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EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-IND-10-383 – Empowerment of Women in India through Innovative
Vocational Education and Training**

Date: 7 October 2014

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Background

The project ran from 15 April 2012 – 14 May 2014, with a total grant of USD 350,000. It was designed by Amrita Multi Modal Applications Using Computer Human Interaction (Ammachi Labs) of Amrita University, and was implemented in the two states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in southern India. It was implemented in partnership with numerous other faculties of Amrita University (Amrita SREE, Amrita JSS, Amrita Vidyalayam, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Amrita E- Learning Research Lab). The target population consisted of 3,000 economically and socially impoverished women. As defined in the Project Document, the overall objective was to provide them with the ability to participate in the democratic process and to strengthen their capacity to make decisions at individual, family and community levels. Accordingly, Ammachi Lab's strategic approach aimed for two key outcomes for the project's trainees:

- Economic empowerment, i.e. strengthened income potential, paired with improved access to new opportunities and resources.
- Social and democratic empowerment, i.e. strengthened capacity to think critically and make informed decisions, with regards to personal, family and community issues; and hence power to control their own lives, both within and outside their homes.

(ii) Assessment of the project

The design of (a) the project's Computerized Vocational and Educational Training (CVET) methodology was appropriate to enable women to benefit from innovative computer technology to learn skills, which were traditionally limited to men; (b) the actual CVET subjects were adequate to qualify women for a wider range of employment opportunities and thus to widen for them the scope of possibilities to achieve financial independence. The approach of subsequently offering Life Enrichment Education (LEE) activities, which comprised of video lectures and animated group discussions, was appropriate to complement the women trainee's entrepreneurial skills with democratic values and civic awareness, in order to transform them post-graduation into empowered participants of their local communities. It is therefore our view that the **overall design of the project was relevant** to address economic, social and democratic shortcomings identified in the targeted communities, which prevented women from the participation in decisions affecting their lives.

While the grantee's efforts faced a number of challenges, evaluators noted that the project produced or even exceeded its expected outputs. The grantee managed to target 10 areas in addition to the planned 18 training centre locations. Moreover, 83% of the project's enrolled trainees have completed the course programme, which is 4.5% above plan. Many former trainees praised the CVET courses for delivering skills and providing them with employment opportunities, and acknowledged the LEE courses and subsequent gatherings provided them with a much needed space, in which they could discuss how to resolve their social and economic issues. Having generated 35 self-help groups (SHGs), which involve 451 former trainees in joint community and / or entrepreneurial activity, and given the numerous initiatives, which graduates have organised to address community problems (e.g. alcoholism, domestic violence, poverty, social exclusion, traffic accidents), evaluators are of

the view that **the project was highly effective**.

Breaking the amount spent for awareness raising as well as vocational skills and civic knowledge training over the total number of 3,136 graduates, an acceptable average of approximately USD 50 was spent per participant. The average cost to convince a trainee to enrol in the programme was as low as USD 8. While the grantee's nominal staff costs essentially covered the human resources required in the field, resources for project management and administration were provided free of charge. Computer equipment and the mobile training unit were also provided at no cost to the budget. Given the project's remarkable achievements, evaluators are of the view that **the project was efficient**

The grantee's initially proposed target indicators for economic and social-democratic empowerment allow for a positive assessment. While evidence presented failed to document sufficiently increased access to resources, evaluators were still pleased about the women's significantly improved levels of self-confidence and autonomy. Surveys confirmed their enhanced participation in household decision making, as well as control over their cash earnings. Evaluators on the basis of independently gathered first-hand evidence also confirmed that **the project generated positive impact**. The women graduates are not only more employable; they also take informed decisions and actively engage in the identification and resolution of most pressing community issues.

Evaluators also found **promising signs of sustainability**. A significant number of graduates still pursue an income-generating activity and remain engaged in community action. The grantee also continues to offer CVET and LEE courses to interested women after the end of the UNDEF-supported project implementation period. In addition to its existing structural, human and financial resources, Ammachi Labs will be able to rely on strong levels of ownership among the current set of facilitators and graduates, who are all eager to contribute time and effort to support future skills transfer and knowledge dissemination. Both the grantee's enormous innovative potential and the recent beneficiaries' commitment could be therefore of benefit to the development of new vocational training subjects and the programme's expansion to other states of India.

(iii) Conclusions

- The fact that the approach of Ammachi Labs included the conduct of a baseline survey and the formulation of outcome indicators is highly commendable, as this confirmed the project's **relevance** and facilitated the evaluators' favourable **assessment of effectiveness and impact** of the grantee's contribution towards increased income potential and increased participation in household and community decision making. However, evaluators would have appreciated a more rigorous approach to data analysis and a reporting which is pertinent and fully responding to the project document's monitoring framework. The grantee expanded the definition of existing target indicators by adding a variety of measurement options, which made the reporting of project outcomes less pertinent, as it lacked clear responses to the project document's initial monitoring framework.

- Given the significantly improved levels of employability, independence, and self-esteem, there is little doubt that the project **effectively contributed to the women graduates' economic, social and democratic empowerment**. It is, however, also clear

that the effects of the grantee's intervention have been limited to beneficiaries living in the local areas targeted by the project's training centres and its mobile vocational education unit.

▪ Therefore, continued and improved outreach will be needed (a) to **sustain women's economic, social, and democratic empowerment** in existing training centre locations and (b) to **expand it to other local communities across India**. Ideally the human resources requirement would be supported through a mix of inputs provided both by Amrita University, and the project's women graduates, most of whom seem to be eager to support a wider dissemination of their newly acquired knowledge and skills.

(iv) Recommendations

▪ In accordance with our **observations on effectiveness and impact, we recommend to the grantee** to design monitoring frameworks, which make consistent use of baseline and target indicators, as this could enable Ammachi Labs to improve its current assessment in qualitative terms and thus enhance the organization's strategic objectives. Exploiting the results of progress monitoring more systematically facilitates the identification of remaining and new needs. This may also help the grantee to attract new donors and implementing partners for an expansion of the original project.

▪ **Based on our comments on impact and sustainability, we recommend to the grantee** to consider its team members involved in the design and management of the previous UNDEF project to hold regular strategy meetings. The resulting approach should ensure that the programme's future expansion relies also on resources which were newly created by the UNDEF project, so as not overstretch the grantee's existing resources (c.f. suggestions provided below). To support the design of such an extended project intervention we recommend the following measures:

- Investigate the possibility to convert existing training centres in the medium-term into facilities that become independent from the grantee's financial support. Taking into account the high levels of ownership evaluators observed among many women graduates, and given their willingness to share skills, knowledge and part of their income, this could be achieved by (a) encouraging some of the UNDEF project's most achieved graduates to become part-time facilitators in the centres in which they were trained, and (b) obtaining agreement from SHGs formed by the project to support "their" centres, i.e. they could contribute modest shares of their SHGs' earnings.
- Exploit the grantee's existing structural, human and financial resources to establish new training centre facilities. Capitalise on the routine of existing facilitators, by inviting them to support the grantee's programme expansion by migrating as trainers (or trainers of future trainers) to new locations.
- Undertake targeted donor screening in preparation for a proposal seeking support for an extension of the project in line with the above suggestions. Ensure the proposal's approach matches with donor expectations and offers added value as compared to the original project.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report contains the evaluation of the project entitled “Empowerment of Women in India through Innovative Vocational Education and Training”. The project ran from 15 April 2012 – 14 May 2014 (including a one-month extension), with a total grant of USD 350,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 25,000 for monitoring and evaluation), and co-funding of at least USD 150,000 (provided by Mata Amritanandamayi Math).

The project was designed by Amrita Multi Modal Applications Using Computer Human Interaction (Ammachi Labs) of Amrita University, and was implemented in the two states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in southern India. It was implemented in partnership with numerous other faculties of Amrita University (Amrita SREE, Amrita JSS, Amrita Vidyalayam, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Amrita E- Learning Research Lab). As defined in the Project Document, the overall objective was to provide socially and economically impoverished women with the ability to participate in the democratic process and to strengthen their capacity to make decisions at individual, family and community levels.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed on a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to “undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved”.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert, working with a national expert, under the terms of the framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. In accordance with the agreed process, the evaluation aimed to answer questions across the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, as well as the additional criterion of UNDEF value added (see Annex 1).

