Democratic Processes.** Nirmala Buch, Rukmini Rao.
Asia Department
- 01/06** **Sida's Contribution to Humanitarian Mine Action. Final report.** Göran Andersson, Kristian Berg Harpviken, Ananda S. Millard, Kjell Erling Kjellman, Arne Strand
Division for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management
- 01/07** **Assumptions and Partnerships in the Making of a Country Strategy. An evaluation of the Swedish-Mozambican Experience.** Marc Wuyts, Helena Dolny, Bridget O'Laughlin
Department for Africa, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 01/08** **NGO Cooperation with Belarus. Evaluation of programme implemented by Forum Syd.** Peter Winai.
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/09** **Active Labour Market Policy in Russia. An evaluation of the Swedish technical assistance to the Russian Employment Services 1997–2000.** Henrik Huitfeldt.
- 01/10** **Svenska bataljonens humanitära insatser i Kosovo.** Maria Broberg Wulff, Karin Ströberg.
Avdelningen för Samverkan med Enskilda Organisationer och Humanitärt Bistånd
- 01/11** **Democracy and Human Rights. An evaluation of Sida's support to five projects in Georgia.** Birgitta Berggren, Patrik Jotun.
Department for central and Eastern Europe
- 01/12** **Sida's Support to the University of Asmara, Eritrea; College of Science and Faculty of Engineering.** Eva Selin Lindgren.
Department for Research Cooperation
- 01/13** **Strengthening Local Democracy in North West Russia 1995–2000.** Ilari Karppi, Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith.
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/14** **Approach and Organisation of Sida Support to Private Sector Development.** Sunil Sinha, Julia Hawkins, Anja Beijer och Åsa Teglund
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 01/15** **Follow-up to Social Sector Support to Moldova.** Nils Öström.
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/16** **Human Rights Training in Vietnam.** Carl-Johan Groth, Simia Ahmadi-Thosten, Clifford Wang, Tran van Nam
Department for Democracy and Social Development

Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0) 8 690 93 80
Fax: +46 (0) 8 690 92 66
info@sida.se

A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:

Sida, UTV, S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0) 8 698 51 63
Fax: +46 (0) 8 698 56 10
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden

Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>