



Interim Report

1. Organization Name: The Tandana Foundation

Project Title: Women LEAP: Literacy, Empowerment, Awareness, Possibilities

Grant Amount: \$47,980

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2. The project's goal is to promote women's economic independence and participation in local decision-making in the Bandiagara Circle by improving their literacy, numeracy, and association management, democratic governance, and leadership skills in 2017 and 2018. The specific objectives are as follows: 1) By July 2017, 677 of the 900 women participating in the extended Tommo So literacy classes will achieve a satisfactory score in reading, writing, and calculation skills; 2) by November 2017, 250 booklets containing association documents, governance and leadership skills in Tommo So will be created to be used to train 250 women leaders; 3) by March 2018, a minimum of 10 women's associations will be registered by women who participated in the training and asked to submit proposals for income-generating activities; and 4) by June 2018, 5 women's association proposals will be selected for continued funding and technical support.

3. Funding has not changed significantly. We received \$3,100 in other donations for this project, which we put toward the Tandana contribution outlined in the budget. A favorable exchange rate has led to savings in USD on most expenses, so we have saved \$4,221.12 to date. We will use these savings to cover unforeseen expenses related to the project and to fund additional projects proposed by women's associations. For example, we had only budgeted for one set of relocation costs of the literacy instructors. However, we ended up paying three sets of relocation costs, since each instructor had to work in three different villages during 2017. We also had not included in the budget certain costs related to legal registration of the women's associations and for a committee of local development professionals to assist the associations with preparation of their project proposals for income-generating activities and translate them into French. We will use the savings to cover these costs, which are estimated at \$1,272. The remaining savings will be used to fund additional projects proposed by the new women's associations. If other expenses continue as expected, then we should be able to fund 7 proposed projects instead of only 5.

4. Aaron DiMartino has replaced Juliana Essen as Operations Director.

5. Out of the 900 women expected to participate in the literacy classes, only 837 attended regularly. Social obligations and gardening work prevented some students from attending regularly. Nevertheless, out of the 837 students, 687 achieved a satisfactory score on the test, surpassing the goal of 677 passing scores.

6. The main challenge we faced was consistent attendance of the students. The instructors made great efforts to explain the importance of regular attendance, and were able to improve attendance in some villages. Also, in some villages, students had greater difficulty attaining the desired skill level than expected. Some of those who had attended their first session of classes several years ago had forgotten much of what they had learned, and more review was required than we had expected. Some students had used their skills in their own micro-businesses or in their Savings for Change groups, and retained the knowledge, while others had not practiced much and had forgotten more. The instructors responded by providing the necessary review to bring the struggling students up to speed.

7. We have not made major changes to our original objectives, just three small ones. One change is that we have extended the timeline for objective 2. Due to prolonged travel of the Secretary of AFTCD/PD, our linguistic partner organization, the creation of the governance and leadership booklets is behind schedule. The content has been compiled, but AFTCD/PD is awaiting the Secretary, who is the linguistic expert best qualified to type the final versions, to finalize them. We expect them to be completed in January, so the workshops themselves, which are scheduled for February and March, should not be delayed. The other slight change pertains to the manner in which the women's associations will be registered. Due to changes in the national government under the new President of Mali, the process for legally registering associations at the national level has become much more complicated and costly and thus is not cost effective. However, the women's associations can be registered at the local level, through the Mayor's office of each Township. Through this local process, they will gain official recognition. Finally, thanks to savings on project expenses, we hope to be able to fund seven of the best project proposals from the new women's associations, rather than just five.

8. Through the continuation literacy classes, 687 students achieved satisfactory scores on the literacy and numeracy test, which surpassed our objective of 677 passing students. Out of those 687 students, 477 achieved a high score on the test, indicating that their literacy and numeracy skills are stronger than the basic level required to pass the test. The booklets concerning association documents, governance, and leadership skills have been compiled and translated into Tommo So. They will soon be finalized and then printed in preparation for the workshops. In 2018, the workshops will be held, and then the women's association proposals will be selected for support.

9. Although we are behind schedule on the printing of the leadership and governance booklets, we do not foresee any problems completing our overall project in the timeframe outlined.

Impact of the Grant:

We feel that the impact of this grant can best be seen by considering the personal stories of the participants. In their own words, two students and an instructor describe the changes that the program has brought about.

Yagouno Tembiné, one of the students, said:

I am a student of the literacy class in Kansongho and one of the cooks trained by The Tandana Foundation to cook for Tandana volunteer groups on their visits to Mali. I am also a member of the executive committee of the Olouguelemo Environmental Association and a member of the Kansongho cotton bank committee. Thanks to the literacy classes, I can carry out my responsibilities in all the roles that have been entrusted to me and I can take notes during meetings and assemblies. Now I know how to calculate so I can estimate the quantities of ingredients needed for meals we cook for the different workshops and Tandana activities, based on the number of participants. Thanks to my work cooking for these workshops, I earn the money I need for skin cream, soap, clothes for me and my children, and ingredients for our family's meals. After the literacy classes, I now can keep a notebook recording the attendance and contributions of each member of my Savings for Change group, and I assist other Savings for Change groups in my village when they share their group fund at the end of the year.

Mariétou Telly, one of the students, said:

I am the president of the women's group in the village, and we do a lot of things in this village. I had never been to school. At one point I wanted to resign from my post because a president who does not know how to read and write is not good. When I heard about the literacy course in Tommo So, I was ready to pay the instructor to teach me. Thanks to the literacy program, I gave up thoughts of resigning from the president's post and have had no more complications. Today, I read, I write and I calculate, which is going to serve me in my work as president of the women of Kédou.

We received the following letter, originally written in Tommo So in her own hand, from Ada Kanambaye, one of the literacy instructors who began as a student in the program:

Friday, June 16, 2017

This letter is addressed to the Tandana Foundation, its partners and all the staff of the Tandana Foundation.

I want to thank you on behalf of all the participants of the Tommo So Literacy Program. We give thanks for the grace of God, for The Tandana Foundation, and its partners. As the year comes to an end we close the literacy classes with a sense of peace. We hope God gives us all a good new year, with health and the courage to finish the program. With the Tommo So Literacy Program, many women have benefited from writing, reading, and math skills and knowledge about how to take part in meetings. I, too, working as an instructor with the participants, have learned many lessons about the wisdom and the daily work of women in the Tommoquiné (Wadouba, Ningari, and

Ondogou Townships).

Before I didn't know much about the roles, responsibilities and daily life of women, and I now realize that in our environment, we women are a bit behind. Why? It is because before there was no women's association nor any group for women, and there were not even any activities or meetings for women.

Thanks to the Tandana Foundation in partnership with the AFTCD/PD Association, based in Bandiagara, over the past three years, women have made great progress in regards to their literacy skills, and especially in building their capacity in the role and responsibility of women leaders. This is what I discovered from the various women participants from several villages.

Now, on behalf of all the participants from the different Tommo So literacy classes, we ask The Tandana Foundation and its partners to continue to support the development and promotion of women.

May God grant us the wisdom of good mutual understanding. May God bring us the opportunity to meet again. Now we trust in both God and The Tandana Foundation and we count on your partnership.

*Ada Kanambaye
Village Literacy Instructor
Sal-Dimi*