The evaluation took place from July – September 2014 with the fieldwork conducted in Kerala State from 04 – 08 July 2014. The evaluators reviewed available project documentation and contextual / background materials on issues preventing women from participation in decision-making processes in India (Annex 2). Initial and final interviews were held at the Ammachi Labs’ offices on Amritapuri Campus, with the Ammachi Labs’ director, as well as with staff involved in the management and administration of the project. Other meetings focused on interviews and exchanges with the project’s resource persons (district coordinators, local facilitators), and with beneficiary representatives of the target groups from seven training centre facilities, to confirm the project beneficiaries’ experiences and to obtain updates of their most recent activities. These interviews and group meetings were carried out throughout Kerala state (Meppadi, Mananthavady, Calicut, Changanassery, Pala and Parippally), as well as at Amrita University (for the Amritapuri area, which

neighbours Campus), involving 25 resource persons and 60 project beneficiaries.

(iii) Development context

It is widely accepted that access to paid employment and entrepreneurship opportunities importantly contribute to improved equality levels between women and men. Economic participation and empowerment are essential to strengthen the rights of women, because they enable them to have control over their lives and to exert influence in society¹.

More than 22% of India's population is classified as poor. Despite three decades of strong economic growth, about 270 million people still do not obtain the nutritional minimum they require for subsistence. Between 2005 and 2006, 470 million persons were concerned by multidimensional poverty, which defines combined access to commodities, services and entitlements². India's classification according to Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has improved from the low to the medium human development category. However, it still ranks 135th among 187 countries, and thus finds itself compared to economies such as Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, and Tajikistan³.

Although India is a vibrant electoral democracy, which has grown throughout its history, the country faces an extreme social divide. The line that separates "[...] the haves and have-nots is not just a rhetorical cliché but also an important part of diagnostic analysis [...]", which shows that inequality has been propelled by factors like caste, religion, and gender. It has pushed e.g. Dalit, tribal groups, and women towards the margins of society⁴. The benefits of rights-based welfare measures and affirmative actions for the inclusion of these marginalized groups have been limited by gender inequality: India ranks 127th in UNDP's Gender Inequality Index⁵.

According to the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID), higher female earnings and bargaining power would translate into greater investment in children's education, health and nutrition⁶. This in turn could lead to economic growth in the long term: it is estimated that India's GDP could rise by 8%, if the female/male employment ratio would improve by 10%⁷. Therefore, learning about improved production technologies and methods, new products and markets, business skills, as well as life skills (such as health management, decision-making, self-confidence, or conflict management) can make a big difference for many of the rural poor, and for women in particular⁸. The challenge is to establish an understanding that investment in women's education carries the potential of high return for everyone. It is hence clear that an emphasis on the complementary role of economic and social empowerment of women is the way forward to strengthen India's economy and democracy.

¹ E.g. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, "Women's economic empowerment and working conditions", in: Policy for Gender Equality and the Rights and Role of Women in Sweden's International Development Cooperation 2010–2015.

² D. Jayaraj and S. Subramanian, "A Chakravarty-D'Ambrasio View of Multi-Dimensional Deprivation: Some Estimates for India", in: Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 45 / No 6, February 2010.

³ UNDP, Human Development Report, July 2014.

⁴ Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, "An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions", Oxford 2013.

⁵ UNDP, Human Development Report, July 2014.

⁶ DFID, "Agenda 2010 — The turning point on poverty: background paper on gender", London 2010.

⁷ The OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), "Women's economic empowerment", 2012.

⁸ FAO/IFAD/ILO, "Investing in Skills for Socio-Economic Empowerment of Rural Women", in: Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief #4, September 2010.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

(i) Project strategy and approach

The overall objective of the project “Empowerment of Women in India through Innovative Vocational Education and Training”, as defined in the Project Document (UDF-IND-10-383) in March 2012, was to provide socially and economically impoverished women with the ability to participate in the democratic process and to strengthen their capacity to make decisions at individual, family and community levels.

At the project’s outset, only 31% of India’s women were active in the labour sector, with over 95% of them engaged in informal and thus unstable and underpaid jobs. This kept them trapped in the poverty cycle, which is detrimental to the democratic functioning of any individual⁹. According to the grantee’s analysis, limited educational opportunities and lack of monetary resources or financial support, as well as societal barriers associated with the caste system, limited the ability of women to participate in economic decision-making, although women often still carry the responsibility of being a family’s primary caretaker and food producer. Considering that economic empowerment alone is insufficient to fully empower individual women (UNPF, 2007), the grantee aimed to also facilitate the acquisition of general life skills and knowledge (such as civic responsibility, human rights, community engagement and support, critical thinking, money management and communication skills), to help women overcome the difficulties they experience when trying to participate in decision-making. Therefore, the grantee’s approach foresaw to provide impoverished women with both (1) a university-certified Computerized Vocational and Educational Training (CVET) to economically empower them; and (2) Life Enrichment Education (LEE) to also socially and democratically empower the project’s target group.

Accordingly, the project’s two key outcomes for the female trainees were defined as follows:

- Economic empowerment: strengthened income potential following CVET completion, paired with improved access to new opportunities and resources.
- Social and democratic empowerment: strengthened capacity to think critically and make informed decisions, with regards to personal, family and community issues; and hence power to control their own lives, both within and outside their homes.

Inspired and guided by its chancellor and renowned humanitarian leader, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (commonly referred to as “Amma” or Mother), the Amrita University’s Ammachi¹⁰ Labs are operated as a centre of technological innovation. Researching the field of computer-human interaction, the grantee primarily develops applications designed to improve the quality of life for those least favoured. While India’s economy grows and the demand for skilled workers rises, vocational training in India is effectively paralyzed by social stigma, budget constraints and a lack of trainers and materials. Therefore Ammachi Labs applies a unique training approach, which is flexible and mobile, thus allowing it to reach out to people even living remote and belonging to all walks of life¹¹.

⁹ In line with assessments of UNFPA (2007) and ILO (2011)

¹⁰ Amrita Multi Modal Applications Using Computer Human Interaction

¹¹ Source: <http://www2.amrita.edu/centers/ammachi>

(ii) Logical framework

The Project Document translates the grantee’s programmatic approach into a structured plan of project activities and intended outcomes. The framework below aims to capture the project logic systematically, and attempts to link activities and intended outcomes with medium-term impacts and long-term development objectives, which evaluators observed dispersed over different sections of the grantee’s Project Document, result framework and reporting.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Medium Term Impacts	Long Term Development Objectives
<u>1. Preparatory project activities</u>			
Determine selection criteria: trainees, facilitators, locations	Facilitators trained	First group of “change agents” in place to turn women into better informed and more active community members	
Raise programme awareness across training locations	Individuals from local communities (district coordinators) have identified potential trainees		
Select facilitators, trainees; pre-training surveys	Baseline and target data established		
<u>2. Computerized Vocational and Educational Training (CVET)</u>			
Establish CVET facilities; train CVET facilitators	Economic Empowerment: women acquired professional skills, paired with improved access to new opportunities	CVET graduates display an increased income potential	Empowered women participate in the democratic process and take informed decisions, hence control their own lives, both within and outside their homes
CVET course delivery in three rounds for 1,000 trainees each	Skills attained: plumbing, tiling, solar panel installation, two-wheeler maintenance; fabric painting, mushroom cultivation, beauty & hair care, soap making, beekeeping, geriatric nursing	CVET graduates enjoy improved access to resources (media, health care, other services)	
Promote sustainable skills: industry visits, internships			
Post-training feedback evaluation			
<u>3. Life Enrichment Education (LEE)</u>			
Establish LEE facilities; train LEE facilitators	Social-democratic Empowerment: women’s capacity has been strengthened, enabling critical thinking and informed decision-making with regards to personal, family and local community issues	LEE graduates display increased participation in household and community decision making	
LEE course delivery in three rounds for 1,000 trainees each		LEE graduates have increased control over their own cash earnings	
Promote community partnerships: trainees launch and run self-help groups	Knowledge acquired: gender equality and domestic violence; social democratic participation and values; health and family; entrepreneurship, communication skills and decision making		
Post-training feedback evaluation			

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Relevance

Baseline Situation

The project targeted the twelve poorest districts of Kerala (Kozhikode, Wayanad, Idukki, Kollam, Trissur, Pallakad, Kottayam, Allapuzha, Mallapuram) and Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore, Virudhanagar, Ramanathapuram) States. In some cases the target group included tribal communities, which had lost their livelihoods following relocation (e.g. dam construction). At the outset the project's potential beneficiaries from all targeted areas were missing appropriate skills or vocations to earn a substantial livelihood. As a consequence, the population addressed by the project in these areas was displaying low levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy and significant occurrence of alcohol abuse and suicide.

