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MPA Candidate, 2015

Deliverables Proposal: DPPI+ Summer/Fall 2015

Background on my DPPI+ Organization

The social change organization that I am conducting my DPPI+ practicum with is *Traditional Medicinals Foundation* (TMF). Traditional Medicinals, a US medicinal herbal tea company, works to “transform the commerce of herbs by promoting wellbeing at every point and striving to create value for all stakeholders, from collection and cultivation to consumption”. The founders of Traditional Medicinals started TMF in 2009 in order to support herb-sourcing communities around the world through social programs. TMF’s largest program is in Rajasthan, India in villages where TM sources organic senna for its Smooth Move teas. In 2009, TMF partnered with local NGO Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) to launch *Revive!* a social business partnership focused on reducing poverty and empowering women through organic agriculture. The purpose of the *Revive!* program is to leverage a multi-pronged approach to developing 6 villages in the program catchment. The program is designed to form and strengthen the organization, empowerment, and self-reliance of the *Revive!* communities in the Thar desert.

The program takes a holistic approach to development by addressing a wide variety of community needs. Primary focus areas of the program include: water security, food security, improved farming, women’s empowerment, community development, and enhanced education (with a focus on girls). The approach is unique in its inherently Gandhian Model of community empowerment, lifting up those in greatest need through a highly participatory process. The program aims to: improve water security through traditional harvesting and storage techniques, enhance food security by increasing knowledge of advanced farming techniques and development of family gardens, empower women through participation in Self Help Groups (SHGs) including loan and training opportunities, expand access to education, and encourage village development through the establishment of Village Development Committees (VDCs).

My role as a DPPI+ Fellow at TMF

TMF has partnered with local NGO, GRAVIS, for the past 6 years. In recent years TMF has become increasingly involved in improving the quality of interventions included in the *Revive!* project. This is largely a result of an external evaluation conducted by then MIIS student (and now TMF program manager) Emily Davydov. TMF has expressed interest in me working with *Revive!* field staff in establishing systems for monitoring and evaluation that can be implemented by staff with no formal training in M&E. *Revive!* projects currently do not have M&E systems in place, therefore TMF would like to leverage my education and experience in M&E to build up local staff capacity in data collection.

In addition, this year TMF is introducing a new intervention targeted at *Revive!* women’s self-help groups (SHGs). The new intervention is the launch of SHG market readiness training. TMF has identified and partnered with an Indian fashion designer, Sonica Kapur, an expert in curating local artisan handicrafts and linking artisans to international markets. The project launches in January 2016 with a series of trainings for *Revive!* SHGs in various skills from braiding to

stitching. Based on the existing skill sets of SHG members, Sonica Kapur will develop a number of prototype products designed for the US market. Women will then be provided training on: product specific skills, self assessment, quality control, and entrepreneurship. The long-term goal of this pilot project is to link participating SHG members with the US market in terms of product orders and fulfillment, to increase their opportunity for income generation.

Developing a comprehensive M&E strategy at this point will be important for understanding the perceived value by participants, changes in income, and changes in household decision-making over time. This pilot is intended to serve as a foundation for shifting the manner in which Revive implements vocational trainings targeted at income generation for SHG members.

The goal is to train women in marketable skills that they can then earn a substantial income on in order to support themselves and their families; in turn leading to increased levels of decision-making among women. Because of TMF's lean staffing in India, the TMF program manager expressed to me that currently the greatest need for assistance is in designing the monitoring and evaluation plans for use throughout this project intervention.

The market readiness intervention is going to be my primary focus during my 3 months with TMF (deliverables 1-3), supplemented by support to establishing clearer systems for reporting and documentation (deliverables 4-6).

Deliverables

1. Develop logic model for market readiness intervention

The market readiness intervention is currently in the planning stages. As it is an extension of the Revive! SHGs, TMF has asked that I use the current SHG logic model and revise it to include the specific indicators, outcomes, and impact relevant to this new intervention. I plan to conduct secondary research to better understand common indicators used in similar interventions, and will then design a log frame based on DPPI module 1 training.

Timeline: Aug 17 – Aug 31

2. Develop M&E framework to track changes in women's skillset, income, and decision-making for market readiness intervention

Building off of the logic model, TMF would like my assistance in designing an M&E framework that can be implemented throughout the market readiness intervention. The plan will outline several areas of monitoring including how indicators will be tracked, when data will be collected, and who will be responsible for data collection. I plan to conduct secondary research to better understand how programs similar to this intervention have been monitored, and will then design an M&E framework based on DPPI training as well as other academic and professional experiences.

Timeline: Aug 17 – Aug 31

3. Develop tool(s) & manage baseline data collection for market readiness intervention

Following completion of the logic model and M&E framework, a baseline survey will be designed to collect information on female participants prior to their involvement in the market readiness trainings. Survey design will be based on secondary research and meetings with TMF as well as Revive! field staff. Baseline data collection will then take place during September, under my guidance and supervision. This process will include survey training with field staff, monitoring of survey implementation, data analysis, and completion of baseline findings report to be shared with all stakeholders.

Timeline: Sept 3 – Oct 2

4. Develop criteria for disbursement of seed grant funding to SHGs

TMF would also like assistance in strengthening the current SHG intervention taking place. To date, TMF has initiated over 30 SHGs across 6 villages, which are managed by two local staff. The two staff managing the project conducts each group based on personal experience and understanding of the SHG Model. In order to bring greater clarity to one area of the current SHG implementation, TMF has asked that I work with the two female field staff, as well as the field project manager, to develop criteria for the disbursement of seed grant funding. Once a SHG is formed, at some point GRAVIS provides seed grant funding to contribute to the group's pool of loan funds available. The point at which a group is given seed funds is unclear and TMF would like to see a more systematized approach to how funds are disbursed. I will facilitate meetings with the field staff to better understand the current process and also brainstorm ideas to improve upon the current approach. At this point, I envision creating a checklist with the staff to help guide decision-making around seed grants, but the exact deliverable may change.

Timeline: Oct 6 – Oct 15

5. Develop project matrix that documents water security intervention (taanka construction), including intended & observed outcomes, and current staff monitoring

Similar to the concerns TMF expressed around inconsistent implementation of the SHG program, TMF has also requested assistance with documentation of project interventions. They would like a document that includes a description of the intervention, the project goals, intended and observed outcomes, and current monitoring efforts. TMF would like me to do this by starting with one water security intervention (taanka construction), with the goal being that the field staff are then able to complete similar project matrices once they have completed the process with me. I will design a participatory session for the field staff to begin identifying root causes of water insecurity and intended or observed outcomes of the taanka intervention. Activities under consideration include problem tree and/or outcome mapping. I'll then take the information gathered from the staff session to design a simple project matrix that captures staff input and bring it back to staff for feedback and revisions.

Timeline: Aug 19 – Sept 16

6. Develop field reporting template

Finally, TMF would like help in establishing a system for more regular reporting from field staff. They have asked that I create a field reporting template that can be used by field staff on a monthly. To design the template, I'll first hold a meeting with field staff to better understand their current reporting and monitoring, then use their input to design a simple reporting document.

Timeline: Sept 11 – Oct 5

7. Case Study

Topic TBD

Timeline: Aug 17 – Oct 31