In order to confirm the initial analysis of the baseline situation (c.f. the above section on project strategy), Ammachi Labs conducted a pre-course survey among project's potential trainees, in easily understandable local language throughout all of the 28 project locations. This way of insight (see above box) re-confirmed the grantee's concerns about the economic and social-democratic deficits in the targeted communities, which prevented women from the participation in decisions affecting their lives in- and outside of their homes.

The project response

In addition to the above baseline findings, which confirmed a general need to support women's economic and social-democratic empowerment, the project design of Ammachi Labs relied on the analysis and results of four pilot projects implemented between 2009 and 2011 under its Sakshat Amrita Vocational Education (SAVE) scheme. The grantee's SAVE approach was based on computerized vocational education technology, which transfers the fundamentals of a training topic through (1) video lectures by certified resource experts, (2) computer simulated haptic technology virtual exercises, (3) hands-on training with real tools and materials, and (4) the final application of the newly acquired skills. The SAVE pilots confirmed that initial video tutorials and interactive multimedia minimized human resource

Selected baseline findings

The project participant's feedback at the time of the pre-course survey:

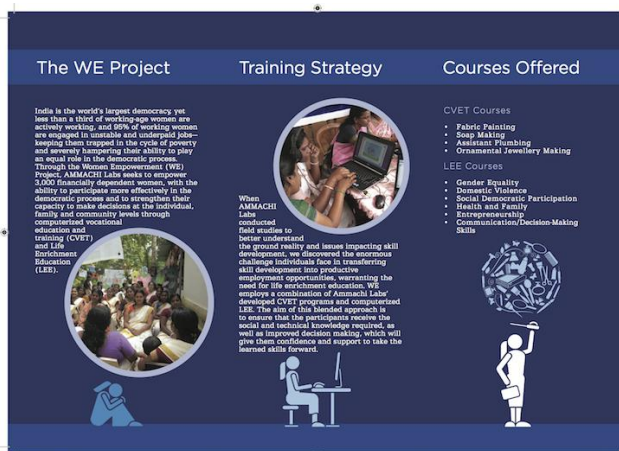
- Less than one third had previously accessed vocational training.
- 83.5% of the married women were unemployed.
- Less than half had a bank account.
- 69% had regularly voted before in Kerala, compared to 18% in Tamil Nadu State.
- Less than a quarter was allowed to decide themselves about daily purchases and household needs, and more than 60% were not consulted on major purchases.
- Less than two thirds were allowed to go alone to a market, hospital, or anywhere else outside the community.
- More than 84% from Kerala and 73% from Tamil Nadu State had the ambition to improve their lives (enhanced self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-confidence).

needs and that, subsequently, the haptic technology¹² helped to develop the physical skills required for a specific profession, thus offering the intermediate step between the virtual world and actual application in real life. SAVE pilot projects also demonstrated positive enrolment dynamics, increased demand for continued skills development, heightened self-esteem and proved beneficial to the social inclusion of marginalized groups.

Within the framework of the present project, evaluators found various examples of relevant project design, which addressed the baseline aspects:

1. Computerized Vocational and Educational Training (CVET)

Preparations for the CVET course delivery comprised of the establishment of training centre facilities, the selection and training of CVET facilitators, and the provision of the CVET training system.



The Women Empowerment brochures provided a comprehensive introduction to the project's purpose and informed about courses offered

Where possible, it was foreseen to establish *training centre facilities* connected to the local electricity and communication grids, within proximity of the communities targeted by the project. Training centre readiness was assessed on the basis of a dedicated checklist, with requirements including electrical, phone and Internet connectivity, assurance of equipment supply (PC, phone and video hardware) in full and according to specifications. A Mobile Vocational Education (MOVE) unit was conceived to serve locations, in which environmental or infrastructure conditions prevented the installation of permanent training centres.

The *identification of CVET facilitators* was based on the field experience of the grantee's implementation partner Amrita SREE (community building and grassroots level work), who proposed promising candidates from among members of the project's target communities. These subsequently had to undergo an interview process conducted by the Ammachi Labs' project team. *Training the Trainers* (TTT) was meant to familiarize future facilitators with the technology involved in computerised training, and to introduce them to the CVET methodology and navigation. As and when appropriate, it was considered to replace initially recruited facilitators in the course of project implementation by former training graduates, who successfully converted their knowledge and skills to overcome previous social and economic barriers.

CVET course system provision relied entirely on the grantee's SAVE approach explained above. In other words, Ammachi Labs' training programme was available upon project launch. It was designed to enable individuals with no prior computer experience to learn a

¹² A set of custom devices and software tools used to simulate the handling of specific vocational tools.

particular skill through an easy-to-navigate intuitive interface. The SAVE approach made it possible to train women in skills, which were traditionally limited to males. The intention was to qualify women for a wider range of employment opportunities and thus to widen for them the scope of possibilities to achieve financial independence.

The purpose of *organising industry visits and internships* was to improve the sustainability of the training programme's results, in order to stimulate to programme graduates' to engage in post-training initiatives such as starting a business, seeking continued training, or forming an economically driven cooperative in the form of a self-help group (SHG). Therefore, Ammachi Labs concluded industry partnerships with a broad spectrum of organisations, companies and service providers such as technology incubators, banks, and creative businesses.

2. Life Enrichment Education (LEE)

Infrastructure and human resources used for CVET were also allocated to serve LEE. The process applied to *establish training centres, identify and train facilitators* was hence identical.

The actual *LEE course design* aimed to complement and reinforce the women trainee's entrepreneurship skills and knowledge with democratic values and civic awareness. The available technology (video lectures and computer simulations), but also animated group discussions were the means applied to explore the principles of social participation and gender equality, in order to support the trainees' transformation post-graduation into empowered participants of their local communities.



Community action: women graduates of the Mananthavady Centre wear sarees of similar colour, which they produced for a silent march, in order to protest against a liquor store located nearby a school and a temple.

Following completion of the LEE courses, the grantee planned to organise regular meetings for its women graduates, to provide them with the opportunity to share their experience with the application of the newly gained knowledge and skills. This *promotion of community partnerships*, which was meant to serve as an exchange about successes and failures, was expected to gradually turn into a self-help group (SHG) activity, steered by the women themselves.

3. Post-training feedback evaluation

In accordance with the project's results framework, the grantee foresaw the collection of individual post-training feedback, in order to evaluate the CVET and LEE programmes' impact with regards to each of the intended outcomes supporting the economic and social democratic empowerment of the future graduates (see also the project's logical framework above). For this purpose, surveys were conducted (a) at the conclusion of a given training course and (b) once more, three months after course completion. Additional focus group discussions and exchanges with individual trainees were foreseen to gather case studies.

(ii) Effectiveness

According to the Final Narrative Report (FNR), the project faced a number of challenges. Compared to the plan the grantee's implementation efforts, however, produced or even exceeded principal outputs.

1. Computerized Vocational and Educational Training (CVET)



The project's training centres and its mobile vocational education unit covered 28 locations in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Most notably, the final number of *target locations selected* amounted to 28 (planned: 18). While the grantee established 19 *training centre facilities*, 9 additional communities from other local areas were served by MoVE. Delivery, pricing and specification issues with computer hardware, though, significantly delayed the full operation of the first 18 training centres to the project's second milestone. Irrespective of this reduced capacity the grantee managed to train within the second milestone time frame a total of 2,431 women, and hence reached out to more than the 2,000 beneficiaries targeted for this point of time.

Taking into account the higher number of training centres, the necessity to update the facilitators' skills, and the fact that certain facilitators failed to meet their obligations, it turned out necessary to pursue the *identification and training of facilitators* as a continuous task. Accordingly, Ammachi Labs converted its *train the*

trainers (TTT) programme, organising multiple TTT sessions (instead of the initially planned conduct of a single programme): two of these were held at Amritapuri University and nine on-site. Knowledge and skills were also updated during three additional "TTT refreshers", which took place at Amritapuri University. Therefore, the grantee had selected and trained 60 (planned: 20) facilitators by the end of the project. The way in which the TTT programme evolved can be almost certainly attributed to the grantee's rigorous quality control, which was made possible with the help of Amrita's Virtual Interactive e-Learning World (AVIEW) system. This audio- and video-based system was installed at each training centre, which enabled the grantee to centrally monitor the performance of its facilitators to ensure compliant and effective course delivery.

The final set of options offered by Ammachi Labs' *CVET course delivery*, from which each trainee had to select and complete one course, consisted of 6 (planned: 10)¹³ different skills: fabric painting, artificial jewellery making, soap making, plumbing, organic vegetable cultivation, and flower arrangement. According to the grantee, trainees had difficulties to commit to participate for periods longer than a month. Based on their experience trainees then, however, requested a course extension. Ammachi Labs responded by offering post-training activities in the form of advanced workshops and special resource expert sessions, among them:

¹³ Evaluators noted that courses covering a set of six additional skills are currently being developed. It is understood that these courses in basic woodworking, electrical works, turning and grinding, sheet and metal work, two-wheeler maintenance, and mushroom cultivation will be offered by the training centre facilities established in the course of the UNDEF-supported project.

- Advanced training in fabric painting and artificial jewellery making;
- Niche product workshops for those interested and displaying potential for the creation of specialized products;
- Financial literacy to help understanding the importance of financial planning for the development and expansion of business initiatives.

Counting a total of 3,136 graduates, the CVET courses achieved a slightly higher than anticipated *number of trained participants* (planned: 3,000). It is also worth noting, that with a drop out rate of 17.3% among its initially enrolled 3,794 trainees, the grantee reportedly lost 42% less trainees than comparable national training programmes.

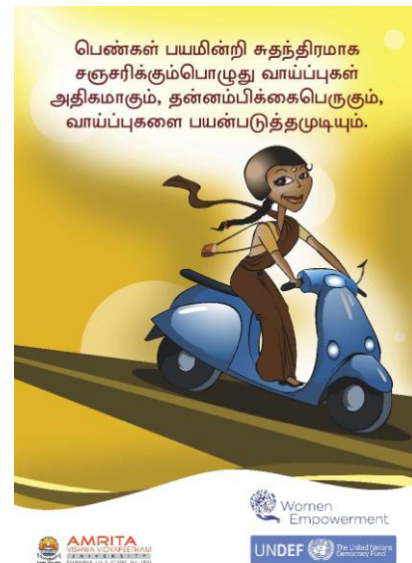
Remarkably, trainees following CVET course delivery reportedly expressed a preference for self-employment. Therefore, the grantee focused on *organising industry visits* rather than internships. Forging partnership with the business community, Ammachi Labs successfully managed to organise 117 visits. During exchanges with representatives of seven organisations, companies and service providers (including Pidilite Industries, Pandyan Grama Bank, Reliance Jio, I Create, Citi Bank India, the Vanitha Commission and the Amrita Technology Business Incubator), these trainees obtained numerous new insights and accessed valuable information about business opportunities. Nevertheless, the grantee also arranged *internships* for a number of plumbing graduates, which was the only group that chose a service-based skill course. By the end of the project, the grantee had also succeeded to agree *job placements* for the first 22 of its women graduates into the company of one of its industry partners.

2. Life Enrichment Education (LEE)

As infrastructure and human resources used for CVET were also allocated to serve LEE, the project's achievements in relation to the *establishment of training centres, identification and training of facilitators and number of course graduates* were identical.

In terms of the grantee's *LEE course delivery*, each project beneficiary was required to complete the full set of LEE training subjects, which included gender equality and domestic violence, social democratic participation and values, health and family, communication skills and decision-making, and social entrepreneurship. Similar to the case of CVET course delivery, additional LEE activities were offered post-training to further expand the women's knowledge. Examples include:

- Medical awareness and first aid training provided graduates with basic health and hygiene skills, aiming to improve their family's quality of life and to prevent the spread of communicable diseases;
- Social and legal awareness classes provided informed graduates e.g. about India's civic laws, its domestic violence act, as well as family issues and women's rights.



Travel Independently: posters were an effective way attracting interest of potential trainees and raising graduate's confidence

Following completion of the LEE course programme the grantee undertook as planned the *promotion of community partnerships*. Many of the women whom evaluators met confirmed that their regular gatherings provided them with a much needed space, in which they could discuss how to resolve their social and economic issues with the help of their newly acquired skills and knowledge. Mentors supported the further development of social and entrepreneurial capacity among women graduates interested to participate in SHGs. The activity effectively generated the formation of 35 SHGs in 15 of the 28 areas it targeted. These new SHGs involve 451 former trainees, who today participate in various kinds of joint community and/or entrepreneurial activity. Most notably, the achievements of these SHGs include:

- The launch of numerous micro-enterprise initiatives. Focusing on income generating activities and profit sharing, they enable the women graduates to gain equal access to a common fund of resource.
- Community initiatives to raise awareness and support the resolution of community problems. Various groups organised events (e.g. a march, meeting, or workshop) highlighting the need to reduce alcohol abuse (being the main cause of increased domestic violence and poverty) and aiming to remove or relocate liquor stores. Other groups used their micro-enterprises' profits to support community members in need (e.g. to purchase school uniforms for pupils, whose families were unable to afford them).



Calicut graduates in the news. Their product offer: artificial jewellery, and skilfully printed textiles & pottery.

3. Post-training feedback evaluation

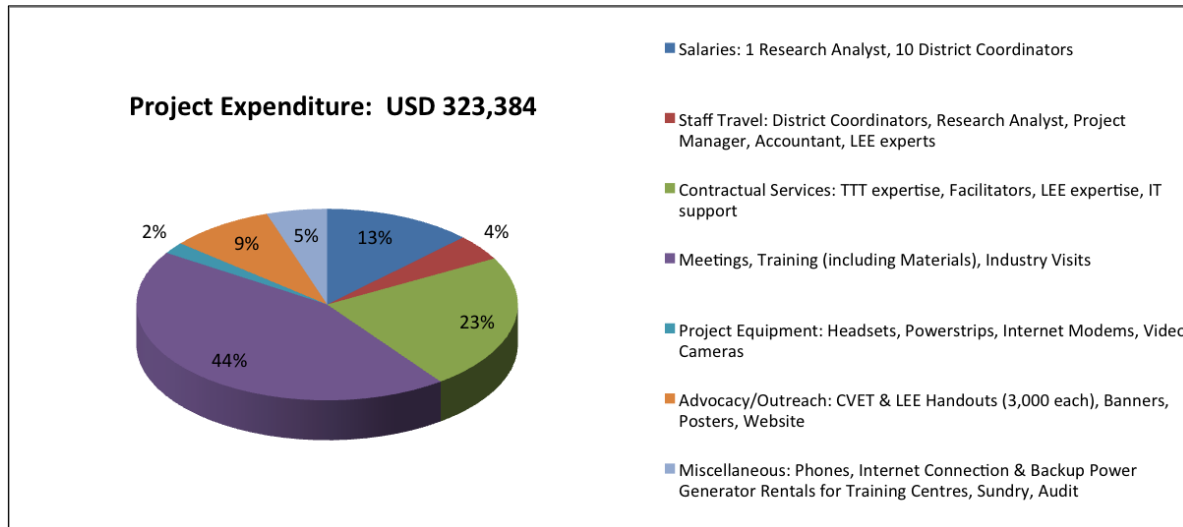
Within the framework of the project the grantee undertook two types of surveys to capture and analyse the trainees' feedback, i.e. (i) a post-course survey at the conclusion of each training session, and (ii) a follow-up survey conducted in the context of an event held with each batch of trainees three months after course completion. By the end of the project, of the 3,136 women graduates 80% had participated in the post-course survey, and 41% in the follow-up survey. In addition, Ammachi Labs held interviews during field visits, to collect individual success stories. While the surveys have been used to assess the project's impact, anecdotal evidence established during field visits has been disseminated in the form of project videos and illustrations of project photo books.

(iii) Efficiency¹⁴

Expending merely 9% of the project's budget for *advocacy and outreach*, the grantee invested moderate levels of funding to support programme visibility and awareness (among them hand-outs, posters, banners, c.f. images in the relevance section), while attracting

¹⁴ Quantitative assessments made in this section are based on the total amount of project expenditure, which excludes the budget amount reserved for evaluation by UNDEF.

good levels of interest and achieving the targeted levels of commitment and ownership among the participating women (as documented by the enrolment by 3,794 trainees and a relatively low drop-out rate). Building vocational skills and developing civic knowledge to empower these women both in the economic and democratic spheres represented the project's principal focus. Accordingly, 44% of the budget's expenditure related to *meetings, training, and industry visits*¹⁵. Staff travel costs associated with these actions required relatively low expenses in the order of 4%.



Breaking the amount spent for training materials, awareness campaign and training session setup, trainees' and resource persons' subsistence, and industry partner visits¹⁶ over the reported total number of 3,794 initially enrolled trainees provides a relatively low average cost of approximately USD 41, which was spent per beneficiary. Considering the final number of 3,136 graduates who actually completed both one CVET and the complete series of LEE courses, a still acceptable average of approximately USD 50 per participant was spent, to empower women to participate in the democratic process and to take informed decisions. Taking into account that the poignant designs and crisp messages of the above mentioned hand-outs, posters, banners, successfully supported the programme's visibility, the unit cost to raise awareness and attract the interest and convince a potential project trainee to enrol was as low as USD 8.

Spending about USD 115,000 for salaries (ten district coordinators and one research analyst) and resource persons (facilitators, TTT and LEE expertise, IT support), the nominal staff costs of Ammachi Labs amounted to 36% of the total budget. This is acceptable, given the fact that the human resources required for project management, financial administration and M&E were provided free of charge. With 5%, the grantee's miscellaneous expenses to run and administrate the permanent training centre facilities were low, mostly since costs for training sites and electricity (except for backup power) were not charged to the project. In addition, MoVE served temporary training locations at no cost to the budget. The grantee's

¹⁵ These costs most importantly include expenditure for training materials, awareness campaign and training session setup, trainees' and resource persons' subsistence, and industry partner visits promoting skills sustainability.

¹⁶ Expenditure considered for this purpose in addition to the actual cost of the training includes associated staff travel costs.

2% allocation for project equipment was also insignificant (all computer hardware was funded with the support of an external donor).

(iv) Impact

The design, monitoring and reporting of the grantee's initially proposed outcome indicators allow for a preliminary analysis of impact. A review of selected quantitative outcomes vis-à-vis target indicators, paired with field observations, leads to the following assessment:

Economic Empowerment

- *A 50% increase in earning potential among the targeted women after successful completion of the CVET course:* 73% of the project's graduates displayed increased post-course confidence to find a job. Following course completion, 71% of those working stated they were newly employed, and 94% of them claimed to apply skills acquired while participating in the project. 57% of follow-up survey participants reportedly started performing an income-generating activity¹⁷, of which 75% had earned an average of USD 25 within the first 3 months (i.e. since the completion of their training).
- *A 50% increase in access to resources among the targeted women after successful completion of the CVET course:* Compared to pre-course findings, the follow-up survey established a 23% increase in access to financial services (considering both banking services and loan programmes). At the same time, the number of bank clients knowing how to operate their bank accounts, increased by 10%. Only 6% of the course graduates reported difficulties with transportation as an obstacle to employment, while 14% did so in the pre-course survey. Using SHG formation and their achievements to document increased resources access the grantee, however, ignored that these were outcomes designed to support social-democratic empowerment. Given that survey results generally displayed improved levels of self-confidence and autonomy regardless of current employment circumstances, evaluators are still satisfied with the progress the former trainees have made.



Some of the SHGs have opened stores, which further increased the women's jewellery and textile product sales.

Social-Democratic Empowerment

- *A 50% increase of participation in household and community decision making among the targeted women:* The surveys established improvements across several aspects involving decisions jointly made by wife and husband, i.e. a 25% increase in decisions about big purchases, 16% regarding daily purchases, and 11% on whether or not to have a child. Individual voting participation increased by 15% in Kerala and 300% in Tamil Nadu State. 73 community initiatives (see effectiveness section above) also indicate that, compared to the past, course graduates' have greater control over decisions affecting their lives.
- *A 50% increase in control over the targeted women's cash earnings:* The number of women who claimed to have ownership over their earnings improved by 54%. A

¹⁷ Evaluators assume that variations in employment rates do not necessarily reflect a decline, but rather relate to the fact that compared to the post-course survey, follow-up survey participants were less numerous and may not have been identical.

composite measure, which evaluated the former trainees' joint and individual participation in decisions regarding the permission to work, the nature of their work, and how their earnings would be used, documented a 70% increase.

On the basis of group interviews held with 25 resource persons and 60 project beneficiaries (graduates), evaluators also independently formed the view that the project generated remarkable effects. They demonstrate that the grantee managed to bring about change, since the women developed an increased capacity to think critically and make informed decisions with respect to individual, family and community issues. Selected anecdotes are provided below¹⁸. They are grouped along key issues identified at the outset of the project (= baseline, cf. section on relevance), in order to demonstrate if and how the project contributed to increased employment, access to resources and participation in decisions affecting the quality of life. These examples show that the grantee has indeed managed to provide a first appropriate response to address the baseline situation:

Limited access to vocational training & high unemployment among women

When Sharmila signed up for a course at the project's **Calicut training centre**, all she knew was that it was about fabric painting, but she had no idea about the other benefits that she was going to experience. As an educated woman with 12 years of experience as clerical staff, she had to stop working due to health issues. Leading a family life and raising children, however, did not satisfy her. A lot has changed since, which she attributes in particular to the LEE courses. Her motivation and self-confidence improved remarkably: "I always felt I may have some talent, but it was the training that reassured me", she says while presenting to evaluators photos of her work and illustrations on the Sari she wears. "Now I have the courage to present the results of textile projects, on which I have worked individually or as part of our group of seven women". The "**Calicut Seven**" SHG was founded on World Women's Day 2013 and since then has produced a variety of textile articles for clients locally, as well as in Italy and the UK. Many of their products carry very detailed and fine designs, which are inspired by temple art. "If women come together there is nothing they could not do", Sharmila says and highlights that they have started to set aside a part of their earnings to support the costs of work materials and other future efforts. These also include investments into the community, as they intend to transfer their newly acquired skills to others who expressed interest.

Making independent decisions about daily purchases, household needs, and involvement in consultations about major purchases

Geetha completed the project's plumbing course and today is a member of **Amritasudha SHG, Kerala's first women plumbers' group**. "Society is not comfortable seeing women engaged in a job predominantly followed by men. We were raised to believe that way. So when we decided to learn this profession we had to face questions from every side", and she continues: "Initially we were hesitant, but we found the training was considerate of the needs of women, which was highly motivating." Today, no one questions their qualification anymore. The plumbers' SHG enabled the women to expand their business and to gain autonomy: "I have taken a loan from the bank, because I know I have sufficient earnings to repay it. I can make purchases of my choice for myself and other family members without asking my husband for money. He has started to ask me to express my opinion on household and family matters." Because of its success, the SHG's members were recently invited to Sri Lanka for a visit to train local women in plumbing.

¹⁸ In line with current development practice, an effort was made to identify recent anecdotes or to obtain, where possible, details of relevance complementing the grantee's available report documentation, to conduct an independent assessment of impact.

**Making independent decisions to go alone to a market, hospital,
or anywhere else outside the community**

Before her participation in the project, Abitha, a former trainee of the **Changanassery training centre**, did not have the confidence to come out of her house to join a group or community activity. Having only completed two years of school, she is grateful for the experience she gained. "I am talking to you today, because I gained the courage to do so through this project", she told evaluators and continued: "When I see people arguing or being unfair I try to help finding a solution." On a bus trip she witnessed a male's misbehaviour and a woman who did not dare to defend herself. She spoke up and threatened the aggressor to go and file a police complaint, which worked to calm the situation. "When courses began I felt less educated compared to others, but now I have confidence. It is exciting to engage in community and business activity." She now has her own monthly earnings from artificial jewellery production, which she shares with friends and family. Spending most of her time ("24 days a month") at the centre, she seemingly enjoys her new freedom.

**Ambition to improve the quality of life:
Enhanced self-esteem, self-efficacy, self confidence**

Project graduate Aswathy, who aspires to become a teacher, observed with great curiosity the **Parippally training centre** facilitator's coursework management, with a group of women characterized by a diverse age-range and of socio-economic background. It made her understand that it is important to be patient, so as to give equal importance to everybody's problem. Describing the group discussions held following the LEE videos she said: "We tried to come up with a strategy and action plan to solve the issues identified by our group". The question how to go about alcoholism represented a challenge to them: "We found it difficult to address adults, so we changed strategy and focused on combating alcoholism already among children". They visited schools to tell pupils to stay away from alcohol so they wouldn't turn the same way as their grownup family members. She was impressed that children shared their experience about what is going on back home in their families. "The discussion stopped them from being introvert, and it instilled confidence in them that they can champion this and other challenges".

Fifty-four year old Girija, who graduated at the **Mananthavady training centre**, did not have many educational opportunities and hence used to have little contact with the outside world. "After the LEE courses I wanted to get out of the house and do something to improve the living circumstances in our community." She helped organizing a petition to move a local alcohol shop, and although its relocation has turned into a difficult and politically motivated issue, she continued following up on it. Girija regularly participates in the village's Panchayat meetings to draw attention to this and other problems, such as public health or water supply. On one occasion, however, she lost her patience with the local government authorities and decided to organise and pay herself for what was needed to ensure the repair of a public water tap, which is her village's main fresh water supply source.

(v) Sustainability

In view of the project's remarkable achievements (cf. sections on effectiveness and impact), evaluators with regards to sustainability at the time of their field visit mainly focused on (a) graduates' continued engagement in employment and community partnerships; (b) the training programme's continuation in existing and roll-out to future locations, and (c) the continued application and development of CVET and LEE course tools.

a. Continued engagement in employment and community partnerships

With more than half of the surveyed graduates involved in an income-generating activity three months after course completion, the project's results speak for themselves. In addition, the LEE classes have visibly opened up previously untapped potential for lasting community action. Once confronted with video examples how others have overcome their challenges, many former trainees felt prompted to share their issues and to jointly discuss and address them. By the end of the project, 35 SHGs have become the vehicle for a local and democratic process that steers both economic and community initiatives – and graduates told evaluators, individually as well as collectively, that more of them are being established. Evaluators were also impressed that many of the present graduates were willing to share their newly acquired skills and knowledge and to take on a trainer or facilitator role in the future.

b. Training programme continuation and roll-out

All training centre locations visited by evaluators have continued to offer CVET and LEE courses to women after the end of the UNDEF-supported project implementation period. Evaluators have noted that: (i) the grantee or members of its implementation partnership in most cases own and run the spaces in which the training centres are located; (ii) key management and coordination staff are in continued employment by the grantee; and (iii) the training centres through Amrita University can rely on a variety of material and financial contributions from charitable and other donor organisations. Most importantly, evaluators could establish that these structural, human and financial resources are complemented by strong levels of ownership among the current set of facilitators and the benefiting local population: in all existing training centre locations there is a strong desire to transfer skills to and disseminate knowledge among all interested members of the community. In the long-term and on a large scale, the grantee appears also determined to expand the programme to all states across India.

c. CVET and LEE tools' application and development

The training programme's modules and technologies, which Ammachi Labs applied over the past two years, are based on the results of the intensive scientific work of its in-house research teams. Taking into account the project graduates' feedback, evaluators concluded that the training modules offered are of continued relevance to local economy and societal needs, and that the methods, tools and reference materials applied were well developed and researched. During the UNDEF-funded project, both SAVE's haptic technology approach and MOVE's flexible service delivery have demonstrated that the grantee, unlike few other organisations, carries enormous innovative potential and does not depend on the provision of external technology support. New vocational training subjects (e.g. basic

woodwork, electrical works, turning and grinding, sheet and metal work, two-wheeler maintenance, and mushroom cultivation) are being developed by the grantee, and with the help of district coordinators and local facilitators, piloting and testing is set to continue in the training centres.

Evaluators, however, would see the continued use of the grantee's audio- and video-based system AVIEW in already operational training centres critically. While the central monitoring of the facilitators' performance certainly supported the grantee's quality control, considerations should be given to the trainees' privacy when personal issues are discussed as part of the LEE courses.

(vi) UNDEF Value Added

The Ammachi Labs' director made clear that working with UNDEF promoted the grantee's recognition of the importance of knowledge about human rights, civic responsibility, and community engagement to help women develop the capacity to take informed decisions on aspects affecting the quality of their lives. According to her, UNDEF was essential for developing the grantee's strategic approach, which is based on the understanding that women's empowerment would be incomplete without considering its democratic dimension, which is characterised by "[...] the capacity to think critically, and come forward with the right arguments".

V. CONCLUSIONS

i. The grantee's initial analysis of the baseline situation (source: results of research conducted on women's empowerment by UNFPA and ILO) was confirmed by the project's pre-course survey, which was carried out among potential trainees throughout all of the 28 project locations. Accordingly, the project was designed to address economic, social and democratic shortcomings identified in the targeted communities, which prevented women from the participation in decisions affecting their lives. While the grantee foresaw Computerized Vocational and Educational Training (CVET) to economically empower them, Life Enrichment Education (LEE) aimed to also empower these women socially and democratically. It is therefore our view that **the project represented a relevant effort** to empower women to participate in the democratic process and to take control over their own lives, both within and outside their homes. Our findings related to the project's CVET show that (a) the programme was designed to enable women to benefit from innovative computer technology to learn skills, which were traditionally limited to men; and (b) the subjects offered aimed to qualify women for a wider range of employment opportunities and thus to widen for them the scope of possibilities to achieve financial independence. Subsequent LEE activities in the form of video lectures and animated group discussions were meant to complement the women trainee's entrepreneurial skills with democratic values and civic awareness, in order to support the trainees' transformation post-graduation into empowered participants of their local communities.

ii. Although the project faced a number of challenges, evaluators noted that the grantee's implementation efforts produced or even exceeded the quantities planned for the project's main outputs. Most importantly, the grantee operated 28 and not, as planned, 18 training centre facilities. Nineteen of these were run permanently, while communities in 9 additional locations were served temporarily with the help of a mobile training unit. A vast majority of the project's 3,794 enrolled trainees has completed the course programme (3,136 = 83% retention rate, and 4.5% beyond plan). Not only did former trainees vis-à-vis evaluators praise CVET courses for the skills, which have effectively provided them with employment opportunities; they also confirmed that LEE courses and subsequent gatherings provided them with a much needed space, in which they could discuss how to resolve their social and economic issues. Overall, the project generated 35 self-help groups (SHGs) in 15 of the 28 areas it targeted. These new SHGs involve 451 former trainees, who today participate in various kinds of joint community and / or entrepreneurial activity. In addition to those gaining income via SHGs, many others are known to operate as self-employed, and at least 22 have been employed by the grantee's industry partners. Given these significant achievements and considering the numerous community initiatives, which graduates have organised to raise awareness and support the resolution of community issues (e.g. alcoholism, domestic violence, poverty, social exclusion, traffic accidents), evaluators are of the view that **the project was highly effective**.

iii. The grantee's initially proposed target indicators for economic and

social-democratic empowerment allow for a positive assessment of impact in respect of the project's achieved outcomes. Of those graduates surveyed, more than 50% display increased income potential. While evidence presented was insufficient to document that women enjoy sufficiently increased access to resources, evaluators were still pleased with the improved levels of self-confidence and autonomy women demonstrated regardless of their current employment circumstances. Surveys also established that the former trainees' participation in household and community decision making, as well as control over their cash earnings increased beyond the 50% target. Evaluators on the basis of independently gathered first-hand evidence also confirmed that the women's employability, independence, and self-esteem have improved. They therefore conclude that **the project generated positive impact**. The project's graduates are not only more confident; they also take informed decisions and actively engage in the identification of most pressing community issues. With women's concern for initiatives improving the quality of life growing, the willingness to consult them and the receptiveness for their suggestions has improved accordingly among the men.

iv. The development of vocational skills and civic knowledge represented the project's principal focus. Breaking the amount spent for training materials, awareness campaign and training session setup, trainees' and resource persons' subsistence, and industry partner visits over the total number of 3,136 graduates, an acceptable average of approximately USD 50 was spent per participant to empower women both in economic and democratic respect. Taking into account that the project's hand-outs, posters, banners, successfully attracted the initial interest of 3,794 persons, the average cost to convince a trainee to enrol in the programme was as low as USD 8. The grantee's nominal staff costs amounted to 36% of the total budget, and essentially covered the human resources required in the field, while resources for project management, financial administration and M&E were provided free of charge. Similarly, the training centres' computer equipment and the mobile training unit MOVE were provided at no cost to the budget. Given the project's remarkable achievements, evaluators are therefore of the view that **the project was efficient**.

v. In addition to the positive results, evaluators also found **promising signs of sustainability**. During interviews with numerous beneficiaries evaluators could confirm that a significant number of graduates still pursue an income-generating activity. With more interested women showing up at the training centres, it is reassuring that the grantee continues to offer CVET and LEE courses after the end of the UNDEF-supported project implementation period. Based on the current trainees' feedback, evaluators concluded that the training modules offered today are of continued relevance to local economy and societal needs. Evaluators were also pleased to establish that in addition to existing structural, human and financial resources, Ammachi Labs will be able to rely on strong levels of ownership among the current set of facilitators and graduates, who are all eager to contribute time and effort to support future skills transfer and knowledge dissemination. With regards to the expansion of a future course offer and its potential roll-out across other states of India the grantee, unlike few other organisations, carries an enormous innovative potential and therefore does not depend on the provision of external support, to develop new vocational training subjects and approaches.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen the outcome and similar projects in the future, evaluators recommend to UNDEF and project grantees:

i. The fact that the approach and methodology of Ammachi Labs included the conduct of baseline research and the formulation of outcome indicators is highly commendable, as this enhanced the project's **relevance** and significantly facilitated the **assessment of effectiveness and impact**. Evaluators, however, would have appreciated a more rigorous approach to data analysis. As a matter of fact, the grantee expanded (and not, as claimed, refined) the definition of existing target indicators by adding a variety of measurement options. This made the reporting of project outcomes less pertinent, as it lacked clear responses to the project document's initial monitoring framework (e.g. instead of economic empowerment indicators like access to health care and media, democratic empowerment indicators of voting behaviour were used to assess if women enjoy increased access to services). Based on the above **we recommend to the grantee** to design monitoring frameworks, which make consistent use of baseline and target indicators. Exploiting the results of progress monitoring more systematically facilitates the identification of remaining and new needs. This could enable Ammachi Labs to improve its current assessment in qualitative terms and thus enhance the organization's strategic objectives. It may also help the grantee to attract new donors and implementing partners for an expansion of the original project.

ii. Given the significantly improved levels of employability, independence, and self-esteem, there is little doubt that the project contributed effectively to the women graduates' economic, social and democratic empowerment. Despite this achievement it is, however, also clear that the effects of the grantee's intervention have been limited to beneficiaries living in the local areas targeted by the project's training centres and MoVE. Having noted the grantee's intention to roll the programme out to other states of India, and **based on our observations on impact and sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee** to have team members involved in the design and management of the previous UNDEF project to hold regular strategy meetings. The resulting approach should ensure that the programme's future expansion relies also on resources which were newly created by the UNDEF project, so as not overstretch the grantee's existing resources (c.f. suggestions provided below).

iii. In view of the above it is our strong belief that a wider outreach of the CVET and LEE methodology to local communities previously not covered by the UNDEF project will be essential to promote women's empowerment. **Based on our comments on sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee** to:

- Investigate the possibility to convert existing training centres in the medium-term into facilities that become independent from the programme's financial support. Taking into account the high levels of ownership evaluators observed among many women

graduates, and given their willingness to share skills, knowledge and part of their income, this could be achieved by (a) encouraging some of the UNDEF project's most achieved graduates to become part-time facilitators in the centres in which they were trained, and (b) obtaining agreement from SHGs formed by the project to support "their" centres, i.e. they contribute modest shares of their SHGs' earnings.

- Exploit the grantee's existing structural, human and financial resources to establish new training centre facilities. Capitalise on the routine of existing facilitators, by inviting them to support the grantee's programme expansion by migrating as trainers (or trainers of future trainers) to new locations.
- Undertake targeted donor screening in preparation for a proposal seeking support for an extension of the project in line with the above suggestions. Ensure the proposal's approach matches with donor expectations and offers added value as compared to the original project.
- Abandon progressively the use of the audio-visual AVIEW system for the purpose of monitoring the performance of facilitators, once they either gained experience or have shifted to new locations. This in order to respect and/or avoid possible privacy concerns of women trainees, who may prefer to be unobserved when sharing personal issues in the context of LEE courses.

IX. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

UNDEF:

- Final Narrative Report
- Mid-Term/Annual Progress Report
- Project Document
- Milestone Verification Reports
- Financial Utilization Report
- Project Officer's Evaluation Note

Ammachi Labs of Amrita University:

- CVET Handbooks: Jewellery Making; Fabric Painting; Soap Making
- LEE Handbooks: Women's Rights; Financial Literacy; Health & Hygiene
- Facilitator Handbook
- Counselling Handbook for Facilitators
- Project Brochure "Women Empowerment"
- Poster "Travel Independently"
- USB: Documents, Images

Other sources:

- "Women's economic empowerment and working conditions", in: Policy for Gender Equality and the Rights and Role of Women in Sweden's International Development Cooperation 2010–2015, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden (2010)
- "A Chakravarty-D'Ambrasio View of Multi-Dimensional Deprivation: Some Estimates for India", D. Jayaraj & S. Subramanian, in: Economic & Political Weekly, Volume 45/No 6 (2010)
- Human Development Report, UNDP (July 2014)
- "An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions", Oxford (2013)
- "Agenda 2010 – The turning point on poverty: background paper on gender", DFID (2010)
- "Women's economic empowerment", OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET, 2012)
- "Investing in Skills for Socio-Economic Empowerment of Rural Women", in: Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief #4, FAO/IFAD/ILO (2010)

ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

4 August 2014	
<i>Grantee's Project Briefing, Amritapuri University Campus</i>	
Prof. Bhavani B	Director, Ammachi Labs
Christopher Coley	Research Analyst, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Liju Karanayil Mahadevan	Project Manager, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Reshma Ramesh	HR Manager, Ammachi Labs
Hari P Ajayan	IT Team Leader, Ammachi Labs
Sreeram K	Operations Team Leader, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Srividya Sheshadri	Research Team Leader, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Br. Sudeep	Director, Amrita University, Amritapuri Campus
Dr. Balakrishnan Shankar	Associate Dean, Amrita University, Amritapuri Campus
Dr. Geetha Kumar	Amrita School of Biotechnology
Dr. Krishnasree Achuthan	Cyber Security and TBI, Amritapuri Campus
Shivakumar D	Consultant, Amrita University, Amritapuri Campus
Ajay Balakrishnan	Project Manager, Ammachi Labs
Sreejith Nair	Project Manager, My Sangham Portal, Ammachi Labs
Rupa R	Accountant in charge, Ammachi Labs
Sheeja Jagadeesh	Training Manager, UNDEF project
Shwetha Chidruvala	Team Leader, Quality Assurance, Ammachi Labs
Yamuna Sandrine	Post Training Team, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Amal Mohan	Operations, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Jamie Ottelsberg	Graphics Team Leader, Ammachi Labs
Gayathri Manikutty	Ammachi Labs Research and MTech Programme Coordinator, Ammachi Labs
Unnikrishnan R	Ammachi Labs
AdityaVikram Reddy	Research Team, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Prof. Kamal Bijlani	AVIEW, Amrita University, Amritapuri Campus
Aneesh Babu	IT support
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Amritapuri Training Centre</i>	
Sandhya Nair	Administration
Rashmi Mol	Facilitator, Amritapuri Centre
Sinitha KV	Operations Team, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Parvathy Valsala	Research Analyst, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Divya Vijayan	Research Analyst, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Sowmya Amar	Post Training Team, UNDEF project

Sindhya EP	Post Training Team, UNDEF project
Sanal Menon	Post Training Team, UNDEF project
Remani K.S	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Subha .O	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Sindhu	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Sandhya Sreekumar	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Bijukumari	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Soumya Ratheesh	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Vidhya	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Subi	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Princy	Graduate, Parasakthi SHG
Latha	Current trainee, Parasakthi SHG
Maya	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Libina	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Soumya	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Deepa	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Reshmi	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Rethnamony	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Bindhu	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Sheeja	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Vijaya Sasidaran	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Athira	Graduate, Dhanalakshmi SHG
Vasanthakumari	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
Ushakumari P	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
Geetha Babu	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
Boby S	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
Sindhu K	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
Priyakumari L	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
Ushakumari B	Graduate, Plumbers' Group, Amritasudha SHG
5 August 2014	
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Meppadi Training Centre, Wayanad</i>	
Sumesh Babu	District Coordinator, Wayanad
Seetha Murali	Facilitator, Meppady Centre
Vijayakumari	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Aruna M	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Renjushavinod	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Roshna Vinod	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Sobhana K N	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre

Divya K C	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Anjana Ashok	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Radhika Suresh	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Rajitha A V	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Sandhya Mohan	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Renjitha Sasidharan	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Saudhamini	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Reshmi	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Vijayakumari	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Renjitha	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Sarojini	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Ambika	Current trainee, Jewellery Making, Meppady Centre
Sarala K	Graduate, Amritham SHG
Preetha Ravi	Graduate, Amritham SHG
Suseetha	Graduate, Amritavarshini SHG
Vasantha Kumari	Graduate, Amritavarshini SHG
Manjusha	Graduate, Amritavarshini SHG
Hemaladha	Graduate, Amritavarshini SHG
Manjumanoj	Graduate, Amritavarshini SHG
Geetha	Graduate, Amritavarshini SHG
Monisha	Graduate, Archana SHG
Sindusmijesh	Graduate, Dhanasree SHG
Manju J N	Graduate, Dhanasree SHG
Vasala P V	Graduate, Jyothirmayi SHG
Sumishaunnikrishnan	Graduate, Jyothirmayi SHG
Babita Saju	Graduate, Kripamayi SHG
Aajitha	Graduate, Kripamayi SHG
Irakrishnan	Graduate, Nandanam SHG
Sajini	Graduate, Nandanam SHG
Pushpaladha	Graduate, Sreepadam SHG
Preetha Rajan	Graduate, Thanima SHG
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Mananthavady Training Centre</i>	
Anitha Shajil Kumar	Facilitator, Mananthavady Centre
Mini K M	Graduate, Gurukripa SHG
Nisha Vishwanathan	Graduate, Gurukripa SHG
Preetja Devi	Graduate, Varnam SHG
Girija Mohandas	Graduate, Jyotirmayi SHG
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Calicut Training Centre</i>	

Jilsha A	Facilitator, Cheruvannur Calicut Centre
Sharmila S	Graduate, Amritheshwari SHG
Jaseena P	Graduate, Amritheshwari SHG
Ambujam P	Graduate, Amritheshwari SHG
Bindu B	Graduate, Amritheshwari SHG
6 August 2014	
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Changanassery Training Centre</i>	
Krishnakumar	Coordinator, Changanassery Centre
Sreekala L	Facilitator, Changanassery Centre
Sreya Babu	Graduate, President of SHG Poornasree
Sandhya Sudharshem	Graduate, Secretary of SHG Poornasree
T S Suseela	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Sreya	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Usha Mahanan	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Abitha Siyad	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Usha Kumari	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Subhadra	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Thilakanathy	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Shubha	Graduate, SHG Poornasree
Reniu Revindranvais	Graduate, President of SHG Amrithavarshiny
Sindhu Sasi	Graduate, Secretary of SHG Amrithavarshiny
Sreekala L	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Sajitha Raiesh	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Prabha Maniyanachari	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Mini Babu	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Sreelekha P	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Velammal	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Girija M	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Indu C R	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Shibini P N	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Lailamani	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Geetha K J	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Ambily A G	Graduate, SHG Amrithavarshiny
Archana	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Ambuly	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Bindhu	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Celinama	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Smitha	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre

Saranya	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Indira	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Sindhu	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Sandya	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Subha	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Sabhana	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Preethy	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Resmi	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Rai Soundararaj	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Mini	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Vineethu	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Krishna Kumari	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Lyla	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Prabha	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
Jayasree	Current trainee, Changanassery Centre
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Pala Training Centre</i>	
Saleelamma Soman	Facilitator, Pala Centre
Jayasree Suekumar	Graduate, Pala Centre
Prasanna Babu	Graduate, Pala Centre
Sheela Radhakrishnan	Graduate, Pala Centre
Birija K N	Graduate, Pala Centre
7 August 2014	
<i>Resource Person & Beneficiary Interviews: Parippally Training Centre</i>	
Vasanta Kumari	Facilitator, Parippally Centre
Aswathy	Graduate, Parippally Centre
Deepa	Graduate, Parippally Centre
Heete	Graduate, Parippally Centre
Reena	Graduate, Parippally Centre
Srilatha	Graduate, Parippally Centre
Jija	Graduate, Parippally Centre
<i>Evaluators' Debriefing, Ammachi Labs</i>	
Prof. Bhavani B	Director, Ammachi Labs
Christopher Coley	Research Analyst, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Liju Karanayil Mahadevan	Project Manager, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Srividya Sheshadri	Research Team Leader, UNDEF project, Ammachi Labs
Rupa R	Accountant in charge, Ammachi Labs

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

AMMACHI	Amrita Multi Modal Applications Using Computer Human Interaction
AVIEW	Amrita Virtual Interactive e-Learning World
CVET	Computerized Vocational and Educational Training
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development
FNR	Final Narrative Report
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
LEE	Life Enrichment Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOVE	Mobile Vocational Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SAVE	Sakshat Amrita Vocational Education
SHG	Self-Help Group
TTT	Training the Trainers
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar