

“MY WORK IS MY FUTURE”: A CASE STUDY OF AN NGO’S EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN WEST AFRICA

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the educational programs of an international non-governmental organization (NGO) operating in a developing region. The purpose of this study was to examine the exchange between an international NGO and the women entrepreneurs enrolled in that NGO's educational programs. Specifically, I explored the ways the NGO and program participants influenced one another. The study's conceptual framework drew from Vella's principles of effective adult learning and global feminist theory.

Using a qualitative case study approach, the single-case design focused on an international NGO operating in a West African country. In its tenth year of operations, this fair-trade organization provided training and educational programs for an extensive network of women entrepreneurs and facilitated the export of their products abroad. Data consisted of documents, observations, and interviews. Documents included extensive training and course materials, NGO publications and reports, and internal planning memos. Observational data were collected from training events, NGO staff and strategic meetings, and daily interactions with employees, volunteers, and the local women entrepreneurs. Fifteen women participated in this study, including two full-time permanent NGO employees, two short-term student volunteers, and 11 local entrepreneurs. All participants had engaged with the NGO's educational programs in one of three possible roles: learner, instructor, or program manager. Findings were developed using a thematic analysis of the qualitative data set.

Although the present case centers on an NGO that would generally be regarded as successful, findings indicated opportunities for increased efficacy and collaboration. Five major themes emerged from the analysis, including gendered work, ongoing cultural and communication barriers, a precarious balance between the goals of economic justice (e.g., living wages and reasonable work hours) and social justice (e.g., empowerment and education), limited educational program resources as a barrier to success, and pride.

Findings from this study highlighted challenges and opportunities for NGOs working in developing regions. The ways in which this NGO's educational programs addressed aspects of the UN's MDGs and UNESCO's agenda of international adult education have implications for both theory and practice. The present study can inform the educational agendas of others in similar circumstances or with similar social justice mandates.

DEDICATION

During an interview, entrepreneur Ruth stated, “my work is my future.” And so the NGO in this study contributes to the brightness of that future, persevering to ensure continued economic and educational opportunities in collaboration with the women entrepreneurs of West Africa. This work is dedicated to all the talented, hard-working and committed women I met there and without whom my research would not have been possible.

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from emptying the dishwasher to reading rough drafts to spending precious international flight upgrade points. His patience, pep talks, and ruthless pragmatism have been crucial to this process.

NOMENCLATURE

CBP	Capacity Building Program
CONFINTEA	International Conferences on Adult Education
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IMF	International Monetary Fund
FTF	Fair Trade Federation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WFTO	World Fair Trade Organization
WW	Worldwide Women

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized that:

Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be one of the main challenges of our time, and is a major concern of the international community. Ending this scourge will require the combined efforts of all, governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, in the context of a stronger and more effective global partnership for development (UN, 2008, p. 2).

The efforts to end the scourge of extreme poverty are subdivided into the UN's eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN, 2013b). Introduced in 2002, the MDGs, listed in Table 1, are "timebound targets, by which progress in reducing income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion—while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability—can be measured" (UN, 2008, p. 2). While the world is unlikely to entirely eradicate poverty by the deadline of 2015, the goals have galvanized global efforts. By uniting governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGO), in a common purpose (UN, 2013b), there has been substantial progress towards meeting the MGDs since their introduction.

Notice that, of the eight goals, numbers three and five specifically pertain to women and their roles in developing regions. Additionally, women are more likely to

live in poverty (goal one), less likely to attend primary school (goal two), have less control over sexually transmitted infections (a component of goal six), and maternal health (goal five) is strongly correlated to child mortality (goal four) (UN, 2012). The prominence of women’s issues in the MDGs suggests that the UN considers women’s empowerment, equality, and health crucial to the eradication of global poverty and the success of the UN’s comprehensive development efforts.

Table 1. The United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals.

Number	Goal
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2	Achieve universal primary education.
3	Promote gender equality and empower women.
4	Reduce child mortality.
5	Improve maternal health.
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7	Ensure environmental sustainability.
8	Develop global partnerships for development.

Note. Adapted from “United Nations millennium development goals.” Retrieved from UN website: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>. Copyright 2013 by the United Nations.

As one means to address the MDGs, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proposes a variety of education programs designed to target explicitly each of the eight goals. Specific to women, UNESCO asserts “no other policy intervention is likely to have a more positive multiplier effect on progress across all the MDGs than the education of women and girls” (UNESCO, 2012b, para. 2). As a result, UNESCO strives to promote gender equity in education through

changes in policy, access, and educational content, and the removal of health-related barriers (UNESCO, 2012a).

Key ideas embedded in the UN’s MDGs and UNESCO’s contributions to the solution are the contributions of civil society organizations, such as NGOs, the importance of empowering women, and the fundamental role played by education. I have explored the intersection of these three concepts, as represented in Figure 1, through a qualitative case study, the details of which I present in this document. The remainder of this chapter provides context for my study, describing the background of the problem as it pertains to the themes represented in Figure 1, and presents the conceptual framework, purpose of the study, research questions, and definitions of some key terms and concepts.

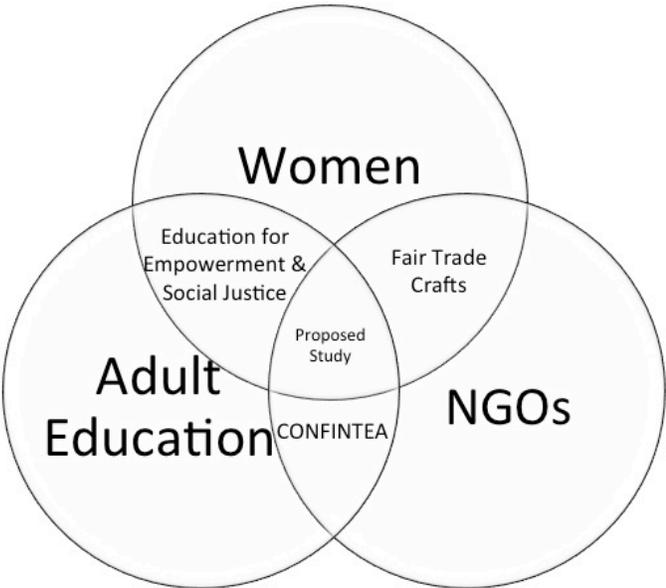


Figure 1. A Representation of the Relationships Among the Major Themes of This Study.

Background

In the following sections, I elaborate on some of the issues that are key to placing this study in a broader context. I begin by (a) discussing the marginalization of women in education, particularly in developing regions, followed by (b) UNESCO's adult education initiatives, (c) the trend in fair trade crafts facilitated by NGOs that claim to support women's empowerment and education, and finally (d) the West African context in which this study is situated.

Gender Inequality in Education

Women's access to education, particularly in developing regions, is undermined by "poverty, geographical isolation, ethnic background, disability, [and] traditional attitudes about their status and role" (UNESCO, 2012a, para. 1). According to UNESCO (2012b), two-thirds of the 796 million adults who cannot read or write are women, a proportion that has remained unchanged since 2000. Worldwide, girls represent approximately 54% of the children who do not attend school (UNESCO, 2012b). The disparity in access to education for women results in limited work and economic prospects, including lack of management or business ownership opportunity, and exclusion from participation in government (UN, 2013a).

In contrast to these bleak statistics, the value of educating women is emphasized throughout the UN's and UNESCO's literature on the MDGs. Evidence shows that an increase in women's education can produce a number of important benefits for families, health, and society. For example, the higher a woman's educational attainment, the more likely she is to earn more, live longer, have fewer and healthier children, and be

protected from HIV infection (UNESCO, 2012b). The focus on empowerment for women through education has the potential to make a dramatic difference in the lives of women worldwide as governments, NGOs, and the private sector work towards the MDGs.

Empowerment of Women Through Adult Education

A key tenet of adult education is the opportunity, through education, to improve people's lives; for example, educational programs can be used to further social justice causes and facilitate the empowerment of learners. The UNESCO International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) seek to highlight the important role adult education plays in efforts to promote “democracy, peace and human rights, respect for diversity and conflict resolution, economic and ecological sustainability and workforce development” (UNESCO, 2013, para. 2).

The acronym CONFINTEA comes from the title of the conference series in French, “CONFérence INTernationale sur l'Éducation des Adultes” which translates in English to “international conference on adult education.” Since 1949 in Elsinore, Denmark, UNESCO has organized a CONFINTEA conference for the international community every 12-13 years to highlight the important role of adult education and non-formal learning in development.

Delegates of the 1997 conference, CONFINTEA V, held in Hamburg, Germany, produced the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning and the Agenda for the Future. These documents emphasized adult and lifelong learning as key tools to address the global challenges of the 21st century (UNESCO, 2013). The Hamburg Declaration

(UNESCO, 1997) outlines an agenda for the future of adult education that includes, to name just a few, active citizenship, education for all, gender equity, alleviation of poverty, and the preservation of the environment. The product of CONFINTEA VI, held in Belem, Brazil in 2009, was the Belem Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2009b). That document revisited the issues from the previous conferences with the intention to “highlight the crucial role of adult learning and education for the realization of current international education and development agendas” (UNESCO, 2010, para. 3), including the MDGs. CONFINTEA V and VI marked a significant change in the way adult education and learning are perceived to contribute to global development efforts.

Thus, adult education on a global scale is guided and supported by the CONFINTEA conferences and shares the values of the MDGs for alleviating poverty and promoting gender equity. The Hamburg Declaration and the Belem Framework for Action highlight the need for collaboration among a variety of organizations, including NGOs, to achieve the conference goals and cannot be accomplished by the UN, UNESCO, or state agencies alone (UNESCO, 1997, 2003, 2009b).

Fair Trade Crafts

For the observant consumer, there has been a noticeable increase recently in the availability and prominence of objects produced by and sold for the benefit of women in developing regions. Internet-based businesses, boutiques and retail stores, and even local cafes are offering crafts, textiles, and jewelry for sale with an emphasis on their fair trade status and contribution to the improved quality of life for their makers. According to Fairtrade International (2011), a global fair trade certification agency, “more than 1.2

million producers and workers in 58 developing countries now benefit from global Fairtrade sales” (“A success story,” para. 3). Fair trade can contribute substantially to the goal of eradicating poverty “by providing access to fair working conditions, (export) markets, higher pay, equal treatment of women and men, and jobs” (Dutch Association of Worldshops, 2011, p. 6).

Visiting the business websites associated with the fair trade objects that are becoming so visible, such as those represented in Table 2, adds a personal dimension to the issue. Each website has a section in which the organizers describe the women they are helping by selling the objects. Many of the narratives involve war, poverty, or abuse and neglect by men; all imply survival against the odds. For example, Ember Arts (2013) describes a woman “beaten with the business end of a machete by a rebel soldier” (para. 2) before having the opportunity to work with their business. Other organizations, such as Raven and Lily (2013), focus on the positive and share stories from the women in their own words, like this statement from participant Ferdoz in India:

It makes me happy to think that what I make goes to beautiful women around the world to wear. It feels like I have done something with my life and not wasted it. I have found a purpose. By what we have made with our hands we are now eating and drinking and there is a future for our kids. If people do not buy what we make, we would have no future (para. 2).

Table 2. Selected Examples of Businesses and NGOs That Sell Fair Trade Items Produced by Women in Developing Regions.

Organization	Object Type(s)	Producers' Location(s)	Website
Altiplano	Jewelry, bags, scarves	Guatemala	http://www.altiplano.com
Ember Arts	Paper beads for jewelry	Uganda	http://emberarts.com
Global Mamas	Gifts, jewelry, accessories, clothing	Ghana	http://www.globalMamas.org
Raven & Lily	Jewelry, accessories, gifts	Cambodia, Ethiopia, India	http://www.ravenandlily.com
Red Thread Movement	Bracelets	Nepal	http://www.redthreadmovement.org
ThaiCraft	Gifts, accessories, bags	Thailand	http://www.thaicraft.org
SERRV	Gifts, jewelry, accessories	Worldwide	http://www.serrv.org

Many of these businesses that sell fair trade crafts are associated with NGOs, such as Global Mamas and SERRV, who also run educational programs. Through the efforts of numerous NGOs worldwide, women in developing regions are being encouraged and supported as they learn or relearn craft and textile production skills. The women's products are then sold and distributed worldwide at fair trade and fair wage prices, thus arguably improving the women's economic status, and subsequently social status, and reinvigorating traditional crafts.

The West African Context

Africa, as a continent, faces a number of unique and particularly difficult challenges. As summarized at the CONFINTEA VI regional conference, Africa “is still experiencing extreme poverty, recurrent armed conflict, political instability, the HIV and AIDS pandemic and various forms of exclusion, violence and migration” (UNESCO, 2009a, p. 1). Education is cited as

an effective tool to develop Africa’s people, impart appropriate skills (including vocational and technical skills), knowledge and attitudes among youth and adults in order to enable them to participate actively in the true integral development of their countries and the attainment of the ... Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO, 2009a, p. 1).

Thus, regional leaders present at the conference, in addition to the UN and UNESCO, see education as an important contributor to economic and social progress in Africa.

West Africa is a region of Sub-Saharan Africa defined by the 15 member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), depicted in Figure 2 according to official language. ECOWAS was founded to promote economic collaboration but also addresses social and cultural issues, including education. The ECOWAS Department of Education, Culture, Science and Technology identified, among other concerns, girls’ education and vocational training as priorities for the region’s educational programs (ECOWAS, 2014). The department has highlighted “access to quality education and training opportunities” (ECOWAS, 2014, “Education Programme,” para. 3) as a goal for all citizens.

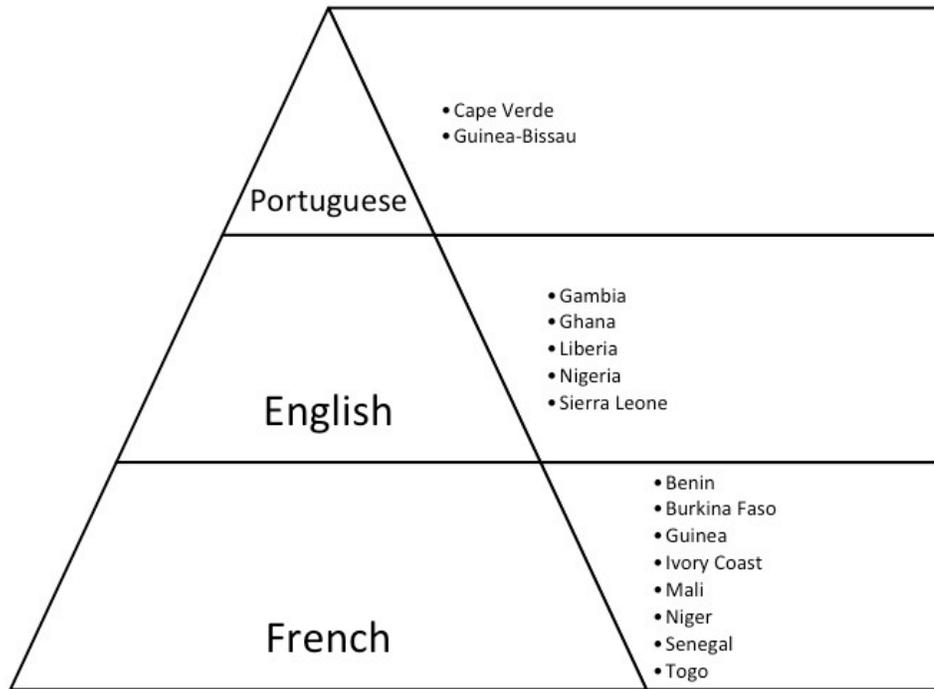


Figure 2. The ECOWAS Countries Sorted by Official Language.

Adult education in Africa has its roots in indigenous education systems, intermixed with colonialist and missionary educational practices (Nafukho, Amutabi, & Otunga, 2005). Nafukho, Amutabi, and Otunga (2005) identify principles for adult education in Africa. The key principles pertinent to the present study include “learning through seeing, observing, and doing,” “joint and community custody of knowledge and information,” and “development and improvement of intellectual skills based on need and want” (Nafukho, Amutabi, & Otunga, 2005, p. 31). The authors argue that adult education programs based in Africa, including vocational trainings or initiatives that target women, should be grounded in these principles.

Statement of the Problem

In a time of declining economic resources for adult education worldwide, no single institution can possibly bring about the magnitude of change or implement all of the recommendations from the Hamburg Declaration (UNESCO, 1997), the Belem Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2009b), and the MDGs. The UN specifically encourages the involvement of NGOs and other civil sector entities as part of addressing the MDGs (UN, 2013b). As early as a few months after the conclusion of CONFINTEA V, Forrester (1998) recognized that the responsibility for implementing adult education services and programs would be shared through partnership among various entities: the UN and its representatives, state agencies, NGOs, community organizations, workforce related programs, and special interest groups.

NGOs serve to fill a gap in the adult education services left by inadequate governmental programs (Nordtveit, 2008) and advocate for the development and preservation of adult education as a priority (Dimitrova, 2007). While NGOs can play a significant role in addressing the needs of global adult education and serve to empower women in developing regions, as previously discussed, what is yet unknown is the extent to which these organizations actually do so. NGOs must and are currently contributing to global adult education work but their contributions remain, to date, largely unexplored. Therefore, it is a particularly prudent time to consider the involvement of NGOs in global adult education.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study integrated Vella's (2002) principles of adult learning and program planning and global feminist theory. Vella emphasizes teaching and learning with respect and consideration for the participants. The presence or absence of applications of Vella's 12 principles can be a measure of the value and impact of the NGO's educational program. One strong advantage of Vella's principles is that she has applied them in a variety of learning contexts with success, such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, the Maldives, and Nepal (Vella, 2002).

Because the NGO's programs specifically target women participants, incorporating global feminist theory allowed me to investigate female perspectives in the context of developing regions, such as West Africa, the region in which this study was conducted. Global feminist theory, also sometimes called development or post-colonial feminism, is concerned with the ways in which what happens in one part of the world (e.g., in developed, Western nations) can disempower and marginalize women in another part of the world (e.g., in developing, non-Western nations) (Tong, 2009).

Mies (1993) argues that marginalized workers in developing regions pay the costs for Western materialistic lifestyles. To build global equality, Westerners must sacrifice their materialistic lifestyles. Thus international and global feminism is undermined by the economic self-interest of the West. It becomes necessary that the focus of the global feminist perspective include economic and political issues in addition to the Western feminist emphasis on sexuality and reproduction. This was relevant to my research because I explored ways that a Western NGO worked to empower women,

politically and economically, through its educational programs. If one subscribes to Mies's (1993) arguments, such programs are biased and doomed to produce little real change because of the inherent conflict of interest between the Western consumerism and philanthropy. By incorporating global feminist perspectives into my work, I had the opportunity to explore the impact of programs as they fit into a global context of development and examine Mies's problematized conception of Western development initiatives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the exchange between an international NGO and the women enrolled in that NGO's educational program. Specifically, I explored the ways the NGO and program participants influenced one another.

For the purposes of this study, I have operationalized the term *exchange* to refer to the dialogic aspects of adult education and the outcomes of such dialogue. Ideally, an educational program reflects and adapts to the needs of the participants, who are encouraged to be co-constructors of the learning experience. Thus, both the educators and learners may be changing or adapting based on their shared interactions and mutual influence.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the women participating in the NGO's educational program?

2. What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the NGO as a consequence of working with the women participants?
3. How does participating in the NGO's educational program influence the women's lives?
4. How do the women participants influence the NGO's operations and programs?

Significance of the Study

There are a number of studies in adult education that are similar to the one I conducted, insofar as adult education, NGOs, and issues of diversity and social justice are concerned, and I elaborate on them in the literature review section of this dissertation. However, none of them, to the best of my knowledge, have incorporated issues of globalization to the extent that I have.

While education has the potential to counteract the negative aspects of globalization and advocate for social justice, a number of scholars are concerned that, as a field, adult education is not carrying its weight. Alfred and Guo (2007) argue that American and Canadian adult educators remain generally absent from the conversation around globalization and social justice. Schied (2006), after reviewing recent publications in the journal *Adult Education Quarterly*, contends that American adult education scholars in particular are guilty of neglecting the consequences of globalization. Merriam, Courtney, and Cervero (2006) suggest that there exists untapped potential for adult education as a field to respond to the effects of globalization critically and constructively to reclaim its effects for the development of equity and social justice. According to Finger (2005), adult education typically operates without government

funding and is thus more independent, originating from community and social justice initiatives, and is uniquely positioned to take advantage of globalization.

The aforementioned scholars have identified a gap in the ways in which American adult education scholars contribute to the academic work on globalization and social justice. Because my dissertation exists within that intersection, I address, at least to some extent, the deficits they have identified.

To highlight the unique contribution my study makes to the adult education literature, in contrast to existing research, I now briefly build on three examples of studies similar to the one I have conducted. Broussard (2007) investigated women's empowerment through an educational program on environmental sustainability in rural China. In this case study, however, the consequences of the program are all very narrow, confined within and influencing only a single community. Kurbanova (2010) takes a broader perspective on the work of Western NGOs operating in Uzbekistan, comparing various projects that target women participants. This study does not truly incorporate issues of education but rather focuses on policy and politics. Arguably, Lane (2007) comes the closest to my own intended study, but hers lacks the personal, individual viewpoint, focusing instead on regional American and national Ukrainian issues. Because I am drawing on feminist perspectives for my work, a vital tenet of which is the personal, my study occupies a niche different from that of Lane (2007).

By designing a study that applies both feminist and globalized perspectives, I am able to incorporate both the local and the global, and connect the personal and the

political. In this way, I can make a unique contribution to the fields of adult education and feminist studies.

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

The following is a list of terms as I define them for this study:

Colonialism: “Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” (Kohn, 2012, para. 1) and most commonly refers to the “project of European political domination from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries that ended with the national liberation movements of the 1960s” (Kohn, 2012, “Definition and Outline”, para. 4). As a consequence of colonialism, many nations experienced or continue to experience political and economic struggles in the transition from dependence to self-government (Kohn, 2012).

Developing Country: Although “there is no established convention for the designation of ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries or areas in the United Nations system” (United Nations Statistics Division, 2012, footnote c), a developing country, also called a less-developed country, is a country with a lower standard of living and a smaller gross domestic product as compared to other nations worldwide. The comparison is gauged by the United Nation’s human development index (HDI), a composite statistic based on life expectancy, education levels, and per capita income. In practice, developed regions include Japan, Canada, the United States, Europe, and Australia and New Zealand in Oceania, while Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and most of Asia and Oceania are considered developing (UN Statistics Division, 2012).

Diversity: Diversity (Adams, 2010) refers to the differences between groups of people based upon, for example, race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, or some combination of those qualities. Physical characteristics, dress, family or cultural traditions, language, or other behaviors or traits can signify one's belonging in a particular group or category and may result in an individual being identified or labeled according to that group membership.

Fair Trade: Fair trade is “a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers” (Fair Trade Resource Network, 2007, p. 1), particularly in developing countries.

Feminism: Feminism is the “the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013, para. 1). A number of more specific variations of feminism are embedded within this broad definition and will be discussed further, as needed, elsewhere in the present document.

Globalization: “Globalization can be defined as the increasing interaction among and integration of diverse human societies in all important dimensions of their activities—economic, social, political, cultural, and religious” (Aninat, 2001). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2002) distinguishes four key components of globalization: international trade, the flow of private capital and investments, migration of people, and the dissemination of knowledge and technology. In its negative

connotations, globalization implies colonization and imperialism while, in its positive form, globalization is perceived to create opportunity and facilitate international communication and cooperation (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006).

Neoliberalism: Neoliberalism most commonly refers to economic reform policies characterized by “eliminating price controls, deregulating capital markets, and lowering trade barriers” (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009, p. 143). Such policies then “reduce the role of the state in the economy, most notably via privatization of state-owned enterprises” (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009, p. 143). The consequences of neoliberalism are interpreted by its opponents as facilitating a society in which “a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize personal profit” thus promoting exploitation and inequality (McChesney, 1998, p. 7).

Non-governmental Organization: A non-governmental organization (NGO) is neither a state or governmental program nor a market or for-profit business (Muhamad, 2005). NGOs exist to fill a gap in public services left by insufficient governmental services, often in cooperation with the government, and funded by international donors rather than through for-profit activities (Nordtveit, 2008).

Nonprofit: Nowicki (2000) uses the adjective “nonprofit” generically to refer to independent and charitable service providing organizations, but also trade unions, political parties, housing cooperatives, NGOs, and similar associations. Nowicki intends for the word to encompass the related terms voluntary and third sector. For the purposes of the present study, the terms will be considered synonymous.

Patriarchy: Patriarchy refers to any social systems in which primarily men hold authority or power (Boynton & Malin, 2005). According to Rich (1987), patriarchy is a “social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play” (p. 57).

Social Justice: Adams (2010) describes social justice as the equitable distribution of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, and argues that social differences often lead to inequalities that must be addressed to achieve social justice. That some people have access, privileges, or advantages that others do not creates a system though which those who belong to a preferred category are treated better than those who do not. According to Bell (2010), social justice is the goal of equality in a society that meets the needs of all its members, including equitable social and natural resource distribution, and physical safety.

Western/non-Western: Western typically refers to the perspectives on science and culture that can be traced back to classical Greek and Roman thought and the resulting value placed on freedom, individuality, and objectivity. Examples of Western cultures include European and European derivative societies such as those in North America, Australia, and New Zealand (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). The term non-Western refers to the othering of societies, cultures, and geographic regions that do not fit into the Western paradigm, for example Africa, Asia, and indigenous peoples in the Americas. Merriam (2007) emphasizes that Western/non-Western is a false dichotomy, and thus it must be noted that the cultures and economic status of nations exist along a

spectrum (in fact such diversity exists even within nations). These labels do not fully convey the complexity of interaction among the cultural and economic outlooks of the world's nations and communities but merely simplify the situation for the present discussion.

Summary

This introductory chapter has presented the background information for a study in which I examined the exchange between an international NGO and the women enrolled in that NGO's educational programs. Specifically, I have explored the ways the NGO and program participants influence one another.

To address the purpose of this study and respond to the research questions, I conducted a single case study of an NGO's educational program. In Chapter II, I present a review of the academic literature that informed the study and in Chapter III, I describe in detail my research methodology, including data collection and analysis. Chapters IV and V describe my findings and conclusions, respectively.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

While investigations of NGOs educational programs are relatively new to the field of adult education, it is nonetheless important that the academic conversation be grounded in previous work. With the goal of informing and motivating the present study, I present in this literature review the academic literature related to the two-part conceptual framework as well as literature pertaining directly to NGO educational programs. I begin by addressing the literature pertaining to the conceptual framework, with a section on each of its two components. I then focus on the literature on NGO educational programs and draw some inferences regarding the challenges and opportunities such programs face.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the present study, as previously discussed, relies on two components: Vella's (2002) 12 principles for effective adult learning and global feminism. In the following sections, I discuss literature that applies to each part within the context of the present study.

Vella's 12 Principles for Effective Adult Learning

Vella emphasizes teaching and learning with respect and consideration for the participants. The presence or absence of applications of Vella's 12 principles, listed in Table 3, can be used as a measure of the value and impact of the NGO's educational program.

Table 3. Vella’s 12 Principles of Effective Adult Learning.

Number	Principle
1	Needs Assessment: Participation of the learners in naming what is to be learned
2	Safety in the environment and the process
3	Sound relationships between teacher and learner and among learners
4	Sequence of content and reinforcement
5	Praxis: Action with reflection or learning by doing
6	Respect for learners as decision makers
7	Ideas, feelings, actions: Cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning
8	Immediacy of the learning
9	Clear roles and role development
10	Teamwork and use of small groups
11	Engagement of the learners in what they are learning
12	Accountability: How do they know they know?

Note. Adapted from *Learning to listen, learning to teach* by J. Vella, 2002, p. 4. Copyright 2002 by Jossey-Bass.

One strong advantage of Vella’s principles is that she has applied them in a variety of learning contexts with success, such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, the Maldives, and Nepal (2002). Similarly, Sawadogo (1995) supports Vella’s position that her work is appropriate for negotiating multiple cultures and cites her as an example of a framework that acknowledges “differences in the ways people from diverse cultures learn” (p. 282). Therefore the application of the principles to a program for adult

learners in the West African context of the present study is a natural extension of Vella's work.

Eight studies since 1998 have applied Vella's (2002) 12 principles as part of a conceptual or theoretical framework. Among these, research topics vary widely. Using the principles, Slusarski (1998) assessed a corporate train-the-trainer program that emphasized a productive learning climate. Vella's principles guided Moore (2000) through planning and evaluating adult spirituality programs at a Catholic church. Robinson Cole (2012) applied the principles as an assessment tool to an historical study of a 19th-century women's correspondence school.

Although Vella (2002) developed the principles based on her own extensive teaching experience in international and multicultural contexts and the adult education literature (e.g., Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007) regularly references her principles as a model for effective adult learning programs, there are relatively few studies that apply her principles in both ways. A review of the literature resulted in only five studies since 2000 that involved (a) international or multicultural work and (b) elements of program planning or assessment.

The learners in these studies came from a variety of contexts such as migrant families in the U.S. (Jasis & Marriott, 2010), Hispanic, Asian, and Arabic adult learners (Tan, 2010), and men in Papua New Guinea (Renich, 2007). Additionally, the international locations included study participants from Canada, the U.S., Australia, Botswana, and Malaysia. Jasis and Marriott (2010) and Renich (2007) applied Vella's 12 principles to the design and implementation of adult education programs that

emphasized respect for learners as decisions makers and dialogical relationships appropriate to their respective cultural contexts. Moore (2002) and Tan (2010) assessed a variety of learning and instructional strategies across cultures through the lens of the principles, with Moore focused on international practitioner methods for community development and Tan investigating adult ESL student perspectives. Smith (2013) used Vella (2002) as a self-assessment tool to uncover the manifestation of privilege in her own teaching practice while working with Aboriginal students. All five of these studies applied the principles as a conceptual framework for culturally sensitive, appropriate, and effective adult learning.

The 12 principles' practitioner orientation is arguably both its strength and primary critique. In a discussion of evidence-based research and the tension between research and practice in adult education, Dirkx (2006) highlights Vella (2002) as an important example of a practitioner-oriented but research-based framework that is highly valued in the field. Although there is limited research applying the 12 principles, "each principle is couched within a story that reveals its particular context, demands, uncertainties, complexities, and ambiguities" (Dirkx, 2006, p. 284). The principles' contextualization within the quagmire of practice is the key to its value as a component of the present study' conceptual framework.

Global Feminism

Global feminist theory, also sometimes called development or post-colonial feminism, is concerned with the ways in which what happens in one part of the world, e.g., in Western, developed nations, can disempower and marginalize women in another

part of the world, e.g., in non-Western developing nations (Tong, 2009). For example, the inexpensive clothing available in the US is so affordable in part because the women in India or Vietnam who sew the garments are paid so little. But if the women were paid a fair wage, the garments could become unaffordable, thus potentially putting the women out of work.

The global economic and political interactions between Western/developed and non-Western/developing nations are complex. Mies (1993) argues that the developed economic and political machines conspire to maintain the gap between themselves and that of developing nations through exploitation and overdevelopment and perpetuate the myth that a high material living standard is equivalent to a high quality life. Developing nations will never catch up because catching-up is impossible.

Mies (1993) goes on to argue that the costs for a materialistic lifestyle are paid by the global South and by the unpaid women in the West. For women, the aforementioned gap is particularly problematic because rights depend on money and property, both of which are limited, and cannot be extended to all women in the world. Thus international and global feminism is undermined by economic self-interest. It becomes necessary that the focus of the global feminist perspective include economic and political issues in addition to the Western feminist emphasis on sexuality and reproduction. If one buys Mies's (1993) arguments, such programs are inherently biased and doomed to produce little real change. By incorporating global feminist perspectives into this study, I am able to explore the impact of programs as they fit into a global context of development.

The goal for global feminists is to consider all injustices against women, both

personal and political and bring all women together as interconnected beings with concern for one another and to work together as equals to challenge the global oppression of all women (Tong, 2009). According to Lorde (1984, as cited by Tong, 2009), the temptation is to look for commonalities and sweep differences aside. However, Lorde proposes that the only way to build the relationships necessary for global cooperation is to celebrate the differences among women and use them to fuel feminist work, to see each woman as making a value and unique contribution to the cause. Mohanty (2003) concurs and emphasizes collaborations based on commonalities while still deliberately appreciating differences. She elaborates “I define solidarity in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities.... Diversity and difference are central values here—to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances” (p. 7). This perspective also contains advice for me as I prepare for my fieldwork, suggesting that a woman from a privileged background, like me, who wishes to work with women in circumstances very different from her own must still reveal herself, not hide her privilege or diminish her own suffering (Tong, 2009). If I believe I am capable of understanding others, I must also trust that others will understand me.

While global feminism largely exists as a theoretical construct, it has been most consistently applied in the fields of community psychology and communications. For example, Norsworthy and Kaschak (2011) co-edited a special issue of the journal *Women & Therapy* focusing on feminist activist psychology projects that involved cross-cultural collaboration. The editors emphasized careful analysis and attention to the

power dynamics in partnerships between practitioners from Western or developed regions and those from non-Western or developing locations, typically the sites of the research. Similarly, from the discipline of communications, Heugh (2011) analyzed local-language texts from various regions of Africa to investigate women's "counter-hegemonic discourse" (p. 101) as a form of resistance to traditional, patriarchal culture and the overt influence from Western development projects. Regarding the work of NGOs, Heugh cautions that their

interventions have often materialised[sic] in the absence of an understanding of the ways in which African women and their networks organise[sic] social, educational and economic practices beneath or parallel to the veneer of the male-dominant structures and post-colonial systems of power (p. 93).

Thus, global feminism has been regularly and successfully applied outside of education and can be used to investigate and analyze the work of Western development initiatives, such as in the present study.

NGO Educational Programs

Since my case study centered on a single educational program run by an NGO in a developing region, the academic literature and research on educational activities of NGOs were central to this work. In the following sections, I discuss the literature with a focus on the ways in which issues of diversity, globalization, and neoliberalism are manifested, and conclude the section with a discussion of some key challenges and opportunities for NGOs that deliver educational programs.

To build a literature review of the educational programs of NGOs, I searched the academic databases for the terms “NGO adult education.” For the purpose of the present review, I restricted my literature search to scholarly works, including peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters, that meet a number of criteria:

- First, the work must describe the activities or programs of a Western NGO. For the purposes of the present discussion, Western refers to the cultural position or the characterization as a developed or first world nation. For example, organizations from the United States, Great Britain, or France could be considered Western. To be considered a Western NGO, the organization must be based in a Western country or founded, financed, or run by Westerners, within the country of operation.
- Second, the NGO must be operating in a non-Western country, which includes nations or regions that have historically been colonized by Western nations, and are generally impoverished and sites of former colonization. Non-Western nations include most of Africa, South and Central America, and Southeast Asia and India and are sometimes referred to as the global South.
- Third, the aspect of the NGO under consideration must be an adult education program of some kind that intends to improve some aspect of the lives of the program participants, although the search was not restricted to the field of adult education. While my personal research interests are centered specifically on handicraft training for women, for the purposes of this literature review, adult education programs of all types are eligible for consideration, with the exception

of teacher-training programs. I excluded teacher-training programs because, while the teachers in training may benefit directly, the ultimate goal is generally to transfer benefits to non-participants, i.e., the students of the teachers in training, outside the purview of the NGO programs.

It should also be noted that I did not restrict the search to programs that only target women participants. Because this field of study is already quite narrow given the aforementioned parameters, limiting the type of participant to women-only would reduce the number of relevant studies too significantly. Additionally, I would argue that an NGO program designed to serve marginalized populations of any kind, such as the poor, racial or ethnic minorities, or immigrants, will likely exhibit characteristics that are applicable or transferable to other marginalized groups. Due to the intersectional nature of oppressions, NGO programs, even if the target population is not women, generally do serve women in some way.

Seven studies satisfied the previously discussed criteria and contribute to the present review. For ease of comparison, Table 4 presents a summary of the studies. The columns of Table 4 identify the distinguishing features of each work, including the geographic location of the study, the primary target participant population, the principal goal of the educational programs discussed, and major findings. Note that, although the table includes the main goal of each program or programs and findings from the study, many NGO programs have multiple goals or purposes and most studies make numerous points.

Because the selection criteria resulted in such a small number of studies, I have also included five additional studies, shown in **Table 5**, that align with the search criteria regarding program location and educational purpose but are organized or run by local or national NGOs (a relaxation of my first selection criterion). Although the studies in **Table 5** do not strictly align with the study of Western NGOs operating in developing countries, I believe there is value nonetheless in examining the efforts of local or national NGOs for the power dynamics between organizers and participants, the outcomes and efficacy of programs, and the best practices or lessons learned that may apply to Western and International NGO programs. Note that purely theoretical and policy pieces are not included in any table.

In the following sections, I will relate how the body of works in Table 4 and **Table 5** relates to the issues of diversity, globalization, and neoliberalism.

Table 4. Key Features of Studies of Western NGO Educational Programs in Non-Western Contexts.

Study	Location	Participant Group	Educational Program Goal(s)	Major Findings/Results
Bochman, 2011	Ghana	Rural; Poor	Clean water education Community empowerment	Importance of cultural exchange and communication to negotiate the power imbalance
Broussard, 2007	China	Women	Environmental sustainability Women's empowerment	Importance of educational materials that align with participant beliefs; Inclusion of all stakeholders
Humphreys, 1999	Thailand	Women; Rural	Craft and business skills Fair trade	To create meaningful change, economic initiatives must also challenge gender stereotypes
Kealing, 2003	Thailand	Poor; Immigrants	Basic education Vocational training	Recommendations for participant recruitment and retention resulting from a program evaluation
Kurbanova, 2010	Uzbekistan	Women	Empowerment Gender equality	Conflict between the government and NGOs must be addressed when program goals do not align with cultural norms
Macpherson, 2009	Tanzania	Poor	Informed citizenship Empowerment	Programs must build from local context, address practical needs, and negotiate power dynamics
Nordtveit, 2008	Senegal	Women; Rural	Literacy Informed citizenship	Program success was undermined by NGO corruption, lack of participant involvement, and a top-down management approach

Table 5. Key Features of Studies of National or Local NGO Educational Programs in Non-Western Contexts.

Study	Location	Participant Group	Educational Program Goal(s)	Major Findings
de Souza, 2007	India	Women; Poor; Low-caste	Empowerment	Empowerment initiatives must take into account the intersecting oppression of poverty, gender, etc., to create communicative spaces
Jongeward, 1998	India	Rural; Low-caste; Women	Craft and business skills Vocational training	Issues of trust are key for local and grass-roots NGOs; Economic development initiative can benefit from the support of international connections
Stifter, 2004	Ecuador	Black and Mestiza Women	Empowerment Gender equality	Local NGO exist to meet needs that are neglected by national and international programs
Timmer, 2009	Hungary	Gypsy/Roma	Basic education	NGOs undermine their own work by characterizing the Gypsy/Roma as needy and irreconcilably different, reinforcing the status quo rather than challenging it
Webstebbe, 2004	Thailand	Women	Empowerment	Programs need to counteract participant vulnerability before empowerment can be addressed

Diversity

Diversity (Adams, 2010) refers to the differences between groups of people based upon, for example, race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, or some combination of those qualities. Physical characteristics, dress, family or cultural traditions, language, or other behaviors or traits can signify one's belonging in a particular group or category and may result in an individual's being identified or labeled according to that group membership. Kirk and Okazawa (2010) describe identity as grounded in social categories, including but not limited to the aforementioned groups. Those categories and group memberships are then used to organize society and social interactions into social hierarchies. Generally speaking, in a given culture or society, one group or characteristic is preferred above others, and those who are not members of the preferred group are oppressed, marginalized, or treated as Others in some way.

Adult education has a long history of embracing diversity and empowering learners to counteract oppression. All of the works of the NGOs' adult education programs in the present literature review follow this trend. As is visible in Tables 4 and 5, all of the participants targeted by the NGO programs belong to some marginalized or oppressed group. The most frequent participant group (66% of the 12 studies) is women, but learners with a low socio-economic status or class (which includes rural, poor, or low-caste populations) and belonging to racial or ethnic minorities (including immigrant populations, Blacks and Mestizas, and the Gypsy/Roma) are also considered (58% and 25% of the 12 studies, respectively).

Difference and diversity, according to Hill (2005) “allow us to understand what and how others know, and challenge our own ways of knowing” (p. 191). Diversity acknowledges the different ways in which meaning may be constructed and creates space for a variety of perspectives and ways of knowing. It follows then that the contributions of women and other minority/marginalized groups are valued by the NGOs that seek to empower them through educational programs. Of the 12 program studies in this review, 66% overtly state the goal of empowerment or informed citizenship. If economic independence is a type of empowerment, then 92% of the studies (11 out of the 12) can be considered to empower participants, with the only exception being Timmer (2009), who investigated programs primarily concerned with access rather than outcomes. The goal of these empowerment programs is to encourage participants to challenge their own exclusion or deprivation, and to engage in local governance practices to strengthen civil society (Nordtveit, 2008; Macpherson, 2009). Such emancipatory goals can only come from a place of respect for learners and their diversity.

Based on the choice of NGO participant groups presented here, it appears that programming to address the marginalization and oppression of women, the poor, and racial and ethnic minorities is a high priority for NGOs worldwide. NGOs have recognized the need for their services in developing nations and seek to fill that need.

Globalization

Globalization is the idea of worldwide development, communication, and integration. Alfred (2012) proposes four main components to globalization. First, there

now exist large economic and political entities dominating international discourse and trade and created through a world economy based upon neoliberal policies. Second, a dramatic increase in information and communications technologies results in geographical distance no longer being a barrier to knowledge transfer. The third component is worldwide homogenization, the sociocultural result of globalization, in which the local and the global collide and create challenges for those who wish to preserve a cultural identity. Lastly, globalization necessitates a philosophical reassessment of the meaning of society and citizenship due to the changing demographics of nations resulting from immigration and permeable national borders and the increasing diversity of, for example, race, ethnicity, culture, and language.

Note the contrast between Alfred's (2012) two positions on diversity and culture. On the one hand, globalization is creating a culturally homogenized world but on the other, Alfred argues that diversity is increasing. As Western entities and values infiltrate other societies, Western culture replaces world cultures but at the same time, uncovers a wealth of local diversity. These conflicting facets of globalization can be difficult to reconcile. Focus for a moment on the improved communication technology and worldwide economies. Globalization creates access to global brands such as McDonalds and Prada, in effect homogenizing the retail and media experience in all markets, and thus culture, through an influx of Western companies and products into previously closed societies. At the same time, the flow of information that facilitates the entry of Western companies into global markets also communicates back to the West stories that might otherwise remain untold. Consider, for example, the large number of

documentaries and human-interest reports bring attention to the conditions around the world (e. g. the recent film *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, Docurama, 2012) that focus on empowerment and transformation for women living in oppression. These two perspectives form the two faces of globalization, the oppressive domination of Western culture, ideas, economies, and products, and the increased richness of communication, narratives, and cultural information available through the Internet and world media.

These same two faces of globalization are visible in the works of Western NGOs in non-Western countries. While Western NGOs are likely moved to action by a desire to alleviate poverty and lift oppression, they are in danger of becoming the oppressors themselves, imposing Western values or culture on local participants. For example, Bochman (2011) investigated an African NGO operating in Ghana and a religious American funding agency, a relationship with colonialist implications and a potentially precarious power dynamic. The project was ultimately considered successful, which Bochman attributes to the very careful communication and negotiation strategies of all parties regarding cross-cultural interactions, power relations, and competing interests between the funding agency and the NGO and cautions “unrecognized cross-cultural dynamics can impede the recognition of additional arenas of needed learning at multiple levels, setting up later failures” (p. iv).

Broussard (2007) examined an environmental empowerment program implemented by a Western religious NGO for rural Chinese women, intended to empower the women and promote sustainable farming practices (the women in the

region held the primary responsibility for agricultural activity). Broussard analyzed the program curriculum in this particular context to assess whether it aligned with participants' conceptions of gender, education, and the environment. She found that participants took on the spiritual aspects, including gender concerns, of the program, but not the sustainable environmental practices because those practices did not align with the community's existing beliefs and values. Additionally, even though the women incorporated the gender issues into a revised perspective on gender roles, local men, who wield considerable authority, were neglected by the NGO. The men were "the other half of the women's empowerment process because women's sense of self is not separate from their relationships with men" (p. 296). The ultimate result was a lack of change in the community as a whole. If women are the target group of participants for an empowerment program, the broader context of their lives must be incorporated.

A major pitfall for Western NGOs is a lack of consideration for local context, beliefs, and value systems. Studies of programs that consider local and participant perspectives, such as Bochman's (2011), show that the programs are able to demonstrate positive outcomes. Studies of programs in which the learning materials are misaligned with local perceptions, such as Broussard (2007), indicated that the programs do not achieve or exhibit limited achievement of their goals and desired outcomes. From the studies present in this review, one can conclude that globalization is valuable for bringing in Western NGOs to address existing problems in non-Western contexts, but those programs can only truly be successful in meeting local needs when they respect and incorporate local values and culture.

Neoliberalism

According to Scholte (2005), globalization is inextricably tied to and guided by neoliberalism, which, in its negative aspects, undermines social justice for a number of reasons, as follows. First, the neoliberal economic policies that facilitate globalized economies also undermine the economic stability of already impoverished people and nations. The privatization of economic markets has not alleviated poverty or increased rates of employment, even in developed nations like the United States and Great Britain, as it was once hypothesized. Second, globalized economies are flawed delivery systems for human rights, security, and social justice because, as markets are deregulated, human working and living conditions deteriorate. Lastly, the increased economic cooperation between nations has not eliminated the war and conflict that continue to plague nations and their citizens, inhibiting the basic human right to physical safety.

Continuing his arguments against neoliberalism as the negative face of globalization, Scholte (2005) contends that the lack of democracy in neoliberal globalized policies creates social inequity. Those who are oppressed and marginalized by such policies have no say in their creation and few available formal processes through which to offer a challenge. The poor, who are more likely to be racial minorities, women, or differently abled, become poorer. People working at a subsistence level no longer have government regulations protecting work conditions. War and conflict destroy bodies, families, and community and social support. Thus globalization, as enacted by neoliberalism, undermines worldwide social justice.

Issues of neoliberalism are particularly relevant to the NGO programs that seek to provide economic empowerment of some kind because those programs must function within the neoliberal systems that infiltrate economies at the global, national, and local levels. Whether through vocational training, business skills instruction, or fair trade outlets for participant-produced craft objects, NGOs face the challenge of serving and empowering participants in a marketplace stacked against individuals.

Several of the studies in this review specifically address economic empowerment, including Humphreys (1999), Jongeward (1998), and Kealing (2003). Humphreys (1999) describes the efforts of a Thailand-based but Westerner-organized NGO to preserve traditional Thai crafts while creating sustainable work for women in impoverished regions of Thailand and counteracting urban migration. Humphreys identifies the challenges of "women's craft" as perpetuating traditionally female skills that are undervalued or valueless in Thai society and as reinforcing the patriarchal system. The author criticizes the NGO for restricting its focus to the production of craft objects without concern for a broader interpretation of the quality of life and gender issues at hand. Of particular concern is the question of whether the NGO is reinforcing rather than challenging the existing social order. Lane (2007) refers to the controversial perspective that "highlighting labor-intensive handicraft production may contribute to stereotypical perceptions of women as relatively unskilled labor suitable for fine manipulative handwork, and not much else, thereby contributing to low wages and exploitive working conditions" (p. 177). So, while the NGO's operations may serve to

sustain the women participants and their families, it is not clear whether the economic emphasis supports or ultimately undermines the women's positions in Thai society.

Jongeward's (1998) case study investigates a community-based NGO that trains hand weavers to improve economic and social conditions in rural India. Through this organization, weavers are empowered both economically, through improved skills and access to fair-trade markets, and socially, by elevating the status of the weavers in the community, most of whom come from low-caste backgrounds. However, the NGO was founded and is run as a grass-roots effort and consequently the organization has difficulty negotiating foreign markets for the weavers' products. Without the international connections that a Western NGO might afford, the local NGO's participants are excluded from participation in lucrative global markets.

Kealing (2003) studied the efficacy of community-based learning programs in Thailand that claim to address the social challenges associated with migration trends from rural to urban areas by poor and unemployed Thai and immigrant Burmese. Demand for factory workers and meager economic prospects in rural villages draw people to the cities to work for below subsistence wages in poor conditions, the only alternative to not working in rural areas. Kealing assessed the efficacy of sustainable development initiatives and vocational training for the migrants and immigrants to counteract the lure of factory jobs and guaranteed, if paltry, income.

While neoliberal forces work to undermine the poor and oppressed, NGOs can act to provide economic opportunity in an effort to counteract those forces. By valuing handmade over factory made, creating fair trade markets for goods that would otherwise

be sold at an undervalued price, and keeping people out of inhumane factory jobs through vocational and agricultural trainings, NGOs can combat the negative aspects of neoliberalism but take advantage of the positives of globalization.

Challenges and Opportunities for NGOs

In the previous section, the discussion and corresponding examples of NGO programs (based upon the academic literature) have highlighted some of the ways in which NGO efforts intersect and overlap with issues of diversity, globalization, and neoliberalism and touched upon related challenges and opportunities. In the present section, I build upon those examples by elaborating on the benefits and pitfalls of NGO operations and draw conclusions about best practices for Western NGOs operating in non-Western contexts, with particular attention to the needs of participants.

A major advantage of globalization is the ways in which nations may work together to address pervasive global social justice issues through initiatives like the United Nations' (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the CONFINTEA conferences on adult education. The UN MDGs (United Nations, 2012) include a number of social justice issues, including an end to poverty and hunger, gender equity, universal education, health issues, environmental sustainability, and global partnership. The CONFINTEA V Hamburg Declaration (UNESCO, 1997) outlines an agenda for the future of adult education that includes, to name just a few, active citizenship, education for all, gender equity, alleviation of poverty, and the preservation of the environment. The Belem Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2009b), the document resulting from

CONFINTEA VI, makes similar recommendations, with a specific focus on adult literacy.

The goals and plans of CONFINTEA V and VI and the MDGs are indeed important but are also undeniably enormous. In a time of declining economic resources for adult education, no single institution can possibly bring about the magnitude of change or implement all the recommendations from the Hamburg Declaration (UNESCO, 1997) or the Belem Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2009b). Only a few months after the conclusion of CONFINTEA V, Forrester (1998) argued that the responsibility for implementing adult education services and programs would be shared through partnership among United Nations and state agencies, NGOs, community organizations, workforce related programs, and special interest groups. NGOs serve to fill a gap in the adult education services left by insufficient governmental programs (Nordtveit, 2008) and advocate for the development and preservation of adult education as a priority (Dimitrova, 2007).

From these worldwide efforts, the connection between globalization and social justice from an educational perspective follows logically. Inequality, based on gender, class, or other factors, restricts access to education. Lack of access to education limits employment and economic opportunities. Lack of economic opportunities decreases access to health care and undermines people's physical well being. By embracing diversity to improve access to education for all, social justice is served and learners are empowered to counteract the negative effects of globalization while harnessing the positive aspects for themselves.

Challenges

According to Timmer (2009), NGOs are subject to the same neoliberal forces as other agencies and businesses. They may reinforce elitism, be accountable only to donors, and work at a distance from those they seek serve. Harvey (2005) warns that, by providing social services, NGOs may quicken the withdrawal of the state, thus promoting the expansion of the neoliberal practices and “privatization by NGO” (p. 177).

Certainly the interaction of NGOs with local government is a concern. Stiles (2002) describes the efforts of NGOs to empower civil society in Bangladesh and the tensions that arise from NGOs skirting the authority structure of government and the challenges that NGOs face with regards to competing pressures from donors and local and national political systems. In effect, some NGOs have had to move away from their initial purpose of empowering citizens and alleviating poverty in order to stay afloat. Kurbanova (2010) investigated NGOs in Uzbekistan, where the NGO movement is perceived as Western imperialism by the national government and thus heavily restricted. Certainly it is the participants who lose when NGOs and local government are in conflict because no entity is fully engaged in meeting the needs of the learners.

The greatest challenge in my view is for Western NGOs to cease colonialist, dominating behaviors and work with developing nations as equal and respectful partners. Regardless of how well intentioned Western agencies may be, the interactions with developing nations are still commingled with issues of globalization, in both its positive and negative forms, and colonialism because program funding and intentions originate in

the West. Sensitivity to non-Western ways of knowing, understanding of varying contexts, and respect for local values and cultures are essential from an adult education perspective, but are perhaps not always the highest priority for those directly involved.

Aspects of colonialism are embedded in many of the studies referenced earlier in this section (e.g., Bochman, 2011; Broussard, 2007; Humphreys, 1999; and Nordtveit, 2008). For this reason, studies of grass-roots NGO operations, such as Webstebbe (2004) and Stifter (2004), can provide valuable insight into ways that successful local NGOs interact with and address the needs of participants. If an NGO seeks to empower its participants, the first opportunity to engage a newfound sense of agency is within the operations of the NGO itself. Western NGOs in particular must make sure such opportunities exist.

Opportunities

Although Western NGOs operating in non-Western countries face many challenges, there are also considerable benefits. First and foremost is the ability to financially back and support local efforts. While many of the studies in the present review looked at Western-run NGOs, there were also substantial numbers of locally run NGOs that were backed (financially and administratively) by an international umbrella NGO (e.g. Macpherson, 2009) or locally-based Westerners (Humphreys, 1999). Because Western nations are typically also First World, Western NGOs have the financial resources that grass roots and community-based NGOs in developing nations simply do not.

The advantages of Western NGOs extend to connections to international markets for products. For example, Jongeward (1998), in her study of a community NGO for weavers, identified the lack of access to global markets for the weavers' produced goods and the need for the NGO to make international connections. Humphreys (1999) identified the international and society connections of the organization's expatriate volunteers as an advantage for the program participants in terms of sales.

Western NGOs can also bring technical knowledge and skills that non-Western locals may not possess (Ervin, 2005), for example, savvy for operating a business, communications technology, marketing, and product design. If the goal of an economic program is to engage participants in the global marketplace, then learners must be equipped with the skills for success in the global economy. Such skills are not likely to exist at the local level in rural or impoverished regions.

Future Work

Although research in the field of adult education as it pertains to NGOs and globalization is limited, Hoff and Hickling-Hudson (2011) make a number of suggestions regarding the role that international NGOs can and should play in international adult education to provide services related to literacy, adult basic education, and vocational training, as part of a global society and to advance social justice causes. Their five-part framework of analysis situated in post-colonial theory is intended to support the work of researchers who study international NGO adult education programs for social change but they acknowledge they have not provided "the detailed case studies that are needed to test our propositions" (p. 187). The five parts are (a) representation,

(b) transformational potential, (c) multiple perspectives, (d) multi-causality, and (e) historicism. Representation indicates the necessity of ensuring that local interests are represented in both theory and practice. Transformational potential refers to the charge of adult education for social justice to impart participants with a sense of political agency or power to improve living conditions and combat oppression. The use of multiple perspectives suggests that researchers and program planners should avoid the use of dichotomous categories and focus on a holistic view of economic and social development in local and global contexts. Multi-causality advocates investigation of non-economic factors that contribute to oppression and marginalization, such as culture, identity, and ethnicity, and well as the arguably more obvious economic and material factors. Lastly, historicism should be used to keep in perspective the political and economic trends that have influenced the global economy to date and which may oppose efforts to promote social justice.

The ideas embedded in numerous works cited in the present paper, including the diversity of learning programs and local contexts, provide a foundation for best practices for Western NGOs operating educational programs in non-Western contexts. Although such NGOs face numerous challenges, respect for the learners and local culture provide a foundation for productive learning relationships.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the bodies of academic literature related to the conceptual frameworks of the present study, Vella's 12 principles of effective adult learning, and global feminism, as well as NGO educational programs. Vella's principles

were primarily applied to investigations of program design and evaluation, with an emphasis on culturally appropriate teaching and learning. The literature on global feminist theory creates a space for the experiences of women in developing regions to stand separate from those of women in Western regions.

The body of academic literature pertaining to NGO educational programs has highlighted three challenges and three opportunities. Among the challenges, NGOs may succumb to neoliberal influences and reinforce elitism by being accountable only to donors and working at a distance from those they seek to serve. Second, local governments may challenge or undermine NGOs' operations or, by replacing government services, NGOs may quicken the influx of neoliberal practices. Last, NGOs struggle to work with developing nations as equal partners, defaulting to globalized, colonialist perspectives originating from Western funding sources or objectives and neglect local context and values. The opportunities include the ability of international organizations to financially back and support local efforts. Second, Western NGOs may have important connections to international export markets, and third, organizations can also bring technical knowledge and skills that non-Western locals may not possess, for example, business management, communications technology, marketing, and product design.

The synthesis of the literature has highlighted some important considerations regarding those topics and was used to inform the research design, data collection and analysis, presented next in Chapter III, and subsequent interpretations and recommendations of the findings, presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe in depth the research methods I used to address the research questions of the study, previously discussed in Chapter I. I begin with an overview of the study design, research paradigm, and the research case. I then describe the data collection and analysis strategies, including procedures to ensure trustworthiness and the influence of my personal biases as a researcher.

Qualitative Research

I used a qualitative case study to investigate the educational exchange between an international NGO and the women it serves. Specifically, I focused on the ways the NGO and the women participants influenced one another.

The present topic aligns with a qualitative research study because of the alignment with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) five axioms of naturalistic inquiry: (1) reliance on individual and multiple realities, (2) investigator interaction with the phenomenon, (3) heavy dependence on context, (4) lack of causal implications, and (5) inextricable incorporation of human values. First, the interaction between the NGO and the program participants is interpreted through each person's individual lens, thus resulting in multiple constructed realities. Second, as a researcher, I served as the instrument for data collection, discussed in greater detail later, and interacted with study participants and context, unavoidably influencing and being influenced by them. Third, since the study is heavily dependent on the particular context and participants,

generalization is not a goal of this research project. Similarly, the inextricable connections among context and participants preclude the possibility of drawing conclusions about cause and effect, as described in the fourth axiom. Last, I used human values to define this study, as demonstrated by my choice of study topic, conceptual framework, and qualitative research paradigm, and I was unavoidably influenced by the human values embedded in the research context. The values, context, and interactions are inseparable from the research I undertook, thus aligning the study with the paradigmatic foundation of qualitative research.

Within the qualitative research paradigm, a number of approaches may be used to investigate the phenomenon of choice, depending on the research questions. Examples include ethnography, in which a cultural group or aspect of human society is studied in depth, phenomenology, in which the essence or basic structure of an experience is investigated, and narrative analysis, in which participants stories are analyzed to explore the aspects of communication and sense-making embedded in those stories (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2009).

As an alternative to the aforementioned examples, I have chosen to apply the case study design to my research. I investigated the interactions between two groups, NGO program participants and program employees and volunteers, within the confines of a single educational program. Due to the inherent characteristics of the phenomenon in which I was interested, no other approach fit as well as did case study.

Case Study

The case study method (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009) is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). A bounded system is the unit of study, the phenomenon around which exists natural boundaries, and defines the focus of the investigation. A case study is thus the examination of the particularity and complexity of a single case, or bounded system, coming to understand its activities and important circumstances (Stake, 1995). Within the bounded system, I investigated the perceptions of diverse participants, collected multiple types of evidence, and paid careful attention to the context in which all aspects of the study were embedded. The restriction of the study to a particular case, explored in every detail, allowed me to generate a rich and deep understanding of the phenomenon. The depth of understanding a case study provided allowed me to achieve a holistic picture of the phenomenon that is not possible with other methodologies.

While a number of authors (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) describe criteria for ascertaining the appropriateness of the case study method to address a given research problem, I chose to focus on Yin’s (2009) discussion of the critical features of a case study. First, a case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The educational program I investigated is a contemporary phenomenon inextricably embedded in its context, context that is vitally important to the way the learners participate in and perceive their experience, and the ways in which all participants

interact. Second, a case study addresses the full complexity of a research problem by incorporating multiple sources and types of evidence (Yin, 2009). As I will detail later in my data collection discussion, I used three types of data to address the research problem and that collection of data, after careful analysis, provided insight into the bounded system of the NGO's educational program.

Single-Case Design

Although both single- and multiple-case designs are acceptable and common (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2014), I decided to investigate a single case. Of the five rationales Yin (2009) describes for choosing a single case over multiple cases, my study best aligns with the unique case rationale. While I will discuss the case in detail in the next section, the important point here is that the NGO in the proposed case is doing work that is, at least from first glance, equivalent to the work of other NGOs worldwide. The case appears to be unique, however, because the NGO I selected for the case presents itself as doing that work with better results and with greater attention to sustainability and participant empowerment than other NGOs whose work I have reviewed. While single-case studies are potentially vulnerable—the case may not always live up to its initial potential—I have taken that risk and, with the advantage of hindsight, believe the NGO was an appropriate choice. I developed a list of potential alternative cases (identified with modified selection criteria) should my first choice have proven unfeasible (Yin, 2009, 2014) but did not need to pursue those alternatives.

As a first step in this study, I selected a case that manifested the complexity of the present problem and provided an opportunity to collect rich data. A large number of

international NGOs engage in fair trade crafts production in partnership with women's cooperatives in developing regions. An even larger number of NGOs run educational programs of some kind. The intersection of both crafts production and educational initiatives narrowed the selection of case candidates. From these, I identified the NGO Worldwide Women (a pseudonym) as my first choice of case because of its strong ties to the West and apparently well-established educational programming and activities.

Case Selection: Worldwide Women

The NGO Worldwide Women (WW) exists as two separate but partnered organizations. In West Africa, WW functions as an independent NGO, recognized by the national government of the country in which it operates. In the United States, WW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation with the express purpose of supporting the activities of the African-based NGO. In effect, the American WW offices organize the international volunteers, technology, and funding that support the educational program efforts in West Africa. WW then delivers the training and technology directly to the African women participants to promote their financial independence and build business acumen. The two branches of WW collaborate to run the fair trade crafts production functions.

WW currently counts over 600 women in its network of participants, including businesses in nine West African communities for the production of handmade goods, including batik fabric, sewn apparel and home goods, glass bead jewelry, and shea butter products. Within each of the nine communities, operations are diverse; local production may rely on as many as 100 or as few as three women. WW's training and educational programs, the focus of the case, were designed to address the following: bookkeeping,

computer literacy, fair trade principles, financial management, health management, marketing, merchandising, new product development, and quality control.

Through this case study, I investigated WW's comprehensive training programs at the Kundu (a pseudonym) location. Kundu is the original and founding site of WW in West Africa and operates under an entrepreneurship model as opposed to a direct employee model. Production consists primarily of batik fabric and sewn apparel and home goods. As such, WW helps the local African women start or grow their own batik or sewing businesses by providing relevant training, placing large work orders, and paying for work promptly.

In addition to the programmatic alignment of WW with the selection criteria, the NGO's objectives align with the feminist perspectives I use to frame the research. For example, WW explicitly advocates for women, stating that "empowering women through income generation and continuing education enhances both their self-esteem and their ability to participate in decisions that affect them within the home and community" and "a promising solution to build prosperity and equalize the balance of power across gender relationships rests on greater economic independence for women."

Participant Selection

Qualitative research typically investigates few samples in great depth, and selected carefully, as opposed to the large samples selected randomly that characterize quantitative research (Patton, 1990). Since this is a qualitative research project, I selected participants by using a purposeful maximum variation sampling strategy. Merriam (2009) describes this strategy as "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to

discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77) as well as “capture and describe the central themes or principle outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation” (Patton, 1990, p. 172). The advantage of this technique is that any patterns that emerge from the variety of informants during the data analysis are likely valuable for representing shared perceptions or experiences (Patton, 1990). To apply the maximum variation sampling strategy, I sought participants who represented the greatest variety possible within the boundaries of the case as determined by roles in relation to the organization and its programs. I also considered the potential participants’ duration of involvement with the NGO, age, NGO administrator or volunteer responsibilities, and NGO participant business type. Through this method, I included those individuals who were most likely to help me gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Study participants were selected based on their direct involvement with the NGO’s educational program around which the case centers. My inclusion criteria for persons who were recruited were based on individual’s relationship to the case. I included (1) current or former program participants, (2) NGO volunteer program instructors, and (3) NGO administrators or employees, such as a program directors or supervisors. Participants must also be at least 18 years of age and speak English well enough to engage in an interview.

I interviewed 15 individuals, including 11 NGO program participants, two employees, and two volunteers. Data saturation in qualitative research can be achieved with even a small number of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); therefore, my 15

interviews were reasonable. Indeed, with the 11 West African program participants I did achieve data saturation.

Since available information about NGO staffing and program participants in West Africa was limited prior to my visit, I identified and recruited these individuals during the course of my on-site fieldwork. For NGO volunteer program instructors and NGO employees, I selected participants from the pool of possible employees and volunteers at my same site and meeting the previously discussed criteria. Two employees and two volunteers met the criteria and all agreed to participate in the study.

Regarding the current or former program participants, I recruited the most diverse viewpoints possible to provide the broadest and richest data set. At the Kundu location, WW works with and provides training to over 50 local women entrepreneurs. The result was 11 women participants selected using the maximum variation strategy based on age, duration of involvement with WW, business type, and level of engagement in WW's educational programs.

Gaining Entry to the Research Site

Before traveling to the research site or contacting potential participants, I obtained approval for my study from the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB). To do so, I submitted a letter of support from the NGO as well as a letter of cultural evaluation outlining the appropriateness of my recruitment and consent strategies for the local West African context. A Texas A&M University faculty member who has conducted his own research in the same country wrote the letter of cultural evaluation. These letters are included as Appendices A and B.

To facilitate support of my research with WW, I offered myself as a program volunteer for the duration of my fieldwork. WW has a well-established volunteer program and consistently needs individuals with diverse skill sets to support program operations. Volunteering my time and abilities (e.g., writing, program planning, teaching, and mathematics) served three functions. First, I facilitated my project's approval by the NGO administration and ensured support at the field site. Second, I offset my own concerns about the intrusiveness of my research by making an immediate and tangible contribution to the NGO's operations. Third, my volunteer work was also an excellent means to build rapport with potential study participants and earn some degree of insider status. This rapport through volunteerism was particularly instrumental regarding my recruitment of WW employees and volunteers but negligible for the West African participants in WW's programs.

My volunteer responsibilities drew primarily from my program planning and instructional expertise. In the Kundu office, I developed materials to guide and inform future volunteers' course design and planning, including strategies for increasing learner engagement and developing culturally appropriate learning materials. I advised the management team on strategies for sustainable and consistent program planning. I also traveled to another WW site and taught a short mathematics lesson. Because my work focused on planning for the future and teaching at other sites, none of my contributions were directly related to the present study's participants or observed activities. The original letter from WW detailing my volunteer assignment is included as Appendix C.

Data Collection

According to Creswell (2009, 2104), when conducting a case study, researchers must use a variety of data collection procedures. Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2009, 2014) suggest multiple sources of information for the purpose of reconstructing and analyzing the case from a sociological perspective. Therefore, multiple sources of evidence were a key tactic for the data collection in the present study. In the following sections, I discuss each of the following sources of data that informed this case study: documents, interviews, and observations.

Although I had originally planned to include audiovisual materials and artifacts, once at the field site I realized those sources of data would not be appropriate. In general, I found that West Africans were very wary of photographs and videos. Many locals were at least mistrustful or at most openly hostile towards tourists or foreigners with cameras. Therefore, I decided to exclude audiovisual materials from this study out of respect for local preferences and to avoid insulting potential participants. Similarly, the original plan to collect artifacts of the entrepreneurs' products was discarded because the work the women were doing for WW was all based on designs and patterns created by WW (primarily the American design team as supported by volunteers and interns) and therefore provided no additional or unique insight.

Documents

According to Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2009, 2014), documents are an easily accessible source of research data and include, for example, official records, newspaper articles, press releases, teaching or course materials/curricula, and annual

reports. Yin (2014) advocates for documents as a way to corroborate and supplement evidence from other sources and can be used to verify findings from interviews or highlight contradictory evidence that requires further inquiry.

I began my document search prior to engaging in fieldwork by first collecting the publicly available documents pertaining to the NGO. I downloaded the annual reports, newsletters, mission statement, organizational objectives, participant and volunteer biographical information and anecdotes posted on the NGO's websites. I also searched the Internet for other relevant documents such as information from NGO database websites and government records from the United States and West Africa concerning the NGO's status or operations. Other documents prior to fieldwork included email communication with NGO personnel and their letter of support for my IRB application.

The major advantage of document collection prior to fieldwork is that I was able to gain a sense of the personnel, operations, priorities, and strategies of the NGO before I arrived at the field site. In this way, I was able to orient myself to the context of the case and become productive in the field more quickly. The documents also informed my interview protocol and provided me with a knowledge base I used to help establish my credibility with potential participants.

After I began my fieldwork, I continued to collect documents at the research site. Such documents included meeting minutes, course materials from WW's educational programs, teaching curricula, evaluation materials, and informal reports generated by previous volunteers.

Interviews

Yin (2009, 2014) describes interviews as essential sources of information for case studies. Although I volunteered at the field site and engaged with potential participants on a daily basis, formal interviews allowed me to address the specific concerns of the research study in a way that I could not through casual conversation alone. Because I interviewed two categories of participants, NGO employees and volunteers and NGO program participants, I designed my interview protocols based on the anticipated difference(s) in perspective of the two groups and guided by the study's theoretical frameworks, Vella's (2002) principles of effective adult learning and global feminist theory. These protocols are included as Appendix D and served as the foundation of the semi-structured interviews I conducted.

I conducted a single semi-structured, focused interview with each of the 15 respondents. Each of the interviews occurred in a location of the respondent's choosing, typically a batik or sewing workshop for the women entrepreneurs or a private space in the volunteer house or office for employees and volunteers. The shortest interview was approximately 15 minutes long and the longest was 90 minutes. The two shorter interviews were conversations I terminated based on my perception that the participant was disinterested or unwilling to share, despite having agreed to the interview.

For all interviews, I created an audio recording, with the participant's permission, and took my own notes. I then fully transcribed the audio recordings myself (Patton, 1990). As part of collecting interview data, I generated interview summary sheets to

organize my own impressions of the interviews, including identification of the most salient information and opportunities to improve my interview skills and strategies.

Observations

Observations were a key component of my data collection strategy. Since I conducted fieldwork, the observations I made and recorded during my time at the field site form a large percentage of my data volume. As recommended by Creswell (2009), I developed an observational protocol to organize my field notes systematically. The protocol, presented in Appendix E, included (a) descriptive notes, primarily comprised of participant portraits, and descriptions of the physical setting, events, and activities I encountered, (b) reflective notes, drawn from my personal thoughts and reactions, and (c) demographic information, including the date, time, and location of the observation (Creswell, 2009). During the data collection, I took notes by hand during the day and then typed them in the evening using the protocol as a guide for elaboration and reflection. By using the protocol as a foundation for my field notes, I ensured I have the depth of detail necessary to provide a rich context for the data I collected by other means.

Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2009) identify a variety of ways a researcher may interact with the research setting to conduct observations. As a result of my volunteer role with the NGO, I collected both participant observations, in which my volunteer responsibilities overshadowed my research activity, and direct observations, in which my primary role was researcher.

Participant Observation

As a volunteer, I had the opportunity to observe and interact with the NGO participants and employees through the daily functions of the organization. As Merriam (2009) describes, “participant observation is a schizophrenic activity in that the researcher participates but not to the extent of becoming totally absorbed in the activity” (p. 126). Striking a balance between researcher and participant was a constant challenge in collecting observational data while volunteering. Similarly, I needed to pay careful attention to the influence I exerted and to which I was subjected in the research setting. Interaction between the researcher and phenomenon is the norm in qualitative research but I needed to remain aware of that interaction and account for it in the data analysis and interpretation phase (Merriam, 2009). My reflective journal, discussed later, was an important tool for tracking and mirroring any potential biases I may have developed. As one example of the tension between my dual roles, I was asked, as part of my volunteer responsibilities, to help an intern design a training event that I also planned to attend and observe as part of my research. In the end, she did not seek my advice and I simply observed the training but the potential for a conflict of priorities was always present.

Direct Observation

In addition to observations collected as part of my volunteer efforts, I also made observations and wrote field notes when I was operating outside of my volunteer role. This included observing activities that were unrelated to my volunteer responsibilities but within the NGO operations, such as the work of the quality control staff or the product design team, public activities and events in the surrounding community, such as

a funeral parade that interrupted work one afternoon, and observations of setting and context that do not involve human subjects, including the office environment and neighborhood and volunteer housing.

Data Analysis

As described previously in the data collection section, I collected my data from diverse sources. As part of my data analysis, I needed to reconcile that diversity of information, described by Baxter and Jack (2008) as strengthening the findings because “various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case” (p. 554). To accomplish that reconciliation, I used the constant comparative method of thematic analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the entire case, rather than an embedded analysis of specific aspects (Yin, 2009). To facilitate the emergent design of the case study, I began analyzing data thematically as soon as it was collected (primarily starting with documents collected prior to fieldwork) and used the early analyses to guide the continuation of my data collection. A thematic analysis is a common approach in which sections of text, such as a transcript of an interview, are broken down into units, typically only a single sentence but occasionally an anecdote or story and always interpretable as a single cohesive idea. I then sorted and coded the units according to common ideas (Schwandt, 2007). The themes, or categories, generally emerge from the sorted, unitized data after an extensive and iterative process of consideration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Creswell (2009) describes a step-by-step process for thematic analysis that informed my study, beginning with the collection of raw data and concluding with

interpretation as the final step. With the exception of the raw data, all of the other stages involve validating the information's accuracy. In addition, Creswell (2009) cautions against the interpretation of the steps as an ordered or hierarchical process; stages may occur simultaneously or in a different order, as needed, due to the interconnectedness of the analytic tasks. In the remainder of this section, I will describe each of the stages as it pertains to my planned data analysis.

Organize and Prepare

In this step, data were organized and prepared for analysis (Creswell, 2009). Tasks at this stage included interview transcription, typing observation and field notes, and unitization of data, previously described. Because this step is largely procedural, I also organized data as part of the data collection process and maintenance of the audit trail.

Data in text form, such as documents, were unitized immediately. I typed observational data and transcribed interviews, and then unitized. I printed units onto blank notecards, including information to link the card to the units' source material.

Read Through the Data

The goal of this stage is to gain an overall or general sense of the data (Creswell, 2009). As aligns with the evolving design of qualitative research, I also read through and examined the data as part of the collection activity. Therefore, by the time I collected all of my data, I had read and reread my data repeatedly and listened to audio recordings of interviews multiple times.

Code the Data

The third stage, data coding, is the beginning of the detailed analysis process (Creswell, 2009). The unitized data are sorted into categories and those categories are named in a way that describes the commonalities of the data units within the category. In the iterative process of constant comparative analysis, the data units are sorted and classified into categories, compared within and between categories, then sorted and classified again until a cohesive sense of each category is established (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Creswell (2014) presents the dilemma for the researcher regarding whether to generate predetermined codes into which data are fit or let codes emerge naturally from the data. I chose the latter strategy because I did not wish to place any expectations on the data and wanted to remain as open-minded as possible when developing themes. I then sorted my printed notecards manually. The kinesthetic experience, including the spatial reasoning of locating data units physically on a tabletop, slowed the process enough that I was able to consider carefully each unit and its connection to the other units.

An example of an evolving categorization at this stage is the development of the women's issues embedded in the findings. I began by grouping together all units pertaining to gender. After examining that group of units, I realized that not all gender data belonged together. Some gender-based units related to motherhood and familial relationships while others were aligned with work, business, or economic stability.

Instead of keeping all women's issues together, I determined that I need to subdivide the category and make connections to other themes.

Describe the Emergent Categories and Themes

The fourth stage builds on the categories established in stage three. I used the categories as a foundation upon which to build thick descriptions of the categories and themes, as well as incorporating the research setting and participants (Creswell, 2009). The results from this stage make up the bulk of Chapter IV. For example, I began with a theme of challenges. Upon review, the classification was too broad and included too much disparate data; no single description captured the complexity of the theme. I then resorted the units by types of challenges, e.g., communication or production, before settling on the final themes.

Interrelate the Themes and Interpret

In these final two stages, the themes are connected and interwoven with narrative to communicate the findings of the study and the researcher then interprets the findings (Creswell, 2009). At this point in the data analysis process, I made connections between my study and the existing literature, identified any lessons learned (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and made recommendations for future studies. The results of this stage are presented in Chapter V.

Ethical Issues

Qualitative researchers, and in fact all researchers who work with human subjects, need to consider the ethical implications of their work (Creswell, 2009). I considered the possible ethical issues in advance of my data collection in an attempt to

minimize them and conduct an ethical study, as aligned with the requirements of the Texas A&M University IRB as well as my own conscience. The following discussion outlines ethical questions I needed to address and my subsequent resolutions.

First, my research needed to be culturally appropriate for the West African field site and local participants. In preparation for my fieldwork, I learned as much as I could about the country, its people, and common cultural practices by accessing reference materials online and in print. I met with the person who wrote my letter of cultural evaluation for the IRB application to make sure I fully understood its implications for my research design. Immediately upon arrival at the research site, I asked for and was granted a debriefing meeting with the NGO's volunteer coordinator to learn about her perspectives on the cultural relevance and appropriateness of my research design. I then made adjustments as necessary. As a result of her input, I rephrased some of my interview questions for local respondents. For example, I asked "Has WW ever given you a headache?" using a local expression instead of asking, "Have you ever had a conflict with WW?"

Second, I needed to establish reciprocity with my study participants. By volunteering, I intended to make a contribution to the NGO that benefitted all parties, including employees, other volunteers, and NGO program participants. In addition, I brought high quality pens and notepads to give as incentives to participants who agreed to be a part of my study after the interview. The favors also served as an expression of my gratitude for their participation and willingness to share with me. I confirmed with the writer of my IRB cultural evaluation letter and NGO administrators that the incentive

I supplied was appropriate as a token of appreciation rather than a bribe or a form of coercion. In general, the items were very well received.

Next, I needed to build trust and rapport with my participants and make a concerted effort to minimize the risk to them as a result of participating in my study. I have done so by maintaining the confidentiality of information participants disclosed and conveying that intention to participants. This confidentiality applied to all participant responses and included information that may be considered personal or the disclosure of which may put the respondent at risk. I have also chosen pseudonyms and assigned them to the organization and to participants for use in the findings and discussion sections (Chapters IV and V). I have respected participants' wishes regarding audio recordings of interviews, requests to exclude any of their personal data from the study, and requests to withhold interview responses from NGO staff. The NGO executive director asked me to use an organizational pseudonym after reading an early draft of Chapter V.

Fourth, it is important that I represent the authentic voice of study participants. I have relied heavily on quotations from participants as I wrote the findings and discussion. I also prepared study participants for the possibility that my final report may contain findings that come as a surprise or with which they do not agree.

Lastly, before I collected any data, I adhered to the formal approval process for human subjects research. I obtained approval for my study from the Texas A&M University IRB, gained access to my field site by first obtaining permission from the appropriate NGO administrative officials, and obtained consent from each individual study participant.

Trustworthiness

As opposed to the quantitative terms internal and external validity, objectivity, and reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize the need for trustworthy qualitative research as characterized by credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To support trustworthiness, I incorporated prolonged engagement, triangulation of data, peer debriefing, reflective field journals, the maintenance of an audit trail, and thick description. In the following sections, I describe the practices in detail in the process of addressing the four qualities of trustworthiness.

Credibility

Merriam (2009) describes credibility in the context of the tenets of relativistic truth and unknowable reality of qualitative research. She claims, “it is important to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening” (p. 215). To ensure credibility, I used the strategies of prolonged engagement, triangulation of data, and peer debriefing.

To this end, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend prolonged engagement and persistent observation as safeguard practices, because the researcher needs the opportunity to truly learn the culture and understand the context of the specific research topic. My goal for fieldwork was to be able to build the understanding, awareness, and trust that come from prolonged engagement and persistent observation, in this case, persistent observation of the educational program and its leaders and participants. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to look for data that enhanced the richness of

my data set or that aligned with alternative explanations (Patton, 2002), and thus achieved data saturation.

In addition to prolonged engagement and persistent observation, I have triangulated my findings. Denzin (1978) recommends four practices for triangulating data: multiple sources, multiple methods, multiple investigators, and multiple theories. Of these four, multiple methods and sources are most appropriate for my study. I employed multiple methods of data collection, including documents, interviews and observations, previously discussed, and compared them to one another as one form of triangulation. For example, I compared the mission statement of WW as presented on its website, as represented during an employee interview, and in practice during my observations of training events. Triangulation based upon multiple sources of data is also possible using participant interviews with people who have different perspectives, such as educators and learners. For example, I considered the entrepreneurs' view of the educational programs in comparison to the views of the program managers and facilitators. Through triangulation, I checked data to ensure my research findings align as closely as possible with the case.

While I was the sole researcher on my dissertation study, I did engage with a colleague in peer debriefing. This technique was useful for probing researcher bias, testing developing hypotheses, and exploring aspects of the emergent design, in addition to acting as a professional and emotional support (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During the post-fieldwork data analysis phase of the study, I discussed my data coding, development of themes, and interpretations with a local peer. My colleague for the peer

debriefing process was a doctoral student in the same program as me. She had successfully conducted case study research as part of her coursework under the direct tutelage of experienced research faculty. At the time of the debriefing, she had completed her preliminary exams and was writing her proposal.

Dependability and Confirmability

To demonstrate dependability and confirmability, I maintained a field journal throughout the project and created an audit trail. The field journal included both personal reflections (as in a reflective journal) and day-to-day research activities. In the reflective aspect of the journal, I reflected critically on myself as the research instrument, examining my biases, assumptions, and relationship to the study (Merriam, 2009). The audit trail is embedded in the field journal and serves as a record of data collection, derivation of data analysis categories, and decision-making processes (Merriam, 2009). In effect, I have created a “running record of my interaction with the data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). Through the field journal, as supported by the raw and processed data and analysis products and records, I am able to demonstrate the dependability of my research process and the confirmability of my final product (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

The naturalistic paradigm of the present qualitative study does not align with the traditional positivist research criteria of generalizability, that the results from a study of one population are generalizable to another similar population based on shared or common characteristics. Instead, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue a more appropriate approach is to consider the transferability of findings from one specific case to another.

The primary difference being that, with qualitative research, there are no claims of representative samples such as one might require for generalizability. Instead the researcher reports findings using a “thick” description of the case context and important elements. Then, whether or not findings from a qualitative study are transferable is left to the reader to decide (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I support transferability by providing the “thick” description of the case context and important elements that will allow other researchers or practitioners to determine for themselves if my work applies to their context, and, if so, in what ways.

Researcher’s Positionality

I am interested in the study for two key reasons. First, I am a passionate knitter. I have derived a lot of personal value from making crafts and being a part of the crafting community, and I have seen others benefit as well. There is beauty and joy in making an object with one’s own hands. I think crafts contribute to a sense of accomplishment that builds self-esteem and increases one’s sense of personal efficacy. I see crafts work in the way I have just described through my engagement in the Western knitting community, which includes my local knitting guild, regional and national knitting conferences, international travel, and online crafting communities.

As part of this study, I am interested to see how the work that gives me so much pleasure translates into other contexts, cultures, and socio-economic situations. I knit for my own enjoyment but if I were knitting for a living, I expect I would regard the task differently. I regularly teach others to knit but how would that educational exchange (as I

previously defined that term) be different if the learners were not engaged in a hobby but rather a new trade upon which their economic stability depended?

Second, I am interested in investigating programs for women in developing Non-Western countries because I am a woman and a feminist and I believe women's work and development merits more attention than it receives. As a Westerner, I find my own privilege burdensome and so I want to make visible, for my own use and for the academic value, the complex interaction of Western NGOs and the populations they desire to serve as an example of the larger interactions between the West and developing countries.

These two ideas, crafts and the privilege of being Western, white, middle-class, and educated, intersected with my gender, are the major driving forces behind my choice to conduct the present study.

Assumptions

My assumptions in this study pertain mostly to my own experience with international work and gender bias. First, as an avid traveler with friends from many different cultures and nations, I see that cultural bias and misunderstandings can occur even under the friendliest and most well-intentioned circumstances. I assumed in this study that the interaction and communication between locals, residents of a developing non-Western nation, and the employees and volunteers from WW, a Western NGO, might be complex. Second, as a woman, I find that my experiences in life, including my educational and economic experiences, have been colored by my gender. I assumed that

my study participants would have also seen gender issues at play in their lives or the lives of the women around them.

Delimitations

Delimitations of this study are inherent in the qualitative case study design. The findings of this study pertain to the specific NGO and are inextricably embedded in the local context. This study will not account for the experiences of people involved with other NGOs, in other contexts, or enrolled in other educational programs.

Limitations

This study is limited by a number of factors. First, the time I spent in the field was restricted as a result of the expense and complex logistics of conducting international research. Despite my best efforts, it is possible that I did not gather or investigate every possible source of data during my fieldwork. Second, it is possible that I did not interview all the potential participants I wished to include. Although no one declined to participate, some key informants were not available for interview, specifically local entrepreneurs who were too busy working to meet production deadlines and volunteers who had already departed the research site. Third, I conducted my research activities in English. Although English is the official language of the country in which I collected data, the government also recognizes a number of tribal and indigenous languages and many residents do not begin to learn English until they reach school age. The ability to speak English is closely related to the amount and quality of a person's education. Some participants were not as proficient in English as others, which

consequently inhibited their ability to communicate effectively their experiences and perceptions during interviews.

Summary

This chapter has detailed the research design for my dissertation study, a qualitative single case study of an international NGO's crafts-based educational program for women. My data collection strategy drew from diverse sources, including documents, interviews, and observation. Additionally I have described my procedures for data analysis and the ways in which I have established the trustworthiness of my research and addressed ethical concerns.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the case study as derived from the data collection and analysis methods described in Chapter III. Recall from Chapter I, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the exchange between an international NGO and the women enrolled in that NGO's educational program. I have operationalized the term *exchange* to refer to the dialogic aspects of adult education and the outcomes of such dialogue. Specifically, I explored the ways the NGO and educational program participants influenced one another. Using the conceptual framework of Vella's (2002) adult learning principles and global feminist theory, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the women participating in the NGO's educational program?
2. What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the NGO as a consequence of working with the women participants?
3. How does participating in the NGO's educational program influence the women's lives?
4. How do the women participants influence the NGO's operations and programs?

To describe the case study, I begin with a broad overview of the NGO and its educational programs, called the Capacity Building Program (CBP), followed by brief descriptions of the study participants. I then continue with background information on

the women entrepreneurs and the educational programs. The remainder of the chapter presents descriptions and findings related to the themes that emerged from the data analysis: (a) gendered work, (b) tension between economic and personal empowerment, (c), limited educational program resources, (d) ongoing cultural and communication barriers, and (e) pride.

An Overview of the Organization and Its Educational Programs

At the time of this study, Worldwide Women (WW; a pseudonym) was an international NGO founded and led by Westerners (Americans) and operating in a West African country. WW was registered in that country as a local NGO and in the United States as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Founded in 2003, this fair-trade NGO maintained a large international customer base, and was continuing to grow. WW's mission was to "transform the lives of women entrepreneurs in [West Africa] by helping them to grow their businesses." As part of its philanthropic charge, WW provided training and educational programs for an extensive network of talented women artisans and facilitated the export of their products abroad. Two business offices, located in a large Midwestern American city and the West African country's capital city, supported a number of production facilities located throughout the West African country. The primary design, production, and export center was located in Kundu, a pseudonym for a town about 100 miles from the nation's capital city. Kundu was the site at which WW was originally founded to support the business of six women entrepreneurs. All six of those women are still involved with the NGO but the organization has since grown to include over 50 local small business owners in the vicinity. As the largest of all WW's

production offices, management in Kundu included two Americans and two nationals who oversaw a quality control staff of approximately 15 full-time direct employees, a steady stream of volunteers, and support for the local entrepreneurs. In Kundu, the entrepreneurs produced batik fabric and sewn products, primarily apparel and home goods. (Batik fabric is the result of a special dyeing process in which cotton cloth is stamped with hot wax to create a pattern. The fabric is then dyed but the wax resists the dye and, after it has been melted off the cloth, the stamped pattern remains on the fabric in a contrasting color to the dyed regions.) While WW artisans also created glass beads and Shea butter goods, those production activities occurred at other West African sites.

The present study was restricted to the activities and people in Kundu, where WW had deep roots in the local community. WW's originators were originally Peace Corps volunteers in the region, and it was during their volunteer work the two women built the relationships that ultimately informed the creation and mission of WW. (Both American founders continued to lead WW but neither was based in Kundu at the time of this study.) The six local founding women chose the organization's name but the pseudonym used in the present study was chosen by me to reflect the pride of the NGO participants in their achievements as women in an international context, as will be presented later in this chapter.

The present case centers on WW's philanthropic, educational programs for the local women, known as its Capacity Building Program (CBP). The CBP was an initiative based on the WFTO's eighth principle. As described by the WFTO (2013), to address this principle, "the organization develops the skills and capabilities of its own employees

or members. Organizations working directly with small producers develop specific activities to help these producers improve their management skills, production capabilities and access to markets” (WFTO, 2013, “Principle Eight: Providing Capacity Building,” para. 2). Thus the organization’s CBP existed for the purpose of enhancing the women’s entrepreneurial skills through educational programs.

The trainings and workshops WW offered to the entrepreneurs in Kundu formed the core of the CBP. The WW website described the educational programs’ purpose and strategy in this way:

Staying true to our roots, we have remained committed to enhancing the skills of our [producers] by providing hands-on training designed to enhance their talents and manage their expanding businesses and personal income. Providing ongoing, personalized training requires tremendous human resources and expertise. We accomplish this by hosting international volunteers and interns who give their expertise, mentorship and encouragement. It is incredible to imagine that since 2003, nearly 400 volunteers representing 24 countries have spent more than 100,000 hours in [this country] sharing their time and skills to forever improve the lives of women in Africa.

Most of our [producers] come to us trained in a craft (batiking, sewing, bead-making, shea butter production). We enhance their skills by providing hands-on training in advanced techniques, quality improvement, and creative design. Many of our women are business owners and we help them to expand their businesses by training them in leadership, financial management, marketing and

merchandising. As our [producers] start realizing the peace of mind of financial security we provide support to help them manage their growing incomes. At the request of our [producers], we added workshops on topics to improve their health.

The learning opportunities offered through the CBP have a wide scope that has grown as the NGO itself has grown.

Participant Overview

The final sample included 15 participants, comprised of 11 independent entrepreneurs, two full-time, permanent NGO employees, and two short-term volunteers. Independent entrepreneurs were all local residents who owned batik or sewing businesses that produced goods for the NGO. Full-time permanent employees worked approximately 40 hours per week during regular business hours, accrued employee benefits like health insurance, and made their homes in the area. Short-term volunteers were in the country for the express purpose of working for WW and stayed between three weeks and three months.

All participants had engaged with the NGO's educational programs in one of three possible roles: learner, instructor, or program manager. Specifically, the two employees and two volunteers were directly involved in managing, planning, or facilitating the NGO's educational programs, in addition to other responsibilities. All of the entrepreneurs had participated in WW workshops or training events as learners, as aligned with the selection criteria, owned their own batik or sewing business, and worked regularly for WW.

The length of time participants had been involved with the NGO ranged from 10 years, since the organization was founded, to just a few weeks. Participants' ages were between approximately 20 and 74 at the time of the interviews. The levels of education spanned from some grade school to Master's degrees. Nationalities included 12 local residents, 2 Americans, and 1 citizen of a different West African nation. All participants were women and are referred to by a pseudonym I chose. In Table 6, I present a summary of key demographic information regarding the participants, sorted by role and the year each joined the NGO. In particular, the education levels are divided among the participant groups, with all four management and volunteer participants but only two of the 11 entrepreneurs having earned or worked towards a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 6. Summary of Participants.

Pseudonym	Year Joined	Age Range	Work	Education Level ^a
Entrepreneurs				
Evelyn	2003	55-59	Seamstress	High school or vocational school
Ruth	2004	40-44	Batiker	8 th grade or less
Edith	2005	35-39	Batiker	Bachelor's or higher
Gladys	2007	40-44	Batiker	Bachelor's or higher
Doris	2007	30-34	Batiker	High school or vocational school
June	2007	25-29	Batiker	High school or vocational school
Sarah	2008	70-74	Seamstress	High school or vocational school
Regina	2008	25-29	Batiker	High school or vocational school
Cora	2009	40-44	Seamstress	High school or vocational school
Estelle	2010	25-29	Seamstress	8 th grade or less
Mabel	2012	45-49	Batiker	8 th grade or less
Employees				
Gloria	2006	40-44	Office Manager	Bachelor's or higher
Margaret	2011	25-29	Volunteer Manager	Bachelor's or higher
Volunteers				
Emily	2013	20-24	Design/Merchandising	Bachelor's or higher
Tamara	2013	25-29	Business Development	Bachelor's or higher

^aIncludes degrees in progress at the time of the interview. For the purpose of this classification, apprenticeship, a person-to-person training, is considered different than a formal vocational school program.

In the following sections, I briefly introduce each participant, beginning with the entrepreneurs, then employees, and finally volunteers. Within each group, participant introductions are presented based on the length of time each woman has been affiliated with the NGO, from longest to shortest as shown in Table 6.

Entrepreneurs

The following descriptions of the entrepreneurs were derived from multiple sources, including the interviews I conducted, my observations during fieldwork, and entrepreneur biographical sketches developed by the NGO for publicity purposes.

Evelyn

I interviewed Evelyn at her workshop, located on a busy main street with lots of motor traffic but few pedestrians. She had two sewing machines set up on the porch, occupied by busy apprentices. She believed that local customers recognize a good seamstress by the amount of work she already has, so she prided herself on gaining new customers by always keeping active. Her 20 years of business experience were visible through her ability to present an attractive display of sewn items outside the shop, exhibiting her work to its best advantage. Inside the shop, Evelyn had a cutting table, surrounded by piles of fabrics, sewn merchandise, and other completed goods, like zipper pouches, kids clothing items, and men's shirts. The space was cross between a production room and a storefront.

Evelyn was a friendly and talkative woman who was proud to be one of the six local women who founded WW. During our conversation, I perceived the sense of responsibility and ownership she felt towards the NGO, although she did have some concerns and complaints. While many locals do not like having photographs taken, after the interview, she was so tickled by the notebook and pen I gave her as a token of my appreciation that she insisted on getting a photo of us exchanging the item and shaking hands, like a graduation diploma photo. She then gave me a little zippered fabric pouch she had sewn and invited me to return whenever I wished.

Ruth

My meeting with Ruth took place outside the workshop she shares with fellow entrepreneur Doris, also a participant in this study. The building was small, about eight

feet by 10 feet, hot because of the braziers of hot wax for batik stamping, and overcrowded, with three dyers all occupying the space. Their combined children were there as well, running around noisily, arguing, and interrupting, as children do. Ruth was a laughing and friendly woman who liked using cameras; she was eager to try a fellow volunteer's professional model. She genuinely seemed to enjoy interacting with people but she was also soft-spoken and quiet.

Ruth was the same woman with whom I took a lesson in batik dyeing during my first days in Kundu. During my lesson, she struck a good balance between letting me attempt the various tasks and intervening when I was having difficulty. While she did agree to participate in this study, during the interview we did not seem to communicate very well. My impression was that she had difficulty understanding some of my questions due to a language barrier, which perhaps also explained some of her general quietness. Despite the language barrier, Ruth expressed moving sentiments about her work with WW, including the statement "my work is my future," from which I derived the title of this study.

Edith

Edith was one of the more educated entrepreneurs, having earned a bachelor's degree in management from the local university. Through her work with WW, she was also able to support her husband when he went back to school to earn his Master's degree in Human Resource Management. A winner of the Kundu Worldwide Women Initiative award, Edith credited her faith and emphasized her goal of helping others by opening a batik school and reducing unemployment.

I met Edith when she was in the NGO office to attend Emily's visual merchandising workshop. Edith was well dressed, wearing a wax-print fabric dress and carrying a nice handbag. She agreed to participate in my study on the condition that I interview her immediately and chose the WW lobby for our conversation. Although Edith gave her consent for the interview, her responses were terse and she avoided eye contact with me. My understanding of her from my conversations with WW staff indicated that she was a very positive and upbeat person, but I just got very short answers from her, and sensed her reluctance to elaborate when I would ask follow-up questions. At a loss to understand the situation, I terminated the interview early and gave her a pen, which she seemed pleased to receive. She then used it to take notes in Emily's workshop. In the workshop, she was willing to voice her opinions and ask good questions. I believe she spoke more during that event than during my whole interview with her!

Gladys

To visit Gladys and her home-based batik workshop, I traveled by taxi with her son as my guide. She and her family live on the campus of a school in Kundu where her husband is a professor of French. I was greeted in the living room, decorated with matching furniture (a luxury in this context) and a TV blaring an English-dubbed Spanish-language soap opera that no one was watching. I interviewed Gladys in her batik dyeing space, a large covered patio behind the home. She had a generously sized stamping table and a bin full of stamps, some of which were WW designs and some of which were her own. In comparison to other batik workspaces, Gladys's was large,

clean, and well ventilated, with the dewaxing area set away from the house under a tree. The yard was filled with fruit trees of all kinds, including banana, plantain, papaya, and mango, as well as cassava plants and many others I did not recognize.

Gladys was an educated and articulate woman with strong opinions about most of the issues behind my questions. She was working on her Master's degree in textile design at the time of the interview and with the goal of starting her own export business. I believe she sensed the differences between herself and many of the other WW entrepreneurs who had not achieved her same level of education and struggled to find a balance between an inclination towards leadership and her desire for equality among the WW entrepreneurs.

Doris

My meeting with Doris took place on a Monday outside the workshop she shared with Ruth. There had been a misunderstanding the previous Friday. I, and the other folks in the office, had understood that Doris was going to be participating in Emily's visual merchandising workshop. The plan was that I would interview her after that event but she did not attend as anticipated. It was only on the following Monday morning that the office manager heard she had been waiting for me to come to her on Friday and was therefore irritated. As an apology gift, I bought her a package of ginger biscuits. She smiled when she received them but it was superficial and short lived; I do not believe the gift actually assuaged her irritation at all.

Consequently, the interview was short because she was so terse. She agreed to be interviewed but did not seem to want to answer my questions, very similar to my

experience with Edith. Also similar to my experience with Edith, WW presented Doris as a positive, upbeat woman but in the interview, her contributions were primarily negative and critical. She repeatedly expressed her discontent with the lack of work she had been getting from WW, her only client.

June

I met with June at her batik studio on the outskirts of Kundu. She worked from a bay in a parking structure next to a government building and her home. She had a strong sense of hospitality and generosity. She fed me popcorn about halfway through the visit and sent me back to the office with a sack lunch of rice, vegetables, and chicken (meat was a rare treat). Although when I met her she was in her work clothes with her hair tied up in a scarf, she exuded a sense of style and confidence that transcended the manual labor of batik.

I was particularly impressed by all of June's responsibilities and her ambition. In addition to batik work for WW, she was also attending catering school, working to grow her fledgling catering business, and supporting a number of family members. I particularly enjoyed the way she spoke. She started many responses with the phrase "Oh, seriously..." and I could not help but smile during the interview and again while reliving it during the transcription phase.

Sarah

Sarah was an older woman and was perhaps friendlier to me than any other West African during my visit. I felt genuinely welcomed by her; she was the only local participant who wanted to hear about me during the interview, asking me to tell her

about my teaching and my family. Although she has had a difficult life, losing her husband early and recovering from a serious traffic accident in which she was the sole survivor, she expresses her positivity, optimism, and kindness by helping those around her. For example, when she was not working on sewing orders, she helped the local school children by mending their uniforms for free.

Sarah's shop is at the start of a row of shops run by Rastafarians near the Kundu castle, disparagingly called Rasta Row. It is a small wooden building, with a covered porch on which the sewing machine sits. Her son, a dyer, mostly runs the shop now and Sarah sews from home with the help of her daughter. Because of her location near a tourist site, much of her work prior to joining WW was based in tourist traffic. She was always searching for new product ideas for her business and, during my visit, brought several samples of new products to the WW office to get the opinions of the foreigners on whether the products would interest tourists.

Regina

When I met Regina, she was wearing jeans and a sleeveless fast pitch women's softball t-shirt. She looked like she belonged on the ball field and could easily pass for an athlete. If I saw her in my hometown, she would have blended in flawlessly. Regina also possessed the dignity and self-assurance of an elite athlete, the quiet confidence of a woman who knows her work and her own ability to be successful. She seemed to be a positive but guarded person, as if she had had a negative experience at some point and was consequently less inclined to trust and more reserved in her judgment.

Her workshop was a similar wooden building to Ruth's but felt significantly larger, perhaps due to the presence of only one batik table and much less other equipment. When I visited her, Regina had finished work for the day, but I could see the stamped WW fabric waiting to be dyed. She was out of dye and could not finish the work until her dyes arrived from the capital on the weekend. We shared a laugh at her story of telling the WW management office that the dye they wanted her to use could not be found at all in Kundu and they would have to wait.

Cora

Cora worked out of her home, having established a sewing room for herself and several apprentices on an enclosed patio. She had three workers there, two of whom had small children with them and they shared two sewing machines, an ironing board, a serger (called a knitting machine in the regional vernacular) nestled amid piles of miscellaneous fabric. The overflow from sewing, like a stack of half-finished school uniforms, had begun to encroach on the home's interior living space.

Cora was a boisterous, confident woman. When she arrived, she burst into the room with loud greetings and explanations for her tardiness. She was wearing traveling clothes and immediately went to freshen up, changing from jeans and an old t-shirt into a bright tailored dress and full makeup. She returned looking almost like a different woman. During the interview, she talked loudly to be heard over the apprentices' noisy sewing machines. She had strong opinions about WW, not all positive, but told stories that caused her to laugh at herself and joke "Oh my god! I'm funny, don't mind me."

While staying on topic was a challenge, her enthusiasm and liveliness were a pleasure to experience.

Estelle

My visit to Estelle was complicated by her remote and hidden location. To find it, my guide and I took a taxi to the nearest intersection and then asked passersby until we found someone who knew her shop. Eventually, we walked through an unkempt field to an unmarked concrete building that was her apartment building. Her shop was located next door in a freestanding wooden structure. Although her workshop was set up as if she were in an area with substantial pedestrian traffic, with a large display space on the porch in front of a sewing room, it was not visible from any roads. She had a table, two sewing machines, a serger (a machine that sews seams by wrapping and trimming the raw fabric edges), and three racks of fabric, along with a few small sewn items for sale.

Estelle seemed to be rather shy and perhaps not entirely comfortable in English. My guide repeatedly chimed in to the interview, translating my questions in English into the local dialect, when she judged that Estelle did not understand my questions. As one of the newer WW entrepreneurs, no one in the office seemed to know her very well. She was friendly and welcoming and seemed to value her affiliation with WW but unfortunately I did not get to know her very well.

Mabel

Mabel was a happy and smiling woman and had a reputation among the NGO's office staff as one of the friendliest and most humble women. Although she was short, not much more than 5 feet tall, she possessed the energy to fill a room. She laughed

easily during the interview, conducted at her batik dyeing facility. Although she was relatively new to the WW program and had not participated in as many workshops as others, Mabel seemed eager to attend future training events. She used her income to support her sister's children and pay their school fees.

Located on the outskirts of a neighboring village, Mabel was fortunate to have one of the largest workshops I saw, including a large covered pavilion with clotheslines for drying fabric and a small building with two doors, presumably where the stamping tables were stored. When I arrived, she and her apprentices had just finished dyeing and were hanging fabric to dry. With all the bright colors, it almost looked like a carnival. The downside to her location was that there was almost no pedestrian traffic; to sell her own fabric designs, she was reliant on the hospitality of nearby tourist hotels that allowed her to vend at their sites.

Employees and Volunteers

The following descriptions of the employees and volunteers were derived from multiple sources, including the interviews I conducted and my observations during fieldwork. I interacted with each of these four women almost every day and shared housing with Margaret, Emily, and Tamara.

Gloria

Gloria was a local woman in her early forties. She had been with WW for eight years, working her way up to a leadership role after returning to school for a bachelor's degree in management studies. Gloria was responsible for the Kundu office's finances and she managed the quality control staff and the Capacity Building Program (CBP), the

program guiding the educational initiatives, addressed in detail later in this chapter. Her hopes for WW included expansion into other African countries. As the lead on the CBP, Gloria organized trainings and workshops but did not deliver or facilitate the events personally. She interacted with volunteers and interns as an intermediary, helping them connect with the WW entrepreneurs as needed for their own projects and activities. For the present study, Gloria was essential in helping me conduct interviews with the entrepreneurs and regularly supported other interns and volunteers on their projects. She introduced me to entrepreneurs, made phone calls to schedule appointments, and facilitated my travel (a complex process considering the scarcity of street signs, building numbers, and permanent structures in Kundu).

Margaret

Margaret was an American in her mid-twenties who had worked with WW since 2011. She first became acquainted with WW as a university student studying abroad in West Africa and worked in the US headquarters as an intern after graduation. She then returned to West Africa to manage the WW store located in the capital city of the country in which WW is based. (The store served as an outlet for products that did not meet export quality standards.) She transitioned to the Kundu office in the spring of 2013. Her official title was Volunteer Coordinator but she had a variety of responsibilities in addition to supervising volunteers, including financial oversight of the production office and collaboration with Gloria on the CBP. Margaret was essential in helping me navigate my fieldwork experience, serving as an adviser, sounding board, and moral support throughout.

Emily

Emily was an American in her early twenties interning at WW to fulfill a requirement for her bachelor's degree in visual merchandising at an American university. She was connected to WW through an alumnus of her university but was attracted by WW's focus on women and sustainability. Her responsibilities at WW were primarily batik and textile design with a focus on production. She was also responsible for developing and delivering a workshop on visual merchandising for the entrepreneurs, which she did on her last day in Kundu. Emily had no prior teaching experience but described the workshop as a highlight of her work with WW.

Tamara

Tamara was a Black African woman in her mid-twenties from a country different from the one in which the study was conducted. At the time of the interview, she was pursuing a Master's degree from an American university in economics and international relations with an emphasis on international economic development. She was working as an intern with WW for the summer and chose WW because of their emphasis on empowering women, alleviating poverty, and the African location. During her internship, she was asked to revise and edit the materials for several of the existing workshops and deliver the SMART Goals workshop (discussed in detail later) to groups of WW employees and entrepreneurs. Tamara's prior teaching experience consisted of two semesters as a teaching assistant in economics at her home university. While she enjoyed being a teaching assistant, sharing her expertise and appreciation of the subject, she was also at times frustrated by undergraduate students' lack of interest.

Background on the Local Women Entrepreneurs

In this section, I present the context of work and business for the women entrepreneurs who participated in the NGO's educational programs. The purpose of this section is to provide background information on the entrepreneurs' economic activities and general perceptions of the NGO as the lens through which the educational programs and corresponding research findings were viewed.

Joining WW

All of the entrepreneurs who participated in this study decided to join the NGO after hearing about it through a friend or business colleague, with the exception of Evelyn, who was one of the original six founding members. To join, one must submit an application letter (basically a letter of interest) and participate in an interview and a site visit. The interview occurs in the office and consists of 27 questions about the entrepreneur's personal circumstances, business, finances, and goals. The interview could be considered a baseline assessment of the entrepreneur and her economic status rather than a behavioral assessment of employable skills. WW management then conducts a site visit to the applicant's production site (often referred to as a workshop) and asks her to complete a sample of a batik fabric or sewn item, from which the woman's skill level and production quality are judged. If an applicant produces samples that meet the baseline quality requirements, she will then go through trainings in fair trade business practices and quality control before receiving her first order from WW. According to Gloria, all applicants who possessed the requisite skills and were willing to adhere to fair trade and quality control standards are accepted into WW.

At the time of this study, order assignments were based directly on completed samples. For example, to receive an order for sewing a particular style of blouse, the seamstress must have produced a high quality sample of that exact blouse. She would not be given orders for other blouse styles until the corresponding samples had been produced and approved. Thus, although WW was very open about accepting new entrepreneurs, affiliation did not directly correspond to work or income.

Typically new affiliates were given simple products, like cloth napkins or tablecloths, or fabric with a simple dye recipe. Challenging items, like ladies' dresses or complex batik patterns, were typically reserved for the skilled and experienced entrepreneurs. The WW production manager, a local who was not a participant in this study, made all decisions regarding order assignments. Entrepreneurs could make requests and indicate preferences but the production manager's assignment strategy is unknown.

A major advantage of working with WW was the provision of raw materials to the entrepreneurs. Batik dyers were given the natural cotton fabric and dye recipes. Seamstresses were provided dyed fabric in appropriate quantities and sewing patterns. American employees of WW, including one designer on site in Kundu and one designer based in the US administrative office, developed all fabric and apparel designs, as supported by Western volunteers and interns.

Before WW

Based on my observations during fieldwork, employment options for women in this region of Africa, and specifically the rural area surrounding Kundu, were relatively

limited. Most visibly, women work in the markets and along streets selling prepared foods, produce and grocery items, home goods, and fabric. The more affluent retailers have a wooden structure in which they display goods; low-class sellers, called vendors, sell goods from a tray they carry on top of their heads while walking along the street or at traffic intersections. Many women are seamstresses or hair stylists and decorate their workspaces with posters depicting style choices for their clients. A patron may make her selection by pointing to a photo, similar to the strategy of tattoo shops in the US.

Seamstresses typically use old-fashioned manual sewing machines because electricity is unreliable. Other employment, such as teaching or administrative work, often requires at least a high school degree, vocational school, or other specialized training. Before joining WW, eight of the 11 women were already working as batik makers and seamstresses and three were not, although all had prior experience or training in their craft. For example, Doris was not working at all before WW and Estelle was selling shoes as a traveling vendor, aiming to save enough money to start her own business.

Evelyn attended vocational school to be a seamstress and therefore already possessed many of the professional skills necessary, such as working from a pattern, to produce export quality goods for WW. Similarly, Regina had taken a batik training course at a vocational school and had started her own batik shop. Unfortunately, she experienced such difficulty in collecting money from customers that she went to work at a local supermarket until she could save enough to restart her batik business. Mabel had been a seamstress before becoming a batik maker. One of the most educated participants, Gladys had a degree in visual arts and worked as an assistant head mistress of a school.

Outside of her employment at the school, she dyed batik fabric for WW and made progress toward a Master's degree. Before joining WW, Sarah relied heavily on seasonal business from tourists, which was somewhat unpredictable. By joining WW, all of the women had gained consistent year-round work in their chosen trade.

General Sentiments About WW

Of the 11 women entrepreneurs who participated in this study, ten of them made spontaneous positive statements about WW during the interview. These comments are summarized in Table 7, showing the general attribute and the number of participants who referenced that attribute. Although participant comments about the NGO were not exclusively positive, the women entrepreneurs gave the overall impression that WW's activities and initiatives were beneficial to them.

Table 7. Entrepreneurs Spontaneously Expressing Positive Sentiments About the NGO.

Attribute	Number of women
Helpful	7
Good	5
Liked	2
No problems	2
Loved	1
Needed	1

Business Activities

Some of the women were eager to share the specifics of the work they do for WW, including the patterns that they batiked and the garments or home goods they sewed, as well as the work they do for other customers or beyond the structured production work for the NGO. For example, Regina dyed batik custom fabric for school

uniforms and Cora regularly sewed uniforms from custom fabric. (Many local schools and businesses commission custom designed fabric, batik dyed with the organization's name or logo and then sewn into uniforms. It demonstrates pride in one's affiliation with the organization and communicates the wearer's status. The NGO had produced custom batik fabric with its logo several years ago; it was used to create aprons for the quality control staff and to upholster the sofa cushions in the office-building lobby.) Producing for other customers was an important part of business for the women, but striking a balance between the commitment to WW and other revenue sources was perceived to create occasional conflicts. WW had strict expectations regarding deadlines as a result of the complicated and expensive export process.

Regina, Ruth, Mabel, and Gladys produced their own batik designs. Evelyn and Sarah sewed bags and garments, which they displayed and sold from their shops on high-traffic streets. (A storefront or workspace is often referred to as a workshop, different from the educational events that are also frequently referred to as workshops.) The other four entrepreneurs, Edith, Estelle, June, and Cora, also took custom orders from local patrons. The only woman who said she worked exclusively for WW was Doris, the same woman who was not working at all before joining the NGO.

Some women also earned extra income by teaching lessons on how to batik. For example, I personally took a batik lesson from Ruth during my first week in Kundu. Regina, Mabel, and Gladys all also taught batik to other locals and foreign visitors. Three of the four seamstresses had either (unpaid) apprentices or (paid) employees working for them and three of the seven batik dyers had hired help.

Future Business Plans and Goals

Many of the participants had strong ideas about the ways in which they would like to see their businesses progress. Estelle, the only seamstress without help, said she would like to begin taking in apprentices because “I like to tell what I learn and then what I know . . . I want to teach someone.” Cora, Gladys, Edith, Mabel, and June all wanted to grow their businesses and employ more workers. Regina, Doris, and Ruth aspired to open their own shops because, at the time of the interviews, they did not have space for a storefront. Instead, the women worked out of structures that were not conducive to business traffic.

Sarah, Regina, and June were working to increase their savings. While Regina and Sarah were putting their money back into their businesses and supporting family, June intended to use the money to change fields. She wanted to run a batik workshop with employees and apply the profits to starting her second business. She viewed her batik business as a means to support her dream of becoming a caterer, “I started with the batik tie and dye . . . but I’m developing a new plan, the catering.”

Gladys, as one of the most educated entrepreneurs, was also one of the most ambitious. She planned to grow her own business and product line to the point where she could become entirely independent from WW. She anticipated that her independence would also involve her own business website and export capabilities. I do not know how WW would react to Gladys’ plans because she specifically asked me not to share that information with WW management. No other entrepreneur, either in interviews or anecdotally, suggested a desire to develop a business that would compete with WW.

Similarly, WW staff never expressed the goal of facilitating entrepreneurs' independence.

Cora had a philanthropic vision for her business. Instead of taking on apprentices according to the traditional model (in which the women would pay for their training rather than being paid for their work), Cora wanted to establish a workshop where she would be able to take in single mothers as new apprentices and pay them immediately for their work while they are learning. At the time of the interview, she had already identified a sponsor who would help fund the initiative but had not yet begun to recruit apprentices. Cora recognized how difficult employment can be for women, and especially if “they have a baby, no husband, no work. They are learning. They have to eat.” Therefore, her idea to revise the apprenticeship model was “because they would need it.”

To summarize this section, the women entrepreneurs affiliated with WW represented a diverse group. Some were content with their current circumstances while other endeavored to grow their businesses or begin new ones. All of the women saw WW as an influencing factor on their futures and were generally positive about WW's support of their work.

Background on the Educational Programs

In the following sections, I present background information on the processes and activities that pertain specifically to the CBP, WW's educational initiative and the focus of the present study. The purpose of this section is to make explicit the context of the programs and their management. The section begins with the content of the trainings,

followed by processes through which the educational events were developed, planned and facilitated and the ways in which educational program participants were recruited and events advertised. I then describe the administrative issues associated with the CBP.

Content Overview

The educational programs developed by WW covered a wide variety of content. Interchangeably referred to as trainings and workshops (different than entrepreneur production spaces), the plans for program content far exceeded the amount of material that had already been developed. As the result of a recent planning exercise, 43 topics were identified by the NGO as necessary or useful for entrepreneurs but training materials for only six (bookkeeping, SMART goals, business indicators, costing and pricing, business planning, and international production) existed in the CBP electronic repository at the time of data collection. An additional two trainings (quality control and fair trade) were known to exist but no corresponding files were stored in the repository.

The year 2013 also marked the first time workshops had been offered that were not specific to business practices, including health workshops and one marriage workshop, addressed in greater detail later in this chapter. The consideration of additional topics was based on direct feedback from 16 women participating in three focus groups conducted by a volunteer in early summer, 2013. Topics that were important to focus group participants and their relative rankings are presented in Table 8 and are drawn directly from the report. Additionally, all focus group participants agreed that women's health was a relevant and important topic, as well as stress management and prevention of HIV/AIDS and malaria. I cannot assess the quality of the report nor

the skill with which the focus groups were conducted because the volunteer responsible left before I arrived and was therefore not available for comment. However, the report was still relevant because its contents influenced managers Margaret and Gloria's decision-making within the CBP.

Table 8. Training Topic Priorities Based on Entrepreneur Focus Groups.

Topic	Number of Women Citing Topic as Important ^a
Business Management Skills	
Costing and pricing	9
Micro finance	5
Business planning	4
How to become bankable	4
SMART Goals	3
Managing customer orders	3
Fair wage guide	3
Quality	3
Bookkeeping	2
Financial independence	2
Professional/Technical Skills	
Visual merchandising/color training	12
Internet usage	10
Design	7
Basic mathematics	6
Spreadsheets	5
Quality control	3
Word processing	3

^a*n* = 16.

It was my understanding that the organization tried to offer at least one workshop every month but that the timing and frequency of events was highly variable. During the data collection phase of this study, two trainings were offered and I observed both of them. The first was SMART Goals, presented by volunteer Tamara using preexisting

materials. The SMART Goals workshop walked participants through a series of steps to develop goals for the future and plans to meet those established goals. Goals may be personal or business related but generally emphasized saving money. In this workshop, SMART was an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-sensitive, as characteristics of high-quality goals. The second was visual merchandising, presented by volunteer Emily who had developed the materials herself as part of her internship project. The visual merchandising content was intended to convey aesthetically pleasing presentations of products in a shop with the goal of increased traffic and sales. Topics included the attractive arrangement and organization of products, creating an inviting retail space, and ways to draw and hold customer attention.

Fair trade and quality control were mandatory for all WW employees and entrepreneur affiliates prior to being assigned production orders. Aside from an annual one-on-one evaluation meeting, all other trainings and educational events were optional. During interviews, the businesswomen also mentioned their experiences with trainings on health issues, computers, bookkeeping, business management, investments, visual merchandising, and goal setting. The women agreed that the required quality control and optional bookkeeping trainings were two of the most valuable and relevant workshops. There were no negative consequences if an entrepreneur did not wish to participate in the optional trainings.

The quality control training covered the use of sewing patterns, size consistency for apparel, fabric grain lines, finishing, dye consistency, wax stamp consistency and spacing, and other similar issues. It was mandatory because the principles of quality

control were essential to creating export quality products. The producers were paid according to pre-established quality levels, thus quality control directly affected the women's income earning potential.

Bookkeeping was an introductory training. Topics included basic financial vocabulary, comparison of income and expenses, petty cash, credit, and reconciliation based on the practice of documenting and recording all transactions. The NGO advocated bookkeeping as a skill to help the entrepreneurs plan for growth or upcoming expenses, think strategically about inventory and sales, monitor cash flow, and track unpaid accounts.

The participants were particularly interested in the computer classes, which had been discontinued at the time of data collection. None of the participants disclosed ownership of a computer and, in the WW office, there were no extra or available computers. Each member of the management staff had a machine but reliability and software varied. Additionally, Internet access in the WW office was slow and unstable by Western standards.

Development, Planning, and Facilitation

While the NGO leadership understood that there were a wide variety of educational needs that could be addressed through the CBP, as evidenced by the master list of 43 potential topics, in practice, relatively few training events were offered. As previously stated, during the five-week data collection period for this study, only two workshops were scheduled and each of those was a single, stand-alone event. My understanding was that the goal was to offer events approximately once per month, with

quality control and fair trade as needed. The overall sentiment from study participants was that the NGO would like to offer more and the local women would like to learn more, but the growth in the educational programming was not being realized to the same degree as growth in the organization's economic activity.

In general, managers Margaret and Gloria were responsible for the workshops, with support from upper management as needed. Decisions about content and scheduling were made based on the expressed interests and perceived needs of the entrepreneurs and the availability of volunteers with relevant expertise. Margaret credited Gloria as the primary driving force and explained Gloria would "come to me with questions, ideas. I'll say yay or nay or did you think about this, let's plan ahead a little bit more, now this is too last-minute, it's the heat of production time..." Thus workshop planning was somewhat collaborative, with Gloria doing much of the groundwork and Margaret overseeing the process.

Many of the workshop ideas came from the women entrepreneurs and were noted for future implementation. Locals commonly chose to speak directly to Gloria about their business challenges, from which Gloria was able to determine training needs and opportunities. Margaret described, "we have a spreadsheet going of any ideas that we'd like to implement when the right person comes along or when the right time is." The "right person" generally referred to an intern or volunteer with the appropriate content expertise. My understanding was that NGO staff led the mandatory fair trade and quality control on an as-needed basis but all other events relied upon volunteers. WW staff members were generally responsible for a diverse range of tasks and typically prioritized

production issues. Leading trainings did not seem to fit into their schedules and none of them had experience facilitating educational programs.

Volunteer involvement in workshop development varied, although volunteers were cited as a driving force behind WW's ability to offer trainings. Margaret described the volunteers' skills and expertise as an important impetus for workshop topics. While it seemed appropriate for volunteers to collaborate with Gloria to deliver workshops, that interaction was often missing. Again, Margaret clarified

When there aren't volunteers around, I see Gloria bringing more ideas to the table. So she kinda backs off more when there's volunteers working on capacity building and is very much the person that would help to facilitate some sort of workshop or one-on-one. I haven't seen her initiate ... meetings with [volunteers]... That leadership and management perspective is something that really needs to be built.

The supervision of program development activities was occasionally shared but not necessarily based on mutual understanding. For example, Margaret described the work on the two training events during this study's data collection by sharing Gloria "was really involved with the SMART Goals content. Visual merchandising no, she probably thought that ... I was taking care of it." Unfortunately, the development of the visual merchandising workshop was virtually unsupervised, as will be discussed again shortly. Thus, it would likely be more accurate to classify Gloria as primarily responsible for interacting with entrepreneurs and Margaret as primarily responsible for interacting with

volunteers and interns although the process and division of tasks had never been made explicit.

Margaret shared one anecdote in which there was a problem with the workshop content. Gloria had organized a marriage workshop, with Margaret's approval:

And then I attended and it was very churchy and had excellent attendance – all the [entrepreneurs] came. It was the first time we ever went outside of the business practices workshops. And that can't happen again because it was a bit too patriarchal and, um, a little bit too much submission type of energy...

Judging from the NGO's mission statement and advocacy for women's empowerment, it is reasonable to conclude the organization's leadership would not welcome a patriarchal message even if it were couched in religious beliefs.

After the marriage workshop, upper management supported Margaret's decision to avoid that type of content moving forward, but, according to Margaret, the decision was communicated to Gloria without the reasoning behind it. The lack of a cohesive vision for the trainings and workshops was certainly an issue in Margaret's view, "I think that figuring out a very clear model of what exact workshops we can offer... is something we need."

Most relevant to the present study, the four volunteer and employee participants each had a different idea about how the trainings should ideally benefit the local participants. In particular, Margaret and Tamara believed the topics should include health and wellness as well as general business practices, considering the women's complete lives. Margaret took a nurturing, comprehensive view, while Tamara saw the

trainings as addressing deficiencies in African perspectives. Gloria and Emily had a more content-based business focus, viewing the trainings as an opportunity for locals to learn about and adapt to Western business practices and customer tastes as well as increase their knowledge about running a profitable business. Emily's American perspective was rather narrow, focused on small changes that could affect the customer traffic in a shop while Gloria, as a local, perceived Western business practices as a monumental lifetime learning goal, comparable to her own eight years of study.

During the data collection phase, I observed two workshops delivered by volunteers. The first was a SMART Goals workshop, led by Tamara and based on preexisting materials. The second was a visual merchandising workshop, developed and led by Emily. In the following sections, I will discuss each of these two events individually.

SMART Goals

As part of her volunteer assignment, Tamara was asked to revise the SMART Goals content to be appropriate for the West African cultural context and deliver the training to as many WW affiliates as possible, both in Kundu and at other WW locations. Tamara's changes to the content primarily involved revising examples to pertain to relevant goals, such as sending children to school, buying a sewing machine, or opening a shop. She had no prior experience with leading goal-setting workshops.

WW employees and volunteers perceived this training as important. Tamara valued the content of the SMART Goals workshop because she perceived goal setting was not part of the African mindset and this workshop helped entrepreneurs and

employees develop a focus for their efforts. She perceived a discussion of goals as highly valuable for the local women but that “it’s not in the culture to have goals.” As an African woman, Tamara shared that she has sacrificed a lot to gain the success she has achieved. She saw the SMART Goals workshop as an opportunity to help the women grow and views the training as “good for them.”

As part of her workshop, Tamara stated that she tried to avoid lecturing, arguing “these kind of workshops are better when you make them get involved. So they really understand it. If you just give a lecture then they’ll probably not get anything out of it.” The workshop was conducted informally, with a circle of chairs in the office-building foyer. In my observations unfortunately, Tamara did not lecture but rather read directly from the PowerPoint presentation she had developed and printed out. Due to a lack of resources, participants each received a copy of a goal-setting worksheet but not the entire presentation. At the training in which I was an observer, all participants were able to read and write.

The size of the workshop was important to Tamara. She preferred to have fewer than 10 participants at one time to be able to give each woman individual attention. The small groups were achieved by allowing participants to come in self-selected cohorts. Tamara also felt that the groups with which she had the strongest pre-existing relationships were more engaged with the workshop content. She perceived the relationships help the women feel more familiar with her and thus they are more “relaxed” and she was better able to get “them to feel more comfortable” and “to believe

in whatever they're saying," meaning that the women would be willing to share serious and meaningful goals.

With other, less familiar groups, participation was a challenge for Tamara. She struggled to get the women to articulate their genuine goals. She clarified:

If you ask them for an example, what's an example of a goal, and the one person says, um, saving 20 [monetary units] a month, all of them agree. Yes, yes, yes, yes, that's one. I think ... it's a fear of being laughed at like, I'm saying something so stupid. So if one person is able to say one thing that's correct, I'd better just stick to it. So what I would like to see is to actually get them to open up more and to, um, think about the questions and give an answer they really want to give. Not just accept what has been given.

Other challenges included a woman who did not want to participate at all, refusing to write down goals, and a woman who feigned illness in an attempt to be excused from the training. Tamara resolved both obstacles by offering individual help to them, writing for them and engaging in a private conversation. She would have liked to include more individual attention, including one-on-one visits before and after the workshop to build relationships and facilitate meaningful, personal goal writing. She felt this personal attention was particularly important for women who were less educated.

Tamara considered the workshop one of the best experiences of her work with WW. She shared, "it's fulfilling to see the joy in people when they are done with the lecture... So, I wanted to see the joy in their faces."

Visual Merchandising

According to Gloria, a number of the entrepreneurs had requested a workshop on visual merchandising. The task of developing and delivering this workshop was assigned to Emily because it aligned with the content of her university degree program and the requirements she needed to fulfill for her internship. She had spent time working with entrepreneurs individually throughout her time in Kundu but she was unable to meet with all the women who would have liked her help. The event was her very last activity before leaving Kundu; she caught a bus to the capital city just two hours after the conclusion of the workshop.

Emily's stated goal for the event was to help the entrepreneurs "have a better understanding of what's appealing to a Western customer." This understanding included "how we would find something appealing and what would draw a customer into their store" and "keep them interested." She elaborated, "there's a lot of times you go into someone's shop and you're just like I don't want to, I want to look through all this, so I'm gonna go."

Unfortunately, the timing of the event so late in Emily's stay and so close to her departure affected the workshop's quality, which was acknowledged by Emily herself and created frustration for Margaret, who attempted to oversee the event. The workshop was not part of Emily's original volunteer assignment, "it said in my internship assignment through WW that I would meet one-on-one and help some of the [women] in their shops. Um, but the workshop is kind of just something that we threw together at the last minute." She conceded the issue, wishing

I could've spent more time on it. Merchandising is ... my focus in school so I, I think I should have spent more time on the workshop because it had, it like correlates with what I'm studying and I think it could've, if I was able to spend more time on it, it could have been even more beneficial to the women.

During the workshop, Emily was concerned about “keeping their attention and keeping them engaged in the workshop,” and offered the reason “it's not necessarily, you know, the most riveting information.” Overall though, Emily did think the workshop “went OK” and that “with all the challenges that went with trying to plan it last minute it went as well as it could have gone.”

Emily had difficulty preparing for the workshop, independent of the time constraints. Prior to developing the workshop, Emily had not had the opportunity to sit in on any other training events and felt she did not fully understand what to expect. Because this workshop would be new, there was no existing material from which she could build. As part of her preparation she conducted a needs assessment by visiting four or five entrepreneurs who run businesses of varying success levels. She did not feel that she was able to get the information she needed to prepare effectively for the event.

Recruitment, Advertising, and Attendance

NGO employees and volunteers agreed Gloria had full responsibility for recruiting and advertising events to the entrepreneurs. The method or strategy of recruitment and advertising, however, remained unclear. Gloria conducted all of her work by telephone, calling the entrepreneurs and inviting them personally. The choice of which women she called and her selection strategies were ambiguous even after the

interviews and data analysis. There were no fliers or posted notices. This impromptu strategy also enabled a lack of advance planning. For example, when Emily's visual merchandising workshop was scheduled, potential learners were only notified one week in advance and consequently attendance was rather poor. Margaret attributed the low numbers to learner fatigue but Emily said there were no preexisting workshop materials so it seems unlikely that the topic had been offered before. Thus fatigue seems unlikely and the short notice through means that make it easy to forget the date and time seems the only feasible explanation.

Margaret, Emily, and Tamara each speculated on the recruitment policies, indicating that these study participants did not have a clear understanding of Gloria's process. Margaret, Gloria's peer, acknowledged, "everything is so different I think, workshop to workshop" and "I don't know what kind of advertising is done." The process was also ambiguous for the volunteers leading workshops, Emily and Tamara. For example, when asked about Gloria's recruitment for workshops, Tamara said "I think she just picked them randomly and based on, I think, their participation in other things and I think their commitment to [WW]." Tamara went on to conjecture that women who do not complain as much get invited to more workshops but also conceded that Gloria had a good understanding of the women's needs and that the opportunity for a woman to benefit from the workshop influenced whether she would be invited.

Gloria's description of her recruitment and advertising strategy included two processes, one of which was an older method, in which every entrepreneur would be invited, and a newer, more targeted method in which invitations were based on

expressed interest or perceived needs. She began by explaining, “for the workshops, we look at the entire women in the network. Then we call them to come for the workshop.” She then went on to indicate that calling everyone was no longer the policy and “this year that the training has changed a little bit” and for the visual merchandising workshop, “we only called a handful, few women to come.” Gloria chose to invite only those entrepreneurs who already owned a shop and who had expressed interest. She was comfortable in her decision to invite those “who have expressed interest and who need it, because if you have a store, but if you don’t express the interest of any training, there is no way we will be able to add you to the training.” With regards to the visual merchandising workshop in particular, although only five women attended, Gloria had planned for 10 women based on her phone conversations. Of the five who agreed to come but did not, Gloria kept a record of their interest and will create another opportunity to attend “when there’s another volunteer who come around, and the person’s interested in offering a merchandising workshop.” Gloria indicated that the present recruitment strategy might not be the most effective, citing the five workshop attendees as “unusual” in that it was so few, and suggesting “we are trying to go back to the original.”

Unfortunately, the information about attendance was not well communicated to the other employees and volunteers. For example, the day before the event, Emily had no idea who or even how many women would be attending her workshop. In particular, Emily did not know the business status of the women (e.g., women who already have a shop versus women who would like to have a shop, women who are already successful

and want to grow versus women who need help getting started) and so did not have the opportunity to adapt her presentation to meet specific needs.

Tamara's SMART Goals workshop was slightly different because it was geared towards full-time, on-site employees (rather than entrepreneurs) who were required to participate. In that workshop, employees organized themselves into small groups of four to six and participated together. The decision to let them choose their own small groups was based on feedback a volunteer had gotten from focus groups earlier in the summer of 2013. Tamara felt that organization strategy was successful for her workshops.

In general, it appeared that attendance at WW's training events has attenuated over time. Margaret, in reference to Emily's visual merchandising workshop, said "only five attended. I think if you looked at our attendance from five years ago, it would have been a different number, certainly." She went on to speculate about reasons why attendance was so low, including the possibility that some women had already taken the workshop and did not need to do so again, workshop fatigue, or insufficient notice that the training had been scheduled. Some of Margaret's concerns were echoed in the comments from entrepreneurs.

Administration

Administrative challenges were a consistent issue for the NGO and contributed to the aforementioned issues with the trainings. Margaret referred to WW as a "vertical company," a term she used to describe the way production, wholesale distribution, and retail sales were all handled directly by WW as opposed to contracting out support services. The result was an organization with relatively few employees who each filled

multiple diverse roles. For example, one of the designers in the American office also worked as a customer service agent, two very different tasks. One of the founders and executive co-directors, based in the country's capital city, also spent her time conducting menial timing exercises at a production facility. Permanent employees with managerial or leadership responsibilities appeared to be spread very thin and were responsible for tasks that, in other organizations, would likely be delegated or assigned to subordinates.

For these reasons, volunteer efforts were particularly crucial to WW. Margaret described the need for independent volunteers this way, “we really empower people, incoming volunteers, to run and just go with it because there's so much stuff that's urgent to just keep us afloat on this end.” Similarly, as the volunteer coordinator, volunteer fees covered a large part of Margaret's salary, a fact she shares as soon as possible with new arrivals to Kundu. Unfortunately, as Margaret lamented, “Americans have that ‘I must do do do do’ mentality [but an] observation period is fundamental. How do you do that when [a volunteer is] here for three weeks?” So, the NGO was dependent on volunteers but, for volunteers to be truly effective, they needed time to observe and get settled. With most volunteers working for only short periods, some as little as three weeks, the necessary time did not exist.

The same personnel issues and limited time frames existed for full-time permanent employees as well. While Margaret would have liked to see permanent employees mentor volunteers more fully, she asked, “how do you do that when, you know, the average, our longest term international employee was three years?” referring to a consistent challenge WW faces regarding the high turnover rate of employees. In

essence, short volunteer stays, some as brief as three weeks, combined with inexperienced management on site in Kundu, no one having been employed for more than three years, created a office culture that operated with a constant sense of urgency but without the expertise and insight only developed over time.

The tension between WW's responsibility to mentor volunteers and interns, and the relative inexperience of employees weighed on Margaret, "I think one of my biggest challenges is to feel a lot of self doubt because I'm learning so much but I'm also feeling like I'm a teacher... Not really knowing how I'm mentoring a lot of my colleagues has been a challenge." Margaret's mentoring and teaching responsibility included business practices, like WW's fair trade practices and supervising volunteer projects, but also more practical matters, like appropriate behavior within the local context and how to get tested for malaria, all of which I observed firsthand. She elaborated "volunteers will come and they're asking some really great questions about [WW] and I have no idea. And I'm their main source to get those questions answered... That's been a bit of a challenge to just confidently and comfortably say 'I don't know.'"

Regarding administrative priorities, Margaret feared the organization had deemphasized the CBP as it had grown and evolved over time. She described her conception of the CBP as the "means to increase the capacity of [the entrepreneurs'] independent business which also might help increase the orders that they take from [WW]... the fundamental way that we help our women achieve prosperity, whatever that is to them. To us, it would be health, financial independence, and, um, happiness." She stated

My thoughts on the capacity building program is that's what we used to be. When [the founders] first came here, capacity building is, was a huge part of [WW].... Um, and fast forward to 10 years later and I think its become, its come to a point where its really challenging to live between that non-profit, I want to help everybody one-on-one, to we need to up our production and have a for-profit business model. And I think it's caught kind of in between there. Uh, it's something that everybody is extremely passionate about but it seems to be a part of our program that has, it changes hands a bit.

While Margaret's key responsibility was to support the volunteers, she also had substantial responsibility for the CBP. As part of her effort to revitalize the CBP, Margaret envisioned Gloria, as a local and the Kundu office and quality control manager, taking a larger role in the program, as supported by Margaret and upper management, and disseminating the trainings and workshops to other WW locations over time.

A lack of continuity in management was an additional challenge for the CBP. The lead manager at the Kundu office passed away unexpectedly in early 2013 while traveling. Her laptop, containing the majority of her WW files and data, was delivered to her family in Canada and WW made the decision not to pursue its retrieval. As a result, the current staff members were virtually starting from scratch to regenerate plans and data for the CBP. Margaret described the loss to the CBP in this way: “[the deceased] was here for 3 years so she knew, she knew everyone who should be or who didn't need to attend or, you know, was waiting for the right volunteer to come to work with

somebody,” and “[the deceased] was very passionate about this piece and she was, I think that she had a vision for Kundu that maybe was just in her head, maybe it was transferred to other people, but I haven’t received that vision.” At the time of the study, all employees accepted that information as lost.

Margaret transferred to her current role from her position as the store manager in the capital city, a process she described as “a huge wave of craziness” and a “whirlwind.” Because her primary responsibility at the time of the study was the volunteer program and many volunteers worked on the CBP, she had naturally stepped into a leadership role on the CBP with minimal guidance, but she admitted, “I’m learning everything as the volunteers are learning.” Similarly Gloria’s role was unclear to Margaret. The intention and understanding was that Gloria would be mentored to oversee the CBP under the guidance of the deceased woman, which of course did not happen. According to Margaret, “everyone says that [the CBP is the] core of our organization but when it comes to one consistent stable person to oversee it, we don’t have that.”

While the trainings and workshops appear to have suffered in the leadership transition, Margaret emphasized the value and impact of other activities, such as one-on-one interactions between the local entrepreneurs and volunteers. Some volunteers in the summer of 2013 worked directly with the local women under Margaret’s supervision, as opposed to leading workshops or trainings like Tamara and Emily did.

Communication barriers existed within the pool of employees and volunteers and hindered CBP efforts. Tamara and Emily were both frustrated at times that their

volunteer responsibilities were unclear, undefined, or unstable. Margaret, relatively new to the Kundu office, felt she had never received a proper briefing from management regarding her new role and responsibilities (partly an unfortunate consequence of her predecessor's untimely death). Communication with the main office in the U.S. was difficult due to time zone differences and unstable Internet connectivity. In sum, it was very rarely the case that all contributors to a given task had a shared understanding of that task.

Most relevant to the present study, the four volunteer and employee participants each had a different idea about how the trainings should ideally benefit the local participants. In particular, Margaret and Tamara believed the topics should include health and wellness as well as general business practices, considering the women's complete lives. Margaret, an American, took a nurturing, comprehensive view, while Tamara, as a West African, saw the trainings as addressing deficiencies in African perspectives. Gloria and Emily had a more content-based business focus, viewing the trainings as an opportunity for locals to learn about and adapt to Western business practices and customer tastes as well as increase their knowledge about running a profitable business. Emily's American perspective was rather narrow, focused on small changes that could affect the customer traffic in a shop while Gloria, as a local, perceived Western business practices as a monumental lifetime learning goal, comparable to her own eight years of study. It is worth noting that Gloria and Tamara, both Africans, shared the perception that Africans lacked business and planning practices, with Tamara suggesting, "it's not in the culture to have goals." The different

perceptions, instead of bringing richness to the discussion about the CBP, created a lack of focus that undermined the success of the trainings and workshops.

CBP Summary

To summarize this section, the CBP covered a broad range of educational activities intended to address the WFTO's capacity building principles and help the entrepreneurs build their business skills as a means to empower them economically and socially. The presentation of workshops and training events relied heavily on volunteer expertise and availability and, although the events were generally perceived as beneficial, a number of challenges existed that impeded the CBP's success. Organizational and administrative structures were not conducive to strategic or sustainable programmatic efforts.

Gender and Work

In this section, I present the first theme that emerged from the data analysis. All of the participants acknowledged that issues of gender as related to employment and economic stability were significant for the women entrepreneurs. The volunteer Emily summed it up best when she said, "I don't know if you've met the ladies here, but they are strong women and they run this place." And the local women did, as far as a WW volunteer or casual tourist in the marketplace could have seen, but what was difficult to see was what happened at a deeper, less visible level. The employees and volunteers in this study recognized that, although women did appear to run the place, as Emily said, ultimately they needed more support from organizations like WW than men did. In general, the women entrepreneurs understood that they were at the heart of WW's

mission and vision and believed that WW was doing the right thing by focusing on employing and creating economic opportunity for women. Although WW included some men as entrepreneurs and direct employees, the vast majority of affiliates at all levels were women.

Although WW began specifically for the purpose of supporting women, volunteer manager Margaret believed much of WW's work was grounded in batik and sewing because they were occupations primarily held by women. She defended her view this way: "We don't want to knock any men down and say we don't want to work with you. We're only allowing women. Because that's not feminist at all...but the textile industry is where we are." While she acknowledged that batik and sewing were not exclusive to women, she did not personally know any men who ran batik or sewing businesses. Margaret had heard that some entrepreneurs employed men to handle the more physical, labor-intensive tasks.

The reasons for supporting WW's focus on women did vary among the entrepreneurs. While, again, batik and sewing were not necessarily considered exclusively women's work in West Africa, they were trades predominantly by occupied by women. Some entrepreneurs believed that WW's focus on women was related to the nature of the work, that women are better suited for batik and sewing than men. For example, Evelyn stated, "you know women, we are more, eh, hardworking" and Sarah affirmed, "that men don't have patience like women," although both women acknowledged that there are men who sew and men who batik. The strict quality controls at WW were also considered a potential issue for men. Sarah said, "I know the way WW

have quality control room, eh, the men can't stand the pressure about it." Other women wondered why WW was no longer exclusively women. In this context, Cora pondered, "of late I've seen some men doing some mats or articles for them. I don't know why we have forgotten [WW is supposed to be] only women. That one I don't know."

Additional reasons for investing in and creating opportunity for women included the greater burden of responsibility women carry, as opposed to men, the unreliability of men, and, simply, in difficult economic times many households need two incomes. For example, Mabel argued, "women have more problem[s]" and that a man, "even if he has, he will hide money from you and give it to [his] girlfriend." Regina concurred, "because you are in the house, everything is on you" and "if the man don't have money, you have to provide." Similarly, June reasoned "its good to work...as a lady, so that if your husband give you ten [monetary units], you can support with a five. It makes [it] easier." Doris said that women "need help so that we can help our husbands." Evelyn was clear about the burdens and problems of being a responsible women and the way WW supports women; "because you don't want to see your children wayward. You don't want to see your children out of school. That if you come home and you have nothing for the children to eat...Because of the house, school, hospital, everything, anything. That is why [WW] choose to help the women." Gladys summarized the sentiment well when she said, "if you help women, you will help the children and everything in the family will be OK."

Thus, the women entrepreneurs had varied and often conflicted opinions on men's participation, from the perception that men could not do the work, to the idea that

regardless of whether men can do the work, WW should be an organization exclusively for women. No entrepreneur said she had been consulted about the decision to include men. It is then likely that including men was a purely administrative decision, a trend that will be addressed further in the section of this chapter regarding the NGO's communication policies.

Among the employees and volunteers, WW's focus on women was unanimously tied to the heavy responsibility local women have for their families. Gloria shared that it was important to focus on women because women give birth and therefore have a greater impact on others. According to Gloria, women were also more likely to use their economic resources for education, a benefit to the women, their families and the country, sharing the adage "if you invest in one woman, you've invested in the whole nation." Tamara's view was women work because they want to help their husbands and send their children to good schools. Margaret argued

All the stats show that a women, a woman is significantly likely to give the money towards her children's education or to some sort of cause compared to a man who is more likely to buy a TV or a suit or a car, or sit on it. So we're really passionate about keeping it to women.

Emily expressed a similar understanding, "I've met so many [women] who are single mothers and they support not only themselves and their children but they support, you know, their sister and their mother and their sister's children. And they're all from one salary."

The relationship between the women entrepreneurs and their husbands was the source of some speculation for the employees and volunteers. Tamara, a volunteer from a different West African nation, was the only participant to express a negative opinion of women, judging that

Women just like to be laid back in Africa, just believe once they get married to a rich man, everything is, everything is settled. They don't need to fight, they don't need to improve on themselves. They just take care of the children. That's just it and so you see that kind of thing happening from generation to generation.

Everyone is just laid back. And I think the problem is because there's actually no room for this kind of empowerment. They've not seen the reason why they should improve on their lives. They've not seen the reason why they need to be strong enough to help the so-called rich husband.

When pressed, Tamara acknowledged that many of the entrepreneurs working for WW were not married to rich men but were concerned about their children's education and therefore working to pay school fees.

Margaret speculated the women entrepreneurs' economic productivity had the potential to cause resentment from husbands but did not have any first-hand knowledge on the subject. She shared, "most of the women we work with are the breadwinners of their family" and acknowledges "they're working their butts off every, everyday but then that doesn't mean that any of their other duties at home are gonna be let go." As a consequence, she conjectured that the husbands may be "insecure that their wife is making more than them" or "I could see also some of them really loving it and enjoying

it.” None of the women entrepreneurs shared information about spousal relationships or the balance of responsibilities at home. Although comments about the unreliability of men implied that there were some husbands who did not live up to the women’s expectations, Margaret’s speculation remained unresolved.

The women entrepreneurs in general held a strong sense of responsibility for the well being of their children and families. As mentioned previously, some participants, like Mabel and Regina, were key providers for their sisters’ children or extended family members. Other women, like Sarah, were themselves primarily responsible for such family obligations as paying school fees. For these reasons, and as supported by participant comments, WW’s focus on employing and creating economic opportunity for women appeared to be a component of its mission and vision that the entrepreneurs understood and valued highly.

Similarly, the employee and volunteer participants all appreciated the idea of women’s empowerment through economic development. Emily saw economic self-sufficiency as a key outcome of WW’s programs, while Tamara viewed a more comprehensive picture of the women’s lives as the target of the trainings. Margaret regarded the NGO as a champion for the women, encouraging and supporting business activities women would undertake regardless but perhaps less successfully.

Balancing Economic and Personal Empowerment

The second theme pertains to the tension between the goals of economic and personal empowerment for the women entrepreneurs based on the WW’s production and CBP efforts. Throughout this section, the difficulty of balancing empowerment based on

economic stability and empowerment based on education for personal efficacy and autonomy is visible in the way the two goals interact, support, or undermine one another. Many women entrepreneurs seemed to feel a sense of ownership over their WW products and introduced themselves by the items they were assigned to produce. There was an element of status attached to specific products based on the skill each required. For example, a seamstress who produced women's dresses with complex shaping would be more highly regarded than a seamstress who sewed tablecloths. For the women entrepreneurs, personal success and economic success were inextricably intertwined.

Entrepreneurs' Achievements Based on NGO Work and Income

Many of the participants mentioned during the interview the goals they had achieved and ways in which they used their earnings from WW work. In general, working with WW created the opportunity for greater income and was the primary advantage. While business success was undoubtedly important, the income from WW work enabled many women were able to work towards personal goals as well. Priorities for the women included paying school fees, covering medical expenses and hospital bills, and taking good care of children, family, and their households. As a result, many women seemed to feel their lives were more stable and their status increased.

Sarah and Gladys were both very clear about the importance of their children's education and that the income generated from WW orders was primarily used to cover school fees. Gladys had two children, one of whom was studying at a university, and she was able to cover their fees in full through her work for WW. Sarah was very proud of her two children and her own accomplishment of educating them "because some of their

mates were not able to go as far as I have tried or helped them to be,” meaning that she had done more for her children than their friends’ families had been able to do. She said, “I could not have been able to educate these children to this level if I’m only depending on my own business.” She hoped to be able to send them to a university eventually through her work for WW. As a result of working with WW, Sarah believed she was happier, healthier, and under less stress. Thus, in terms of the entrepreneur’s perception of the benefits of working with WW, both economic and social outcomes were visible.

Key Business Practices

Four facets of WW business practices, (a) export of local goods abroad, (b) fair trade, (c) quality control standards, and (d) consistent work and prompt payment, were identified by participants as particularly significant in helping local entrepreneurs achieve economic stability and growth.

Exports

First, manager Gloria saw the export market as the single most important contribution of WW to the women entrepreneurs. She explained that the local market was saturated with batik cloth and sewn items. For the local women to earn good incomes, their work needed to be sold elsewhere. Margaret concurred, “our mission is job creation. So to do that happens by finding a larger market outside of [this country] with [the women’s] finished goods.” Tamara saw the exports as giving the local women a sense of their own value and importance on a larger scale. Margaret viewed exports as a source of pride for the local women but also worried that the exports created a feeling of detachment, “as we get bigger and bigger, I could see where someone would feel a

lesser connection... So OK, August 16, you know. I have another shipment due. Like, I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming... It becomes a bit more robotic.”

Despite Margaret's concerns, the export of WW products was also important to the women entrepreneurs. Participants considered it a source of pride and appreciated the visibility exports brought to them, their work, and their country. Sarah's view was that “if you work for [WW], you should always be proud because it means you are producing quality work which is going outside [the country]” and found that it boosted her morale. She continued, “it's a plus! I've never gone outside [the country], but I'm outside [the country]!” Similarly, Cora considered herself an “international woman, because I sell abroad!” June appreciated the balance exports brought to international trade because “we buy from them... At least we are able to expose our things.”

Fair Trade

Second, the fair trade model under which the organization operated was essential to WW's economic impact for the local entrepreneurs. As aligned with the World Fair Trade Organization's (WFTO) 10 Principles of Fair Trade (2013), the prices at which the goods were sold abroad, the percentage of the retail price paid to the producers, and good working conditions, among other practices, all contributed to a business model that supported and fairly compensated the artisans.

As a volunteer, Emily viewed the fair trade operations as one of the key reasons she sought to work with WW. She described the apparel industry as very superficial and wanted to volunteer with an organization operating outside that paradigm. She suggested, “people like to know that they're helping someone. And knowing that they're

not just buying something that was made by a small Chinese child in a sweatshop. They're buying something that's supporting an entire community and an entire country, really." Margaret also valued the fair trade practices, citing the statistic that 37% of the retail price of a WW item goes to the women who produced it, in comparison to the apparel industry estimate that only 0.5% to 4% of the final retail price of an item produced in the developing world goes to the garment worker (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2014). Of the remaining retail price, 50% goes to the seller, presumably leaving 13% to cover WW overhead, export costs, and materials.

Statistics about pay rates among other fair trade organizations or the fair trade community as a whole are generally vague or missing. For example, in response to a question about the percent of sale price paid to artisans in general, the Fair Trade Resource Network publishes only a brief, politicized statement:

Given the different regions of the world, production circumstances, and Fair Trade intermediaries involved in delivering a product to the consumer, it is difficult to say with certainty. What is certain is that Fair Traders are obliged not to exploit producers and to guarantee that the trading relationship is a true partnership, allowing all to make a fair profit margins (2014, "More About Fair Trade," para. 7).

A 2010 version of the same site indicated 15% of the retail price, on average, is paid producers based on informal polling of fair trade organizations from all product types (Fair Trade Resource Network, 2010, "The impact for producers," para. 2). Efforts to

find more specific reports were unsuccessful since published fair trade data tends to focus primarily on sales volume and market shares.

In addition to the perceived value of fair trade to the local women, Margaret believed that WW was successful because its products appealed to consumers who valued fair trade but also those who simply liked the products. She acknowledged that sympathetic buyers do exist but dismissed the idea that fair trade is the only reason WW products are successful. In response to my question about the philanthropic marketing message some fair trade organizations use to elicit sympathetic purchases, as described in Chapter I of this study, Margaret laughed, “you’re not saving a life... There’s no life to save that way. It drives me nuts when I see things like that.”

Quality Control

Third, although the international export market and fair trade standards combined to create economic opportunities for the local entrepreneurs, without quality products to sell, very little else would matter. Manager Margaret argued that the rigorous quality control standards were essential to the success of WW products in Western markets and elaborated,

I think more retailers are taking on [WW] who don’t really care so much [about fair trade], they just like the product. Which is awesome, I love it, but they’re not going to be as understanding. So quality control is huge because that also affects where we can source our products. So we have to import our zippers and some buttons, and [monitor] dye consistencies.

In support of Margaret's statement, when I was leaving to travel to West Africa for data collection, WW asked me to carry a suitcase for them. The suitcase contained small plastic bags for packaging jewelry items and a bundle of high-quality zippers, neither of which were available locally, as well as products (mostly beaded necklaces) that did not meet the quality control standards and were being returned to the producers for fixing.

The quality control standards were also in opposition to some of the characteristics of hand-made goods. Margaret described the challenge this way:

From quality control, it's a really difficult concept to understand. And I didn't really think about it this way till I came and had to deal with it. But this is a beautiful piece of batik, why can't I export it? Because there's this small, you know, [blemish]. Its perfect! But our consumers have an entirely different set of expectations. So it's very much this learning process [for locals].

Gladys and June, both batik dyers, were the only two women who expressed frustration about the quality control. June found the standards to be oppressive and argued, "we are doing a handmade thing. It's not a machine." Gladys explained, as part of the dye process, "you can see that if you are dyeing and don't roll it well, some places are not, that place should be whiter. The color will be lighter." She continued, "when you are making it to sell for outsider, you don't normally mind it, patches and these things. But is true [WW], I am very, I am very curious about patches. I really like patches to be in my fabrics when I produce and all that." Although Gladys was the only women to bring up the aesthetic value of imperfections, she was also the only batik dyer with design training, as opposed to technical training. Of course, such imperfections are not

acceptable under WW's export quality control standards and unevenly dyed cloth (as well as other items not up to standard) would be compensated at a lower rate.

Although the quality control standards were a distinctly Western idea, the employees and volunteers did not feel that WW was trying to force Western business expectations on the entrepreneurs. Instead, the employees and volunteers perceived the quality control standards were providing a benefit to the entrepreneurs regarding their business with local clients as well as WW. Tamara and Emily hoped that the entrepreneurs applied the rigor to their own independent work and used that increased quality as a selling point within the local market. Tamara expected WW's quality control "actually will make them stand out with their personal business and so, because if I have a tailor that sews for [WW], I'm sure my, I will expect my dress to be perfect" and Emily agreed "they're gonna have higher quality garments and apparel that they're selling in their shops."

Five of the women entrepreneurs mentioned the benefit of the tight quality control standards at WW compared to their other work. Regina, Edith, and Evelyn all said they were producing better quality garments as a result of learning to meet WW's standards. Evelyn had seen the quality work she did for WW translate to her own products, resulting in better sales at her shop and increased business from white tourists. Cora felt her work had improved since joining WW, sharing the quality control standards have "even helped my own confidence because you know you are doing this it will be perfect. And so it has boost my confidence." WW was Doris's only client but she said she always strived to meet the export quality standards.

Consistent Work and Prompt Payment

Last, the consistent work and prompt payment WW provided, as aligned with the WFTO principles, was a top priority for the entrepreneurs, explicitly mentioned by four of the batik dyers. Since joining WW, Ruth and Mabel had the opportunity to begin working every day whereas before they could not, due to an inability to afford raw materials such as fabric and dye. In addition to placing large orders with the artisans, WW also provided the fabric, the most expensive resource, for all batik and sewing orders. While the women were given color recipes, dyers were responsible for providing their own dyes. Similarly, seamstresses were given patterns but were expected to provide their own thread. Mabel believed that if she continued working with the organization, she would “get much fabric and do more work.” Edith appreciated the large and frequent orders she received from WW and June expressed it this way: “It’s the orders that make us laugh!”

Six of the 11 women considered prompt, lump-sum payment for completed work a major advantage of working for WW, a policy aligned with the WFTO’s principles (2013). In contrast to WW, several women described the problem with working for local customers as a difficulty with income that trickled in over time or payments that must be chased down from the person purchasing the completed goods. Mabel detailed the incremental sales this way: “when I do mine and sell it there is someone will buy it two yard[s], some will buy four yard[s], six yard[s]. The money will not be much.” June had problems collecting money for large orders even though she was doing a lot of business:

Oh, it was booming! But just I, um, I run at a loss because when I finish doing the batik in bulk, when they buy it, the other people buy it, they don't pay it all. They give it, if it were to be 50 [monetary units] this, they will pay it 20, 20, ten. Before you get the 50. By the time you would collect the money to this place, you realize you have spent some, depending on them. So, they would, they spoil our money.

Thus the prompt, lump sum payments made an important difference for the economic stability of the women's businesses and were seen as the top priority by the entrepreneurs.

Among these facets of WW business practices, the emphasis clearly falls on the economic advantages of working for WW. The local entrepreneurs and employees seemed to agree that income generation through fair trade practices, as opposed to the educational programs, was the motivating force behind the organization and its programs.

Production Challenges

Despite, or perhaps because of, the high value placed on the economic success, a variety of complaints and concerns surfaced during the participant interviews that pertained primarily to production issues. For example, several local women wanted to be paid more for finished goods, citing inflation and the rising cost of living but WW's published statistics are evidence of the organization's commitment to fair trade. As presented by WW, producers earned on average 75% more than the national minimum wage, approximately 30% more than their industry peers, worked 40-hour workweeks,

had access to paid maternity leave, health care and retirement funds; only 8% of craft industry workers have access to similar benefits. While the findings of the present study can neither confirm nor dispute the published statistics, I observed that WW's employees, volunteers, and affiliates all valued, respected, and upheld the principles of fair trade.

Other production issues surfaced as well, including the time between the order being placed by WW and delivery deadlines, quality control standards, the costs for raw materials and replacing worn equipment, difficulties balancing WW work with other orders, and worry for their own employees and apprentices. One of the complications for women's businesses was the negotiation between WW work and work for others. Several women mentioned that the negotiation of deadlines could be complex when dealing with the tight export schedules and the expectations and needs of local customers.

At the time of the study, WW was also experiencing an unresolved production bottleneck. As shared by WW management during meetings I observed, goods were in high demand in the United States – a number of popular products were continually on backorder – and yet the local entrepreneurs were complaining that the work from WW had decreased in volume and become inconsistent. The capacity to produce and the demand for the products were both strong but, for some unknown reason, the production process was unable to reach its full potential to satisfy consumers and producers. At the time of my visit, WW management realized that there would be approximately \$50,000 less paid to entrepreneurs in 2013 than in 2012, and consequently decreased sales due to

a lack of product availability. They did not yet have any strategy in place to deal with the decrease. The entrepreneurs had noticed the reduction in producer payments and connected that decline to two intertwined topics, order distribution and the future prospects and growth of WW in Kundu.

Order Distribution

Six of the entrepreneurs expressed frustration about the batik or sewing orders from WW. Two issues, order volume and product assignments, were the cause of the frustrations. Several of the women shared concern over the diminishing volume of orders and were worried that they were beginning to get less work from WW. June explained “as for last three years, I was fine with the WW because I was working, I was having the orders. But this year... Its no.” She continued, “we normally change our catalogues. When the catalog came, when I went through it, there was only one design I was there. Cityscape. So that has made me think in a way.” June felt she had a difficult year with her batik business because the work from WW had decreased. Doris agreed that the work has diminished.

Mabel’s concerns matched June’s, in that she would like more work and had repeatedly asked WW production management for it. As part of the assignments process, a batik or seamstress is asked to produce a sample of the product and then, if the sample conforms to the quality control guidelines, the producer will be assigned an order. Mabel complained

I have done [many] samples, so I pleaded with [the manager] to give me the work to do. Because when you do the sample, they don't give it to you. Always

doing sample sample sample. So I pleaded with him that this time he should let me do the sample that I have made.

Mabel was a good batik dyer and so it was unlikely that the lack of product assignments was due to low quality work.

The ways in which particular products were assigned to entrepreneurs was also a topic of concern. The women entrepreneurs seemed to have a strong sense of ownership over specific products and felt threatened and disrespected when those products were assigned to others. Edith explained that, in the past,

If [the manager] is going to give your product to somebody she will call you – Edith, can you make the order? So then oh maybe its better to give some to somebody... But now it is not like that. They just take it and give it to someone.

Evelyn's perspective was similar to Edith's and shared

We are just pleading with them that I have the girl's reversible dresses, I have the women's sundresses... It's mine. So if you have employed someone to come and then eh, get some work to do so that the person also can have something to do herself. You have to, um, give her another pattern for her to do it.

Evelyn had first-hand experience with products for which she believed she was exclusively responsible being assigned to other, newer WW affiliates. She lamented

You are sewing, you are sewing, you are doing your work but you don't know anything but you will see that they have just, um, taken the one of them out from you. They have taken it and given it to someone else.

Because Evelyn was one of the founding entrepreneurs of WW, her sense of ownership and attachment seemed natural, and her concern was a logical consequence of the perceived changes in WW production assignment practices.

Cora was the only entrepreneur to advocate for training multiple producers on each product. She understood the others' fear of losing products and work, and justified, "some think if everybody learns it, they will not have the work. And so they are protecting their interests." In her opinion, sharing products was a smarter approach because if someone fell ill or was delayed, other entrepreneurs could help, thus ensuring deadlines would be met and WW would continue to be successful.

It is likely that much of the trouble regarding order distribution was consequence of the structural and production challenges WW had been experiencing, discussed previously. The sense of product ownership connected to the strong connection the women entrepreneurs felt with WW, similar to the women's outrage over the use of the word vendor, addressed in an upcoming section.

Growth and Future Prospects in Kundu

Building off the questions about orders and the distribution of work, concern over the ownership of products was also related to the fears many women had regarding the stability and long-term prospects of WW. Sarah was the first to express apprehension, telling me quietly "you know that, this place, they say, they say this place is dropping." Regina hinted at a similar future, "maybe some time will come, maybe [WW] are not there" and June shared that "this is a tough year." Evelyn believed she had

less work “because the things have got down.” Again, the reduction in work volume may have been related to the aforementioned production challenges.

The entrepreneurs attributed part of the reduction in work volume to the growth of WW and the hiring of many additional batikers and seamstresses. While WW started with just six women ten years ago, at the time of data collection, there were over 50 women entrepreneurs working for WW in Kundu. Additionally, Doris explained, “at first it was good but now, because they have a lot of women, they have to share so you don’t get what you were supposed to get.” Ruth agreed, wondering if WW had moved away from its original intentions to assist individual entrepreneurs, and fearing “now when there are plenty [of batikers], I don’t think [WW] will help.”

Some women were afraid the production work was leaving Kundu to be redirected to the NGO’s facilities in other parts of the country (recall that WW operates throughout the country). WW had opened batik and sewing facilities in other cities and the Kundu entrepreneurs correlated that expansion with reduced amounts of work and smaller orders. Evelyn was clear “they have to expand it but not to forget the [Kundu]. Not to get all our things to the [capital city] people.” Cora said, “you can sit back and see that the work is gradually going away from Kundu” but reserved her final judgment. In preparation for a recent export shipment, she described

It’s about a week ago and they were doing shipment and I saw a lot things being done. Batik, dresses, a lot. Packing bags shipment. I said Ah! But we are still working! The [WW] are still here! ...So I said ah, maybe we are safe. They haven’t taken it away from us. Yet.

So, while the women entrepreneurs were concerned, and perhaps rightfully so, about their future with WW, they remained cautiously optimistic. Without exception, they relied heavily on orders from WW to maintain stable businesses, citing the consistent and prompt payment as the number one reason for working with WW, and therefore prioritized that economic stability over WW's education and training opportunities.

Importance and Perceived Benefits of the Trainings

All 11 of the entrepreneurs participating in this study had attended WW educational programs but only one woman, Estelle, mentioned the training events as a motivation for her original decision to join WW. In general, the women offered mixed reviews. Nine of the 11 considered the trainings useful but only seven women said they were using the information they had learned. Eight women would like more training or follow-up on previous topics.

Interview conversations with the entrepreneurs about the training and workshops largely conformed to a consistent pattern. Each woman would articulate a list of the trainings in which she participated, followed by (a) an acknowledgement of the importance of the training and related content or business practices, (b) an admission that she is not using what she had supposedly learned, and (c) a request for more training or assistance so that she can begin to implement the content in her own business.

Expressing discontent, Cora, an award-winning seamstress, and Evelyn, a founding member, felt that they had already attended a large number of training events and were experiencing feelings of ennui. Cora did not feel she was gaining as much from the workshops as she should have and lamented, "you try one or two and you stop

going.” Evelyn seemed tired, commenting that “we have attend and attend and attend,” and “the workshops are so many but we haven’t achieved anything of them.”

Many entrepreneur participants were clear that they saw the value in the workshops and trainings. Of the positive responses, Mabel was eager to learn at every opportunity, requesting, “please, if you have something, train me... If you have something to share with me, I would be glad.” Similarly, Estelle said she would appreciate the opportunity to attend more workshops. Regina liked the trainings and felt she had learned a lot. She said she would continue attending “any workshop that they do. I go because I’m going to learn something from it.” Sarah agreed, enthusiastically declaring, “I always come” and that the topics “are very appropriate.”

Although she seemed tired of them, Cora still called the workshops “excellent.” In regards to the bookkeeping workshop, Estelle shared, “formerly it wasn’t important to me but these days I know it [is] very very important to do. I will start very soon.” Regina felt “this lesson, I have to take it seriously.” Mabel and Gladys generally agreed, both calling the workshops “useful.” Mabel admitted that initially she did not see the value of the trainings but eventually understood and wanted to be able to apply the ideas to her batik business. Evelyn articulated her business need, “I want to know, how am I spending within a month? Because I spend a lot and I couldn’t keep the records.” So, although she previously stated she had not been gaining anything from the programs, Evelyn agreed the content was important, a separate issue from her experience with the events themselves or her ability to retain and use what she was meant to learn.

Despite the entrepreneurs mixed reviews of the trainings, the volunteers and employees did perceive a number of benefits to the learners through participation. Gloria viewed the trainings as an opportunity for locals to learn about and adapt to Western business practices and customer tastes as well as increase their content knowledge, particularly in bookkeeping and running a profitable business. Emily's perceived benefits from her visual merchandising workshop were aligned with Gloria's ideas. She summarized, "running this workshop is just another way to help [local women] ... be even more successful in what they're doing." Emily was focused on the content knowledge participants should gain for the purpose of attracting Western tourists as customers.

Tamara viewed exposure to new ideas and possibilities as the primary benefit of her SMART Goals workshop, "making them improve on themselves personally even if it doesn't really affect the job. Indirectly it still affects," and helps them "think beyond the box." She told the story of her own experience,

I remember when I first got to the US, when I started my program, I, what I realized that they have the problem is that, the way we're brought up in Africa is, first of all, if you don't understand something in class, you just quiet. Yeah, because you don't want to stress the lecturer out. Probably he doesn't even want to explain two times. So you keep quiet. So there is this sort of, a little bit of fear inside. If you happen to be a bold person, you'll be able to walk up to him after and ask a few questions. So now coming to the US, where I was now being forced to think... I remember the first class I had, how I walked out class looking

so stressed out, oh my god, how am I going to get access to this because I've never been asked this kind of questions in my life.

Tamara considered her workshop one of the first times the local women had been asked to think independently and recognized how that change can be difficult. She sympathized, “when I see these women look lost, I know how it, how it feels. They just need someone to talk a little bit more to them.” Margaret’s opinion aligned with Tamara’s. She contended that it was important to provide workshops and trainings that challenge the women while still considering their complete lives. Topics should include health and wellness as well as general business practices and “show them different techniques, things that challenge their creativity in ways that may never happen [otherwise],” like the visual merchandising workshop. In effect, the employees and volunteers viewed the training as conveying social empowerment, rather than supporting economic development exclusively, a contrast to the entrepreneurs perception of the trainings’ value.

Throughout this section, the difficulty of balancing empowerment based on economic stability and empowerment based on education for personal efficacy and autonomy was visible. The economic advantages of WW work were certainly the highest priority for all, but production challenges impeded success. The trainings were perceived to be good opportunities but the women entrepreneurs did not see the events living up to their potential, the employees consistently prioritized production concerns, and the volunteers were not in a position to create any sustainable change. Thus economic

empowerment and social empowerment were in competition with one another, with no resolution in sight.

Limited Educational Program Resources

In the data supporting the previous theme, the entrepreneurs expressed some mixed views of the educational program's value and impact. The third theme, limited educational program resources, explains some of the reservations, concerns, and unmet needs the entrepreneurs had regarding the trainings.

First, a lack of material resources was an issue in terms of workshop setting and supplies. Events were held in the lobby of the building that housed the business and quality control offices or in a chapel upstairs from the offices, belonging to the religious organization that owned the facility. The lobby was distracting and public, with lots of passersby and noise (including the perpetual high-pitched beeping of a broken utility box). For Tamara's SMART Goals training, learners took chairs from the quality control room and sat in the lobby. The chapel was grandiose, with large, heavy wooden benches that were difficult to move and which invited only lecture rather than discussion. During Emily's visual merchandising event, she stood behind the chapel lectern while learners listened intently from the first row of seating. Participants in some events were given handouts but generally technology, including a printer, was absent or insufficient; all involved needed to rely on conversation and handwritten notes. Although instructors and learners were flexible in adapting, a dedicated space and a reliable printer or projector would have been immensely valuable.

Second, Gloria cited financial resources as a challenge for the CBP, particularly regarding the training events. She was responsible for the operational aspects of the CBP and therefore had the most insight into the financial resources for the educational programs. She elaborated “it’s expensive in financing a particular workshop, because [providing refreshments for] the entire meeting of people will demand a lot of money, which, of course its an NGO, we don’t have the money to do it.” This was an unexpected concern because, in my observations, I saw no refreshments offered during the SMART Goals workshops and one soft drink per person offered during the visual merchandising workshop. From an outsider perspective, refreshments should generally not be a prohibitive cost. One soft drink would cost the approximate equivalent of 50 US cents. As points of reference, items that could also be purchased for this sum include a large mango or a generous serving of rice and beans. While donors and business revenues contributed to WW’s economic viability, their recent priority had been to use donor funding to develop new production sites in West Africa rather than reinforce existing sites, such as Kundu, or grow the CBP.

Similarly, during data collection, I observed management meetings in which members of the organization discussed the possibility of hiring additional personnel support for the CBP, an idea primarily limited by its expected cost, admittedly a much larger expense than refreshments. To set aside the funds necessary to fully support the CBP would require its prioritization and approval by administrators at all levels, therefore marking this challenge as primarily administrative.

Overreliance on Volunteers

These financial considerations aside, the major resource deficit in WW's educational program was, in fact, not of a monetary nature but in program planning and instructional expertise. Development and delivery relied heavily on the availability and skills of volunteers, most of whom were business or design students from Western universities, with little or no instructional experience; the volunteers were typically students who had been learners for years but had never had the opportunity to teach before working with WW. The difference between what they were asked to do and what they actually had the skills and expertise to do was considerable. Tamara and Emily both arguably had the content knowledge but neither had a substantive background in developing content curriculum, interacting with adult learners, or planning an interactive, engaging or meaningful learning experience. Tamara had been a teaching assistant two semesters for undergraduate economic courses and Emily, as an undergraduate student, had no teaching experience. Certainly the opportunity was personally valuable for the volunteers, both Emily and Tamara cited their teaching as a highlight of their experience. Emily recommended the experience for future volunteers, advocating "I just think if anyone has the opportunity to like do a workshop for WW that they totally should. Because it helped me too just like, on a personal level and on like a professional level." Tamara valued "conducting the workshops, and seeing that they benefitted from it – its good. Yeah, and it has affected my resume!"

Unfortunately, in my observations, the quality of their work did not do justice to the needs of the learners. Consider Emily's efforts to conduct a needs assessment while

planning the visual merchandising workshop. As previously mentioned, Emily did not feel she was about to adequately prepare for the workshop. As part of her preparation she conducted a needs assessment by visiting four or five entrepreneurs who run businesses of varying success levels. She did not feel that she was able to get the information she needed to prepare effectively for the event. She admitted “I don’t know how talking to these women has prepared me for this workshop.” In her visits, she tried to get a sense of how their businesses work, including the customer base, types and variety of products, and volume of sales. Unfortunately, for unknown reasons, the conversations were unhelpful and communication was difficult. She elaborated,

I’ve been like meeting and trying to ask them questions to figure out, you know, what sort of help they would want and need but they’re not really understanding. I don’t think they get what visual merchandising is... But they’ve like expressed interest in it? Which is why Gloria is like ‘Oh this person wants your help with visual merchandising.’ And then I go and I meet with them and I ask them questions and they have no idea what I’m talking about. No idea what I’m talking about!

I accompanied Emily on one of those visits and sat in when she asked questions about the woman’s visual merchandising needs. My observations of her questioning strategy did not align with her own perception. I expected Emily to conduct a needs assessment, asking what the women would like to learn and attempting to ascertain what they already knew. Instead, Emily asked factual questions about the business. For example, she asked about sales volume and the types of items produced. The mismatch

between what Emily thought she was asking and what she actually asked highlights her lack of experience and skill with workshop design and planning, as well as with teaching in general.

As previously mentioned in the presentation of the CBP's administrative structure, volunteer efforts were particularly crucial to WW. Margaret described the need for independent volunteers this way, "we really empower people, incoming volunteers, to run and just go with it because there's so much stuff that's urgent to just keep us afloat on this end." Similarly, as the volunteer coordinator, volunteer fees covered a large part of Margaret's salary, a fact she shares as soon as possible with new arrivals to Kundu. Unfortunately, as Margaret lamented, "Americans have that 'I must do do do do' mentality [but an] observation period is fundamental. How do you do that when [a volunteer is] here for three weeks?" So, the NGO was dependent on volunteers but, for volunteers to be truly effective, they needed time to observe and get settled. With most volunteers working for only short periods, some as little as three weeks, the necessary time did not exist.

The Need for Additional Learner Supports

While the trainings and workshops appear to have suffered from an overreliance on volunteers and perhaps a lack of supervision, Margaret emphasized the value and impact of other activities, such as one-on-one interactions between the local entrepreneurs and volunteers. Many volunteers in the summer of 2013 worked directly with the local women under Margaret's supervision, as opposed to leading workshops or trainings like Tamara and Emily did. The one-on-one interaction had the unfulfilled

potential to make an important contribution to the educational programs and highlights the need for additional supports for the entrepreneurs as part of their learning process.

The women entrepreneurs were a mix of apologetic, frustrated, and amused by their collective inability to apply what they had learned from the trainings and workshops. The bookkeeping workshop was a particular source of trouble for the women. Cora explained, “we’ve gone through that about two or three times. Some of us, so, myself, I still can’t keep the books. I don’t know why.” She joked, “they have tried their best! The rest is for me.” Evelyn said, “I’m trying, but I couldn’t” while Mabel and Ruth both admit they have forgotten what they learned. Estelle was apologetic when she admitted, “right now I don’t keep books.” Gladys called the bookkeeping “tedious.” Regina had a strong grasp of the bookkeeping and business management concepts but argued

Sometimes you don’t have time to write everything that you have bought... And the end of the month I have to calculate everything. The money comes in, the money comes out. So I have to check all these things. Sometimes you don’t have time for that.

Similarly, Evelyn was explicit that the content can be very difficult and that she has not been using bookkeeping for her business.

Although she says she does not know why, Cora was quite clear that “some of us don’t have any background for the bookkeeping.” As previously presented, the women’s educational experiences varied widely, from limited primary school to advanced degrees. It is plausible that bookkeeping was an advanced skill in comparison to prior

technical experience and knowledge for many women and a single training was insufficient.

It is also possible that the bookkeeping methods presented to the women were not culturally relevant. One of Tamara's volunteer tasks was to review the bookkeeping workshop materials and, while she did make a few changes in the vocabulary (e.g., changing the term petty cash to pocket money) and the context of examples (situating the calculations into a story of a seamstress), the procedures themselves were not changed. Although Tamara was from a different West African country, the NGO managers trusted her judgment in developing culturally appropriate materials. The new materials had not yet been used at the time of data collection.

Regardless, all 11 of the entrepreneurs mentioned bookkeeping but June was the only woman who disclosed she was actively and consistently keeping books, a result she attributed to her caterer training rather than her WW experience. Since difficulty with content retention and application was so extensive in regards to the bookkeeping training, it is conceivable that the problem existed in relation to other educational program topics as well.

To alleviate the widespread problem the entrepreneurs expressed with using what they learned at the NGO's workshops, participants acknowledged their need for additional support after the training events, particularly for the challenging topics like bookkeeping. Unfortunately, as Cora pointed out, "there's no follow up" but she said she would appreciate if someone from WW would "check to see if I'm doing a good thing. If I don't then, they say put this one here, put this one here. Maybe that will also help."

Doris and Evelyn suggested that WW check in on the women periodically and ask how they are progressing.

Gladys, who, as a teacher and a Master's degree student, had a strong educational background, suggested events should be "not all in one day." She expanded

It shouldn't be one day workshop or anything, so that we can master. Yes, it should be continuous. Yes. Just one day, these things, you learn it, you put it aside, and then you forget. And when it is continuous for some time, you will master it. It would benefit all of us.

Gladys's ideas to improve the structure of the workshops were echoed by the volunteers, as presented in the next section.

To summarize the entrepreneur views, the women generally agreed the educational events were useful and important to their businesses. What the programming seemed to lack was the structure and support that would help them consistently and effectively implement the program content for themselves. The employees and volunteers echoed many of the same ideas and concerns that the entrepreneurs voiced. In particular, they agreed that workshop follow-up was an issue in need of attention but felt that there were a number of important benefits gained by the entrepreneurs as a result of participating in the educational programs.

Among the employees and volunteers, everyone except Gloria considered continued support after a workshop to be an important but neglected component. Rather than a support mechanism for the learners, Gloria viewed the follow-up primarily as a tool to gather feedback about the training event for future reference.

Emily, Tamara, and Margaret had ideas for follow-up that would directly benefit the learners. Emily recommended mentoring among the women entrepreneurs. After her visual merchandising workshop, a more experienced woman, Hannah, went with a newer woman, Deborah, to visit Deborah's new workshop. Emily speculated that mentoring partnerships could be beneficial and expressed hope that Hannah and Deborah would continue to work together. Emily also believed she should have conducted her visual merchandising workshop earlier in her internship. She led her workshop on her last day in Kundu and was therefore unable to follow-up with the participants, an activity she said the women had specifically requested and that she would have liked to do.

Tamara also advocated follow-up as key to successful workshops. She did have the opportunity to visit with participants after her workshop and, in that process, realized that the women were not retaining the training content. She described the need for follow-up this way: "I still believe that the follow [up] is still the best way. Because they will definitely forget about it. They will forget about it because it's not something they are used to." By this she meant that the content of the workshops was entirely new to the learners and a single exposure to the material was insufficient.

Margaret acknowledged the value of follow-up, saying "I think that when we can provide the adequate follow-up support and attention and actually meet, meet their desires, it helps exponentially," and "I think that so long as we can have the adequate follow-up after the workshops, [the women] can run as far as they possibly can with it." Unfortunately, Margaret acknowledged that follow-up activities were not taking place and lamented WW did not have the resources to adequately provide that support.

Ongoing Cultural and Communication Barriers

All the study participants were able to articulate benefits or value in the CBP, but many of them also shared challenges and opportunities for the program's improvement. As previously discussed, increased resources, support and follow-up to workshops were a challenge that needed to be resolved, but the solution would be arguably straightforward. In this section, I present findings that pertain to the fourth theme, ongoing cultural and communication challenges, which has less visible resolution strategies. I begin with an overview of some cultural issues associated with WW's international operations, then address communication, first within WW and then between WW and the local entrepreneurs, while continuing to interweave the associated cultural practices associated with issues of communication.

International Business Practices

Entrepreneurs' increased personal status was closely tied to their experiences as contributors to an international business, exporting their handmade products around the world. The international visibility of WW had created some notoriety for the local women. For example, Western tourists visiting Kundu had recognized several of them. Sarah had a visitor to her shop recognize the WW award on the wall and make the connection to a product the tourist had purchased at home, sewn by Sarah. Similarly, Regina had visitors to her workshop for a batik lesson. Those visitors had seen her photo on the WW website and felt as if they knew her. Regina seemed to be rather uncomfortable with that familiarity though; "some people say, I saw you on the net. I know you. And I say you know me, but me, I don't know you." Regina had never seen

herself on the Internet. After our interview, I offered to show her the website but she politely made excuses to avoid it.

Although Regina was not entirely comfortable having her photo and story on the WW website and the resulting notoriety, the entrepreneurs generally did not seem to perceive interactions among locals and foreign tourists and volunteers as a source of conflict. Regarding the volunteers who were primarily from North America or Europe, the women in general said they liked working with them, appreciated their help, and felt they learned from the activities the volunteers organized. Regina shared that she learned from them but also they learn from her and their time in West Africa:

They are also learning. Because if they ask you a question and you share ideas together, they get something from you and you too get something from them.

[Laughs] Yeah, because maybe that thing that I know, maybe you don't know it.

Maybe that thing that you know, me I don't know anything.

Regina was the only local participant who shared her perception that a reciprocal learning relationship existed between herself and the foreign volunteers.

While the women participants felt positively towards the volunteers, their general view of working with foreigners at WW was more neutral. When asked about the differences in working with foreigners versus locals, Ruth considered that “they are all the same” and Edith concurred, “you treat everybody the same.” June expressed how commonplace it was to work with foreigners “because we’ve worked with so many.” Mabel did like working with foreigners because “they give you more yes,” meaning that

she found it easier to work with the foreigners than locals. Gladys was clear that communication with white people was not a problem for her.

Despite perceptions among the entrepreneurs that working with foreigners was unremarkable, WW's international business operations did have a significant influence on the way WW employees and volunteers operated and interacted with local entrepreneurs. Margaret saw WW as one of the nation's business leaders, citing WW's success, growth, and treatment of employees as evidence. Comparing WW to other local companies, she related they are "required by law to provide maternity leave and an hour of breastfeeding every day – that's not unique to [WW]. What's unique to [WW] is that we do it... Paying 75% above minimum wage. All of these things are business practices that aren't expected in [local] culture." For these reasons, Margaret viewed WW's international perspective as a benefit to the women who earned their living through WW.

Gloria and the two volunteers did not perceive that WW was trying to force Western business concepts on the West African women, but quality control and fair trade were both Western business practices that did not necessarily align with local ways of doing business. For example, Gladys liked the aesthetics of the imperfections in her batik fabric and June, also a batik maker, argued inconsistency is a natural quality of hand-produced items. Margaret was the only employee who seemed to understand that WW advocated for practices that are different but not necessarily better, that change was required to export the goods abroad, but that local work methods also produced beautiful products.

In addition to Western production practices, Western professional behaviors were an issue for the volunteers leading the training events. Tamara and Gloria both expressed concern about attendance and tardiness. At one of Tamara's SMART Goals workshop for entrepreneurs (not the one I observed), participants were unapologetic about being late. While the event was scheduled to begin at 10am, four women arrived at 11:30am, as Tamara was finishing the workshop. As a result, she ran the event a second time to accommodate the latecomers. She did not perceive it as a lack of interest though, justifying "I think they pick the people they felt were dedicated and they still came at 11:30 then you can imagine what will happen if you brought other people that were not so interested. They would probably come at 12:30. The whole day on a little workshop." Gloria corroborated Tamara's perception that the women were interested but that interest did not necessarily translate into attendance or punctuality. She found it frustrating that "we've planned for 10 people and at the end of the day, we get 5 who turn up. It makes the whole plan change." She was not certain why attendance was poor and speculated that preparing for an upcoming export shipment might have affected the entrepreneurs' participation. As presented earlier, Margaret also speculated on reasons for poor attendance in the context of Emily's visual merchandising workshop, including the possibility that some women had already taken the workshop and did not need to do so again, workshop fatigue, or insufficient notice that the training had been scheduled. What is more likely is that participants were operating under a flexible sense of time that seemed to exist in the region. Punctuality was culturally less important for the local entrepreneurs than it was for the employees and volunteers. That cultural difference was

likely then the origin of disappointment with participant attendance and tardiness. Their frustration is particularly surprising given that Tamara and Gloria were both West African, albeit more adapted to Western business expectations.

Communication Among Employees and Volunteers

Communication barriers existed within the pool of employees and volunteers and hindered CBP efforts. Previous sections of this chapter have touched on WW's internal communication challenges. Examples include the way information about training attendance and participant recruitment were not well communicated from Gloria to the other employees and volunteers. Tamara and Emily were both frustrated at times that their volunteer responsibilities were unclear, undefined, or unstable. Margaret, relatively new to the Kundu office, felt she had never received a proper briefing from management regarding her new role and responsibilities (partly an unfortunate consequence of her predecessor's untimely death). Communication with the main office in the U.S. was difficult due to time zone differences and unstable Internet connectivity. In sum, it was very rarely the case that all contributors to a given task had a shared understanding of that task.

Most relevant to the present study, the four volunteer and employee participants each had a different idea about how the trainings should ideally benefit the local participants. The different perceptions, instead of bringing richness to the discussion about the CBP, created a lack of focus that undermined the success of the trainings and workshops. In particular, Margaret and Tamara believed the topics should include health and wellness as well as general business practices, considering the women's complete

lives. Margaret took a nurturing, comprehensive view, while Tamara saw the trainings as addressing deficiencies in African perspectives. Gloria and Emily had a more content-based business focus, viewing the trainings as an opportunity for locals to learn about and adapt to Western business practices and customer tastes as well as increase their knowledge about running a profitable business. Emily's American perspective was rather narrow, focused on small changes that could affect the customer traffic in a shop while Gloria, as a local, perceived Western business practices as a monumental lifetime learning goal, comparable to her own eight years of study.

Communication Between WW and Entrepreneurs

The employees organizing events and volunteers leading workshops also experienced some challenges as part of the facilitation process. Issues such as low attendance and tardiness, addressed previously, can be attributed to flaws in communication, and therefore relationships, with the entrepreneurs.

Tamara cited complaints and disinterest from participants as challenges for her as a facilitator in the SMART Goals workshop. Regarding the complaints, she observed participants "dwell in the complaint, and not move on. So that's something that I dealt, I found so difficult..." She believed that the women undervalued the benefits of participation and therefore exaggerated the burden of transportation costs and the time investment of participation. Similarly, she encountered several women who resisted the goal-setting content of the course. Tamara told the story of one woman who "was just not interested. She believed that goals are not for her. That they will never be achieved. She had given up completely. And so when we told her to write her goals down, she

wasn't interested at all." But Tamara's strategy was to keep a positive attitude, laughing "I always try to look for solutions to the ... conflicts I got."

The overwhelming sentiment among the employees and volunteers was a sense of responsibility and good will towards the women entrepreneurs but those good intentions did not always translate into productive communication or mutual understanding. Emily and Tamara were primarily concerned about relationships and communication in the context of workshop development and delivery while Margaret and Gloria took a broader view of the issues.

Emily's view was perhaps the most simplistic, summarizing her interactions with the local entrepreneurs as "I want everyone to just be happy and successful because that's what they want!" and "by accepting what they give you or just listening to what they have to say, you're just making them happy." While her perspective could be considered an oversimplification, she was more pragmatic in the context of her workshop, "I think it's important to have, you know, somewhat of a personal relationship with some of the [entrepreneurs] because if you're not comfortable talking to them, then you're not going to be comfortable teaching the workshop." In my observations, Emily was one of the few Western volunteers who actively sought out interactions with local people beyond her work with WW. She made friends in the marketplace, was comfortable visiting and chatting with the women entrepreneurs, and was thoroughly open to the cultural experience.

Unfortunately, Emily did sense the communication barriers and the consequences of her lack of relationship with the women during her workshop. She felt she had

difficulty engaging the women and struggled to get them to participate. Margaret was present during the workshop and was able to aide facilitation of the interactions, for which Emily was grateful.

In contrast to Emily, Tamara had a more practical sense of how to communicate and build relationships with the local women but much less consistent views in general. She perceived the women entrepreneurs as very comfortable working with Westerners but to create her own relationships as an African woman rather than a foreign volunteer, she presented herself as a daughter to them. One workshop participant challenged her by complaining that Tamara “didn’t understand where she was coming from” and she did not “know what’s going on in Africa”. Tamara shared

And then I broke it down to her right then. I’m actually [from West Africa], I grew up [and] my whole life has been in [West Africa]. I still call home to [West Africa]. There’s no [other] place I’ll call home. So I understand what you’re talking about. And then she calmed down. And then I’m helping. So that’s what it took.

Tamara used her common experience as an African to gain credibility with the women and empathize, an advantage that no other volunteer shared. Despite being from a different West African country, Tamara presented the shared African experience as though it were sufficient for the purpose of building a common understanding. No data contradicted her perspective.

Tamara also noted examples of times Westerners thought they understood locals but in fact did not. Tamara described one situation that occurred outside of WW, when

she was supposed to help a local restaurateur, Eli, a friend of Margaret, with her finances. Tamara elaborated

We went to see Eli. And then Eli made a statement. What I got from the statement was that she did not want to go to the market today but actually she wanted to go to the market tomorrow. What Margaret got from the message was that she will go to the market today if there was money to go to the market and, uh, if there was an order. Because there is no order she will not go today. But what I got from Eli's message from first start was that she was tired and she didn't want to walk today. So that is already, as I was coming to work I was like, oh, this is a serious communication issue. But I don't know who is right, but what I got as an African was different what Western person got with that. The funny part is when we got in the car, Margaret still thought I should go to Eli's today. So I wanted to just be sure that I was, I knew what was going on and then I made a call to Eli's. And then she said oh no, not today, tomorrow. Yeah, I was right but of course I didn't bother to just go back and say, oh, Margaret I think I was right.

Tamara, even as a graduate student in the US, still found she had communication problems with Westerners. Her education facilitated communication but it continued to be a challenge. In her view, the issue with the NGO was that "the senior officials think that they are doing the right thing, which is actually the right thing. But they are not passing the message exactly the way the women understand it." This lack of understanding then created frustration. Tamara admitted, "I don't know the issues that

are going on but the women keep complaining and complaining. Now, when I spoke to [an entrepreneur] the other time, she didn't want to talk to me because she felt she had laid it all out and nothing was done." Tamara saw herself as caught between the two sides, West African and Western, clarifying, "whenever a Western person's experiencing something, I understand completely, and when the [West African's] experiencing something, I understand what she's saying at that time. So I'm just in the middle of both worlds."

Margaret, although she was relatively new to Kundu, expressed the most enthusiasm and optimism about her interactions with the entrepreneurs. She acknowledged that she had not yet fully integrated herself into local WW operations but shared "I look forward to building a lot more relationships with the [entrepreneurs]. Not sure how, really to strategically do that but it will come." While most of her job responsibility required her to direct her energy towards volunteers, the few relationships she had developed with local entrepreneurs were very strong and positive. She was particularly close with Mabel and June, both participants in this study. She was unwilling to take those existing relationships for granted, acknowledging, "I think that that's my biggest challenge, that cultural communication/miscommunication." The communication issues that surfaced as part of the CBP were also visible in the organization's broader production activities and will be addressed again later in this chapter.

Although Margaret and the volunteers agreed communication was a problem resulting from cultural differences, their perception stands in contrast to the entrepreneur

comments that communication was not a problem. Recall, for example, when the women entrepreneurs were asked about the differences in working with foreigners versus locals, Ruth considered that “they are all the same” and Edith concurred, “you treat everybody the same.”

Communication was an issue within the CBP during training events, as previously addressed, but it also emerged from the data analysis as a more general challenge for WW, the study’s participants, and me. Examples from my own observations include the local tendency towards expressing preferences subtly, which is often lost on direct Westerners, and a local frankness about money that causes awkwardness for Westerners reluctant to discuss personal finance. Often miscommunication was a very small incident, like the earlier example about Tamara, Margaret and Eli going to the market. I personally made a mistake on a similar scale; I took a batik-dyeing lesson from one of the entrepreneurs and I forgot to pay her for it right away. My teacher then went to ask Gloria at the main office for her money instead of asking me. It would have been disrespectful to approach me directly although I was admittedly rude and inconsiderate for not paying. Gloria pulled me aside to make me aware of my error and I immediately went to pay. I took a pen as a small gift because it would have been impolite to verbally apologize—the gift was an apology without words. There was a complex system in place for negotiating the situation through a third party and avoiding direct confrontation. I felt fortunate that the NGO’s office staff took the time to coach me through an appropriate resolution.

As a second example of cultural misunderstandings, to get someone's attention in the Kundu area, one hisses. One of the other Western volunteers was under the impression for quite some time that a hiss was like a catcall, disrespectful and sexualized. She hated to walk through town, subjected to the vendors hissing, until someone explained what it really meant. After that, she began hissing herself! Small interactions, like these examples, seem so trivial when examined individually but in sum, over time, they have the potential to impact cross-cultural relationships.

The Vendor Issue

In contrast to the negligible consequences of the previous examples, the organizations' miscommunication regarding the use of the term *vendor* was highly disruptive. In the months before my arrival in Kundu, there was some upheaval concerning the practice of describing the women entrepreneurs as vendors and every local participant mentioned the turmoil surrounding this word. On a form used to track work orders and materials, the woman entrepreneur accepting or returning the work was referred to as a vendor. In the United States, the word vendor would accurately describe the business relationship between the producers, independent batik makers and seamstresses, and WW. In this region, a vendor is a businessperson with very low status, someone who might, for example, sell plantain chips or mobile phone credit to people stopped at a traffic light, not the women entrepreneurs affiliated with WW. By the time the inappropriateness of the word was brought to the attention of WW management, the damage appeared to have already been done and, in conjunction with the aforementioned

production challenges, the women were questioning the intentions of WW, their business relationships, and the future of the organization.

Gladys claimed credit for first raising the vendor issue in a meeting that included one of the WW executive directors:

So when we go for meetings, I don't normally like talking. I keep quiet. Others must do the talking. If it's necessary, I also say something else. So it was only quite recently about the vendor, this thing, that I raised my hand and then I said it... I raised the point that the word vendor I don't think is the right for it.

Regina agreed that "the word that they put on us, that we don't like [is] vendors."

Cora felt the use of the term represented an altered status and affiliation with WW:

When I started with [WW], I know we are an NGO. That is when I joined, but all of a sudden, our names were changed. Right now they call us vendors. Meaning we don't participate. Its like we are workers, you work and they pay you, you don't belong to that site. To me that's how I understand it.

June commented "now they are calling us vendors, as if we are," implying a status change for the women based on the term, similar to the way Cora felt her relationship to the NGO was something different before she was labeled a vendor. Gladys elaborated "If they use vendor then they have to treat us as vendors. But now I think they are now thinking of it." The women perceived the term as an indication of a change in the way they were viewed or valued by WW.

The women explained their understanding of the term during the interviews. For example, Gladys thought a "vendor is a person who sells out on the street." To June, "its

like, you are carrying something or selling in any form of way. If someone, he needs it, he calls you and he pick[s] it.” Here, June was referring to the common practice of selling goods by carrying items on one’s head and walking around high traffic areas looking for buyers. This practice was typically seen along high traffic streets and intersections where buyers call sellers from within their cars. While an effective practice, sellers in this format had a very low status. For Evelyn, that low status translated into a lack of negotiating power, “because they said that we are vendors and they can pay us anything they like.”

Although WW management, in the original meeting in which Gladys raised the issue, explained the source of the misunderstanding and I, in the interviews as a natural part of the conversation, shared that vendor does not have a negative connotation abroad, the women generally seemed unwilling to forgive its use. The offense some women felt seemed to have resulted in an unwillingness to communicate or engage with WW. Regina shared the following anecdote: “I was at the office ... and Gloria called someone. The person told her that ‘I’m a vendor. I don’t have any idea to share with you people’.” Regina believed that the opinions of vendors were generally considered unwelcome and many other women were using the vendor issue as a reason to become silent, warning me “that’s why if you go and ask question with some other members, they won’t open their hearts to talk to you.”

While others were willing to discuss the issue, some women used it as an opening to express concern about their relationship with WW. For example, Evelyn, a founding member, seemed fearful of future changes: “Because we are vendors, they can

do anything to you. So its like now we are not safe.” Cora was clear that “if we are vendors, then [WW] doesn’t exist. Get my point?” For Cora, the word seemed to mark a transformation not just in her relationship to the organization but also in WW’s fundamental operations and purpose. The local entrepreneurs felt that the term was disrespectful and alienating. The women felt a sense of connection to WW and empowerment based on their international visibility and exports. When WW began calling them vendors, they began to perceive that WW was no longer interested in collaboration or partnerships.

As part of the damage control and righting the wrong, the Kundu office managers had asked the local women what word should be used instead. Of the women who had an opinion, including Regina, Mabel, and Gladys, all agreed that the term “partner” would be more accurate representation of their relationship with WW, although Regina was clear that WW should have asked what name would be appropriate before ever creating the forms. *Partner* is a telling choice, demonstrating the sense of connection the entrepreneurs feel to their work with WW, and highlighting their desire for collaboration and community.

Neither volunteer participating in this study was aware of the vendor issue but both of the employees, Margaret and Gloria, were. From a management perspective in the context of the production challenges, Margaret acknowledged, “that’s a grudge that’s going to stick. So, let’s think about how minute that detail is – one word – within a major production meltdown. And we’re looking at a word! So, that’s what’s scary to

me.” The trouble with the label vendor, in Margaret’s opinion, was less that it happened and more about it going for so long without being caught. Margaret elaborated,

I’m just thinking about the word vendor compared to partner [and] how easily that can be overlooked by [WW], by like our biggest brains in the company... That it can be overlooked, or not even overlooked, just not even recognized to look at because it is such a basic business term. And here it is such a low class label. And how many times have we done that? And not heard about it. It’s scary to think about.

The form using the term was originally introduced in 2011, and only corrected in late 2013, after data collection for this study had concluded. Vendor was changed to partner.

The vendor issue, in Margaret’s opinion, connected to a larger, recurring issue, the discord that can arise from differing expectations and communication challenges. She was sometimes frustrated by the perceived constant complaints and continuous bargaining, explaining “if we’re going for a taxi, you always want to get as much as you can from whoever is on the other side. And this challenge isn’t unique to [WW] at all. And I think its human nature. You always want more. It’s not unique to [this country].” And yet that mindset manifests itself constantly in the interface between WW management and the entrepreneurs. While Margaret did not have any specific examples to share that involved the Kundu location, she did disclose there have been a number of conflicts at other WW sites regarding the frustration between management perceiving its offer as generous and employees still demanding more. In this sense, Margaret saw the

conflict as a tension between the for-profit business side of WW and the philanthropic non-profit side.

Of the four volunteers and employees, Gloria perceived the least amount of communication and relationship difficulty. Gloria liked and respected the entrepreneurs but in her view, it was entirely a business relationship, which she described as “cordial” because “we are customers to them. They think of the company as a customer.” She also seemed to be indifferent to the vendor conflict, as though she really does consider the women entrepreneurs to be vendors, explaining

I call this miscommunication because “vendors” in our local parlance is different, has different meaning. And in Western way too, it has a different meaning, so having a different name will mean something else. But with education, it bridges the gap. At the moment, I would say they still with local understanding. They’ve not gotten themselves to an international level where they will understand it all.

In essence, rather than validating the women’s local cultural definition of the term vendor, Gloria was dismissing it as the error based on a lack of education and international experience. Gloria had worked hard to develop her own international business sense, joking that “it has taken me 8 good years.” She valued her interaction with volunteers and advocated for entrepreneurs to do the same because “you learn a lot from them...how a tourist person would talk to them, how they will, they have to relate.”

While Gloria promoted an educational exchange between the local women and the volunteers, it was not clear whether she wished to truly engage with the entrepreneurs. As previously mentioned, she saw the relationship as a clear-cut

producer-customer affiliation. In a similar vein, she did not see the value of including the women in company decision-making processes. While in the past, WW held roundtable discussions with the local Kundu entrepreneurs to discuss the company's well-being and plans, none have occurred for approximately one year. She explained that "we've never had decisions with the women before" and to do so would be "some innovative thing." Her perspective does not align with the history of roundtable meetings and WW's commitment to transparency and accountability, one of the WFTO's principles of fair trade. As stated on the website, "[Worldwide Women] maintains an open-door policy and encourages producers to examine operations and ask questions about financial data. All payment rates are set through an open dialogue."

While possible, a commodification of the relationship between WW and the producers did not match the mission and purpose of the organization. If the women were simply vendors, then efforts such as the CBP and the fair trade practices made no sense. If the company was simply a customer to the entrepreneurs, then their uproar over the word vendor was also nonsensical. Gloria's dismissal of the conflict must therefore be an indication of a fundamental difference between her view of the women producers and the view of Western WW management and the producers themselves.

One plausible explanation was the way Gloria played the role of gatekeeper within WW, a fundamentally important and influential task. As the primary point of contact between local entrepreneurs and the Western volunteers and management, Gloria, a local, was positioned to maintain the hierarchy and status differences between herself and the other local women. Because she was better educated, having worked her

way through business school, perhaps she did truly see the other locals as vendors rather than partners, low-status in comparison to her own high status. If the word vendor was a problem, Gloria should logically have been the first person to note the possibility of a miscommunication. Because she never raised the issue, it is likely she believed the term was appropriate, which placed her perception in direct opposition to those around her, including the other employees and the local women entrepreneurs.

Eight of the entrepreneurs said that WW had asked for their opinion, either directly, through volunteer interviews, or as part of a roundtable discussion. Gladys described the roundtable meetings as a time when “we normally come together to think about our challenges and other things. How we can go about this.” She does caution “you have to have to be very careful about management and all that things” and “I humble myself so that people will not think I’m trying to instigate over there.” The roundtable meetings, formerly a regular event, had become increasingly inconsistent and were not held at all in 2013.

Of the eight who said they had been asked, three women indicated that their opinions were not taken into account. Edith grumbled “when they ask you about your opinion, they will not take it. They will not take your advice, so, no point.” Similarly, Ruth shared “they ask us, they come here, they ask, ask so many questions and don’t see anything coming out of it.” It appeared that there was some interview fatigue among the entrepreneurs and frustration due to a lack of visible results from interviews and discussions.

On a related subject, Cora felt that WW was withholding information from the entrepreneurs. She complained “whenever they are changing anything, they don’t tell us...they don’t have any discussion with us,” and “if I’m [WW] then I belong to that group. I should know whatever is going on in there.” Similarly, Gladys believed “they should be very transparent. That’s what I want. Communication, yes.” She expanded, “in management, if there is enough communication, you know that there is transparency. But if the management, they are not ready to... discuss things, then you can see that there will be suspicion.” While Gladys was warning how WW can avoid suspicion and mistrust, it seemed that those types of feelings had already begun to develop among the entrepreneurs.

Regarding the issue of respect, WW received mixed reviews from the entrepreneurs. Evelyn and Gladys were clear that they felt respected by WW while others were neutral. No one stated outright that she felt disrespected but hesitation and lack of conviction in the interviews called into question the sincerity. Additionally, some of the inconsistent responses stem from varied interpretations of what constituted respect. June, for example, when asked if WW respects her, responded, “just the fact that they are giving me job to do and I’m earning something, I think so.”

While the vendor issue was an example of a serious miscommunication, other examples were more positive. Practical discussions about work, orders, and payments seem to be relatively straightforward. Sarah, Cora and Estelle all said that the office staff were easy to talk to and were ready to explain if there were questions or concerns. Cora elaborated “if I didn’t understand anything about my work, concerning money, or

changes, I just call them, talk over, discuss. Let's do it. Come here, do this, and its settled." Similarly, Evelyn shared "we expect that they will allow us to talk with them and then know more our problems."

Although WW would general be considered successful, findings in this section have highlighted the difficulties of collaboration and communication across cultures. Although they have operated for over 10 years, WW continued to struggle to cope with communication barriers.

Pride

Despite the challenges and negativity presented in relation to previous themes, the fifth and final theme is that of pride, including pride in both work and personal accomplishments for all of this study's participants. The business and economic achievements of the women entrepreneurs fostered a deep sense of satisfaction that was expressed by 13 of 15 participants in this study. This pride was manifest in the employees and volunteers through their belief that the organization was making a real and lasting difference for the women. The entrepreneurs were proud of their accomplishments as business owners, employers, and contributors to a growing national economy. While no one specifically used the terms *empowered* or *freedom*, my sense was that the perceived status increased based on WW work did impart an increased sense of personal control and authority of their lives.

As employees, Margaret and Gloria seemed to derive more satisfaction from WW as an organization and the ways in which it has achieved its mission to empower

women. Gloria particularly valued the philanthropic aspects of the company, emphasizing that she was proud

Any day that I come to work. Because of the women that I'm coming to serve... I like working with the company because I love what they are they doing. It's more passion work and their mission is to help the women in the grassroots to achieve economic independence. So knowing that helps me a lot to also stay on track.

Margaret supported Gloria's sentiment, "what keeps me inspired everyday is to know that I'm a part of [WW]." Margaret underscored the economic priorities of WW, "there's really nothing else to my knowledge out there at all like [WW]. [WW] is a huge leader in fair trade," as well as the organizational culture of teamwork, collaboration, and mutual support, sharing

I'm really proud of my team. I mean everyone. I mean volunteers.... Yeah, I definitely consider interns and volunteers [part of the] team. [Laughs] We're all about the team! So I suppose whatever, whatever kind of support or relationship nurturing I've done throughout the course of the past 5 or 6 months is what I'm most proud of.

While Margaret only specifically mentioned volunteers here, in my observations she was also an important resource for other employees and to many of the entrepreneurs. For example, Margaret regularly recommended June's fledgling catering business to others and directed volunteers and tourists to Sarah when they wanted custom clothing made.

Her efforts to support those around her were not constrained by the boundaries of WW work.

In contrast, Tamara and Emily were more focused on their personal contributions to WW as volunteers and their perceived professional accomplishments. Tamara was excited to add her work at WW to her resume because she saw it as a unique experience. Emily agreed and, comparing her internship with WW to what her classmates were doing for their internships, she reported “So many of my peers are, you know, in New York City or Chicago or LA. They’re working in a retail store and I’m getting hands on experience.” Emily was proud of “everything. I just loved my experience... there is nothing I can say or do that’s gonna, be like, that can explain what I’ve done here. Its just like, this is – I went to [West Africa]! I went to [West Africa] and I, this is what I did. I, I can’t explain it any better than that. Just the experience in general is something I’m proud of.”

The entrepreneurs who participated in this study were a group of accomplished women. Almost all of them (nine out of 11) expressed pride in their work. Of the nine, five women were particularly proud of their affiliation with and contribution to WW by being reliable, punctual, and submitting high quality work. In particular, having products graded as export quality or accepted without the need for revisions or “fixing” was a key source of pride.

WW also offered awards for the women on an annual basis, including an entrepreneur of the year award and a leadership award. Cora and Gladys were both past recipients of awards and expressed pride in that honor. Cora tells it this way: “I always

said no, for me, I don't think [WW] would give me any, um, award. And so all of a sudden I was there last year and they called me! Cora! Leadership! And I said hey! It's me! Yeah! It boosts your confidence in them." Gladys's reaction to the award was similar:

So I didn't know that they were watching me and all that things. So when the time came for the, this thing, they asked us to come to [a nearby town] for dinner and therefore I went and then my name was mentioned. I was surprised because I wasn't told. I didn't know that they've selected me for best [entrepreneur]. So that was my happiest thing!

For Gladys and Cora, the awards were an honor and source of validation for work well done.

For Evelyn, a founding seamstress of WW, the way the organization helped women was a source of pride. She beamed "I'm proud of [WW], helping others or helping myself or helping the [women] to grow so that some of our women who has no thing, eh, anything to do, they can also come and join us. So I'm proud to be like that." She also said she was proud to be a women and an independent business owner.

Ruth summed the sentiment up well when she said she was proud of her work "everyday. I'm proud of it. Because that's my future. *My work is my future*. So I have to be proud of it." Every entrepreneur was proud of her work and her income-generating ability. As a cultural outsider, I would also say this was true of the local people and nation as a whole. There may be poverty and a lack of infrastructure and assets, but the resourcefulness and self-sufficiency I saw demonstrated there on a daily basis were

impressive. During my fieldwork, I was moved by the women's dedication and pride in their work and subsequent achievement, hence the use of Ruth's comment in the title of this study.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the major findings from the case study.

Beginning with an overview of the organization, the educational programs, and the women who participated in this study, I then presented background information on the context for the women entrepreneurs affiliated with WW and the operations and scope of the educational programs. Five key themes emerged from the findings: (a) gendered work, (b) tension between economic and personal empowerment, (c), limited educational program resources, (d) ongoing cultural and communication barriers, and (e) pride.

The findings highlighted some key challenges and opportunities for WW. The true strength of the organization lies in the commitment and responsibility every single participant in this study felt towards WW. WW's work was highly valued and respected. The local women saw WW as an important and unique resource, creating opportunity through business while maintaining personal connections. The employees and volunteers were willing to give of themselves to ensure WW's viability and success. The desire to be helpful in the Kundu office was palpable and sincere. This organization had no shortage of heart.

That said, despite everyone's best intentions, WW faced numerous challenges. Although the employees and volunteers advocated for feedback from the local women, that feedback was not always applied. Trainings and workshops were inconsistent, a

consequence of insufficient planning and instructional expertise, and lack the follow-up necessary to fully support the women's acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Despite the numerous challenges the NGO faced in many facets of its operations, the CBP was still perceived by the women entrepreneurs as a useful and valuable learning experience with opportunities for improvement.

The next and final chapter includes a discussion and interpretations of the findings in the context of the research questions, collected data, and the conceptual framework and literature review, as well as recommendations for research, practice and future work.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the exchange between an international NGO and the women enrolled in that NGO's educational program, with the term *exchange* operationalized to refer to the dialogic aspects of adult education and the outcomes of such dialogue. Specifically, I explored the ways the NGO and program participants influenced one another. I applied a qualitative case study approach using a single-case design focused on Worldwide Women (WW), an international NGO founded and led by Westerners and operating in a West African nation. In its tenth year of operations at the time of data collection, this fair-trade organization provided training and educational programs for an extensive network of women artisans/entrepreneurs and facilitated the export of their products abroad. The NGO had deep roots in the local community, a large international customer base, and continued to grow.

All data were collected at one of the NGO's West African locations during the summer of 2013 and consisted of documents, observations, and interviews. Documents included extensive training and course materials, NGO publications and reports, and internal planning memos. Observations were collected from training events, staff and strategic meetings, and daily interactions with employees, volunteers, and local entrepreneurs. Semi-structured interviews lasted between 0.5 and 1.5 hours. Interview protocols targeted participants' perceptions of the relationships among employees,

volunteers, and entrepreneurs, and the educational programs in which all were engaged. I used a constant comparative method of thematic analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to develop findings, as informed by Yin's (2009, 2014) case study approach and Creswell's (2009) data analysis process.

Fifteen women participated in this study, including two full-time permanent NGO employees, two short-term student volunteers, and 11 local women artisans. All participants had engaged with the NGO's educational programs in one of three possible roles: learner, instructor, or program manager. Participants ranged in age from approximately 20 to 74 and had been affiliated with the NGO between a few weeks, for the newest volunteer, and 10 years, for a founding member. Nationalities included 12 local residents, 2 Americans, and 1 citizen of a different West African nation. Education levels were highly varied, with some women having only a few years of middle school while others were working on Master's degrees at the time of the interviews.

The research questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the women participating in the NGO's educational program?
2. What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the NGO as a consequence of working with the women participants?
3. How does participating in the NGO's educational program influence the women's lives?
4. How do the women participants influence the NGO's operations and programs?

Vella's (2002) 12 principles for effective adult learning and global feminist theory provided a two-part conceptual framework through which these questions were addressed. Vella emphasizes teaching and learning with respect and consideration for the participants and incorporates cultural sensitivity for diverse or multinational populations. The presence or absence of applications of Vella's principles can be one means of ascertaining the value and impact of the NGO's educational programs. Global feminist theory specifically pertains to women's perspectives in the context of developing regions, such as the country in which this study was conducted. Global feminist theory is concerned with the ways in which what happens in one part of the world (e.g., in developed, Western nations) can disempower and marginalize women in another part of the world (e.g., in developing, non-Western nations; Mies, 1993; Tong, 2009). The conceptual framework guided the interpretation of the findings in order to answer the study's research questions.

The data analysis revealed the successes and opportunities for improvement within the NGOs educational programs. Although the present case centers on an NGO that would generally be regarded as successful, findings indicate opportunities for increased efficacy. Five major findings emerged from the data: (a) gendered work, (b) tension between economic and personal empowerment, (c), limited educational program resources, (d) ongoing cultural and communication barriers, and (e) pride.

Discussion

Most NGO's educational activities are designed to improve the living conditions of the poor by providing literacy, basic adult education, or vocational training. Research on the educational programs of NGOs with a charge of social change is relatively new to the field of adult education and merits increased attention (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011). Hoff and Hickling-Hudson (2011) argued that these educational programs may not be specifically directed at changing underlying policies or social institutions but such initiatives do have the potential to advance social change by taking the first steps towards empowerment and social justice for the populations served by the programs.

In terms of my perspective as the researcher, I was surprised by how few training events occurred, particularly given the emphasis on education in the NGO's published materials. I conceptualized empowerment largely as independence, autonomy, and self-efficacy. There were women entrepreneurs who exhibit those qualities, but their accomplishments were largely attributable to economic success, not the results of the educational programs. My concerns about the burden of craft production were reinforced; batik dyeing is difficult and sometimes dangerous work, requiring fires and harsh chemicals. I also continued to experience my own privilege very acutely and cannot honestly say my volunteer work or research will make a difference for the women of Kundu. As one outcome of my volunteer efforts, I submitted a number of program planning and instructor training documents to WW to address some of the barriers to success that emerged during data collection, including unprepared volunteers

and lack of shared vision for the educational programs. It is unknown whether those materials have been used.

As a means of analyzing the educational program's barriers to success, I applied Vella's (2002) 12 principles of effective adult learning to the present findings. I focus first on the principles with which the NGO struggled to align and then later address the principles with which the NGO was more successful but do not address all 12, omitting the principles about which findings were neutral or were not addressed by the findings. The principles pertaining to content delivery and retention, including the sequence of content and reinforcement (principle 4), praxis (principle 5), and accountability (principle 12) were particular challenges for WW. As presented in the theme of limited program resources, since volunteers with little or no program planning or teaching experience typically deliver the trainings and workshops, the designs are missing key components that would enable learners to retain and apply the content. Desjardins (2013), in reference to volunteers as facilitators and instructors, makes the point that "while important, an exclusive reliance on volunteers is unsustainable, especially in regard to program quality" (p. 84). Findings indicated that WW is experiencing a challenge with respect to quality as a result of volunteers' lack of instructional expertise and transience, both of which undermine program continuity and content reinforcement. Other resource deficiencies, such as limited financial resources and the need for additional learner supports and follow-up, exacerbate the challenge of building valuable and effective trainings. The competition between the priorities of the educational programs and the economic initiatives, and a lack of communication and shared vision

among NGO employees undermine program success. It is particularly relevant to note that the content motivates the trainings and yet lack of alignment with Vella's (2002) principles pertaining to content creates the most serious problems for the NGO's educational programs.

The NGO successfully applies Vella's (2002) principles of needs assessment (principle 1) and engagement (principle 11). The needs assessment is visible in the way WW decides what workshops to offer for the local entrepreneurs. By basing program offerings on the women's stated interests and business needs shared with WW staff during the annual conferences, WW is demonstrating that its programs are intended to address the existing learning needs of the women. Stifter (2002) and MacPherson (2009) both concur that needs assessment is essential for successful programs. Engagement is the second principle executed successfully by the NGO. The women entrepreneurs who participated in this study all agreed that the educational programs are valuable and important. They take time from their busy production schedules to attend and, independent of how much the women actually learn, they believe in the usefulness of the experience for their businesses. Thus, viewing the educational program through the lens of Vella's (2002) 12 principles for effective adult learning provides insight into aspects of the trainings that are particularly successful or require additional support.

Thus, the findings of this study expand the literature base about NGO's adult education programs, specifically as they pertain to increased economic opportunity for women in developing regions as a form of empowerment. The NGO's overarching purpose was to facilitate the export of locally produced products to generate new sources

of revenue. The organization's educational programs targeted women's entrepreneurial skills for engagement in a globalized market and were heavily influenced by Western business perspectives and volunteer resources. In the following two sections, I respond to the four research questions. During the study design phase, I did not want to assume that mutual benefits or influence existed and therefore separated question one from question two, and question three from question four. Having collected and analyzed the data and identified that relationships between the questions do exist, I will address the first two questions as a reciprocal pair, and then the third and fourth questions, again as a pair.

Research Questions One and Two

What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the women participating in the NGO's educational program and for the NGO as a consequence of working with the women participants?

The benefits for the women participating in the NGO's educational programs are, first and foremost, economic. As Lane (2007) found, social justice is often equivalent to economic justice for poverty-stricken populations or for those living in developing nations. Regardless of the other advantages that may be conveyed by working for WW, the opportunity for the women to increase their income by producing goods for international distribution is absolutely essential and arguably the most important benefit. In this regard, findings paralleled Jongeward's (1998) investigation of weavers in rural India who highly valued and relied upon their international export opportunities as a primary benefit of involvement with the organization.

The balance between the goals of economic justice (e.g., living wages and reasonable work hours) and social justice (e.g., empowerment and education) is precarious. The entrepreneurs, without exception, were concerned about a number of production-related issues, including delivery deadlines, quality control standards, the costs of raw materials and for replacing worn equipment, order volume, and payment rates. Their concerns, while not directly related to the educational programs, are important because WW's educational mission is necessarily subservient to the production work and economic activity. If the entrepreneurs are unable to generate sufficient income to support their families, the opportunity for and value of any educational programs are substantially impeded; no one has time to learn about bookkeeping when there are other more pressing needs. Despite the emphasis on the economic needs of the local entrepreneurs, there were positive social outcomes. The local women expressed pride in their work and were vocal about the social advantages they experienced as a result of working with WW, particularly the ability to educate their children and contribute to household income, their increased status as business owners, and the international visibility of producing goods for export.

WW's training in quality control ensures the local women are able to meet the standards for export to Western countries while the fair trade training programs allow the NGO to participate in the rapidly growing international market for responsibly and sustainably produced goods (Dutch Association of Worldshops, 2011). The trainings and workshops that focus on business topics and personal well-being, such as visual merchandising, book keeping, and goal-setting, are perceived as valuable and important

by the women and to the NGO's mission. Nine of the 11 women found the trainings useful and indicated they would like to participate in future events. Humphreys (1999) and Kealing (2003) presented similar findings regarding perceived value in their respective studies of vocational trainings for women in Thailand.

In contrast, as described in Chapter IV, the trainings do not currently produce an impact to match their potential usefulness; the women entrepreneurs attend but do not gain the ability to apply the new knowledge independently. Similar to Nordtveit's (2008) study of a literacy program in Senegal, a lack of genuine participant involvement in program planning undermined the program's ability to achieve its maximum potential. Additionally, a lack of follow-up and consistency, among other barriers, work against the success of WW's training efforts. While the entrepreneurs in the present study were clear that they perceived benefits as a consequence of working with WW and participating in its educational programs, they also articulated needs that were not being met by the trainings. Some women viewed the trainings as too short, too superficial, and without necessary follow-up supports. A lack of resources hindered program efficacy.

The benefits to the NGO as a consequence of working with the women entrepreneurs using the fair trade principles are less visible than the benefits to the local women. A discussion of the benefits to NGOs is missing from the literature but certainly there is an economic benefit for the organization; WW's existing activities are financially self-sustaining thanks to the revenue generated through the sales of entrepreneurs' products. As a consequence, all donor funds can be used to finance new projects. The benefits are most visible in terms of the individual employees and

volunteers; the women employed by or volunteering for the NGO definitely feel that they are making a contribution to the world, to West Africa, and to the local women through their efforts. The employee and volunteer respondents take great pride in their altruism. The employees feel their work is important and the volunteers consider their experiences in West Africa meaningful and productive. These philanthropic perspectives align with those of Kealing's (2003) volunteer literacy teachers in Thailand. The desire to make a difference in the world or to acknowledge one's own privilege by giving to others appears to be common among volunteers.

What remains unclear is the distinction between the direct impact of employees and volunteers and an abstract sense of accomplishment derived from simply being present and participating. Unfortunately, an assessment of any individual contributions is beyond the scope of the present study and the literature does not provide any insight in this regard. Still, some broad inferences may be drawn; the contributions of volunteers are likely minimal due to the short duration of their work with WW. The work of the employees has greater potential to make an impact but the nature and magnitude of that impact entirely depends on the individual's skills and perspective.

A basic issue to consider regarding these two research questions is the apparent disparities in benefits. By participating in WW's programs, the local women entrepreneurs are able to meet the basic needs of their families, becoming providers of food, shelter, and educational opportunities. The employees and volunteers earn a salary or academic credit and a sense of purpose. While these benefits may seem strangely unequal, perhaps the most relevant interpretation is simply that each woman, whether

entrepreneur, volunteer or employee, gains what she most immediately seeks by working with WW.

Research Questions Three and Four

How does participating in the NGO's educational program influence the women's lives and how do the women participants influence the NGO's operations and programs?

As discussed in Chapter IV and earlier in this chapter, the primary benefit to the local women entrepreneurs is economic stability, resulting in increased opportunities for the women and their families. Drawing from that stability, the women indicated that they are able to support their families, send children to school, and gain visibility for their work within a globalized market economy. The influence of the educational trainings and workshops more directly affect the women's business and production practices rather than the women's complete lives. While Humphreys (1999) cautions against economic initiatives that do not also address gender norms and stereotypes, WW's programs, both economic and educational, appear to be relevant without specifically addressing gender issues. Although WW is beginning to incorporate events that pertain to the women's health and welfare, extending beyond business practices, those programs are too new to be addressed by the present study.

The International business perspectives presented in the educational programs and production operations is the central most influential theme. The majority of business-related trainings, for example, quality control, fair trade, and visual merchandising, reflect the values and priorities of Western consumers. For example, the

aesthetic value of blemishes in batik fabric does not align with the unwavering consistency of the quality control guidelines. Undoubtedly, the goal of the educational programs is to enable the local women to produce and sell items to Westerners. While the employees and volunteers were divided on whether or not WW is trying to force Western business ideals onto producers, and whether or not it would be appropriate if they were, the underlying fact is that the women do need to understand Western business practices and consumers to fully realize the economic benefits of working with WW. Again, recall that the economic benefits are the most valuable outcomes for those who work with the NGO.

Bochman (2011) emphasized the importance of cultural exchange and communication within NGOs' operations as a means of negotiating the power imbalance. MacPherson (2009) supports Bochman (2011), arguing NGO programs must build from the local context. The Western influence on the women's production practices could easily be viewed as colonialist or oppressive because the international market does not recognize the beauty and value of unique hand-produced items or appreciate the relaxed pace of work in the West African culture. Western business practices do, however, accomplish what inconsistent hand-made items created at a leisurely pace cannot: they generate substantial and consistent income, the importance of which cannot be denied. Striking a balance between the Western practices that generate income and the West African context that respects local perceptions of work and quality is a clear challenge. So, although, MacPherson (2009) recommended grounding

initiatives in the local context, perhaps a struggle for WW, he also recommended addressing practical needs, a task WW certainly accomplishes.

Despite the challenge of meeting Western business expectations with the export of products, the entrepreneurs' influence on WW derives from the way their wishes and preferences inform and guide the training and educational programs. Ideas for programs arise from the women's expressed needs; WW employees and volunteers have a sincere desire to provide quality programs that meet those needs. Every employee and volunteer participant mentioned the value of speaking with the local women and hearing their opinions as part of the workshop planning and design process. Nordtveit (2008) and Broussard (2007) both emphasized the need for all stakeholders to provide input into the programs. While the outcomes directly resulting from participant input may be minimal or unpredictable, WW employees and volunteers were always very clear that they valued input and were concerned with meeting the training needs of the entrepreneurs.

The inconsistency regarding the influence of the local women on WW draws from the difference between their actual versus perceived influence. The women do not feel that WW listens to them, as presented in terms of the roundtable discussions that no longer occur and the lack of transparency. The women's expressed needs become the ideas for workshops as they are communicated to the NGO employees, but in the planning and development phases, where the women should be integral, work is completed largely without input or feedback by student volunteers operating with minimal supervision.

According to Choudry and Kapoor (2013), “many NGOs are themselves sites of considerable internal struggle over politics, positioning, program priorities – and power” (p. 3). The employees’ varying priorities and the consequences of a lack of shared vision create a situation in which it is the educational program that suffers. The four volunteer and employee participants each had a different idea about how the trainings should ideally benefit the local participants, balancing topics such as health and wellness against general business practices, and nurturing attitudes versus judgmental correction of deficiencies in African perspectives in favor of Western business practices. A comprehensive approach to address these differences would necessarily require improved and explicit communication within WW, in addition to input from the local participants.

Bochman (2011) also advocated communication as a means of building trust. The trust in the relationship between the program participants and the NGO stems largely from the ways in which the NGO is successful or lacking in its communication plans. While the communication challenges discussed in Chapter IV, particularly the trouble with the term *vendor*, indicate a lack of trust, the educational programs suggest that trust does exist in the relationship between the women entrepreneurs and WW. The women entrepreneurs believe that the trainings and workshops are generally valuable and are worth taking time off from production work. The learners may struggle to understand training content, like bookkeeping for example, but they take the word of WW’s employees and volunteers regarding their importance. WW’s generally precarious balance between economic and social goals and the entrepreneurs’ acceptance of WW’s

recommendations suggest that, while there is room for improvement, the educational program is serving its intended purpose.

Recommendations

The ways in which this NGO's educational programs address aspects of the UN's MDGs and UNESCO's agenda for international adult education have implications for theory, practice, and future research. To discuss recommendations in the context of the present study's findings, Vella's (2002) 12 principles for effective adult learning and global feminist theory (Mies, 1993) serve as a launching point.

Theory

The academic literature pertaining to NGO educational programs consistently argues for initiatives that respect local context, address practical needs, and counteract oppressive social constructs, such as neoliberalism, colonialism, or patriarchy. Timmer (2009) cautioned against NGOs that succumb to neoliberal influences and reinforce elitism, being accountable only to donors and working at a distance from those they seek to serve. According to Stiles (2002), local governments may challenge or undermine NGOs' operations or, by replacing government services, NGOs may quicken the influx of neoliberal practices. Multiple studies (Bochman, 2011; Broussard, 2007; Humphreys, 1999; and Nordtveit, 2008) advocated for NGOs to work with developing nations as equal partners, rather than defaulting to globalized, colonialist perspectives that originate from Western funding sources and neglect local context and values.

Hoff and Hickling-Hudson (2011) outlined a five-part theoretical framework of analysis situated in anti-capitalist post-colonial theory intended to guide and support the

work of researchers who study international NGO adult education programs for social change. The authors acknowledge their framework remains largely untested in practice. The present study supports the line of adult education research necessary to generate a body of fieldwork sufficient to test Hoff and Hickling-Hudson's theory because it addresses the target of the principles, NGO educational programs for social change.

Aligned with Hoff and Hickling-Hudson's (2011) advocacy of some practical and operational aspects of NGO educational programs, Vella (2002) emphasizes teaching and learning with respect and consideration for the participants. While Vella is regularly incorporated into studies of program design and diverse learner populations (e.g. Jasis & Marriott, 2010; Renich, 2007), no prior studies have applied the principles to NGO programs in developing regions. As presented in the Discussion section of this chapter, WW was successful regarding some principles and found lacking with respect to others. The unevenness regarding program success in relation to Vella's (2002) principles raises the question of the ways the theory may support practitioners, rather than remaining abstract or idealized. While all 12 principles are valuable, a hierarchical ordering or prioritization rubric could aid in their translation from theory to practice.

As previously discussed in Chapter II, applying global feminist theory creates the opportunity, specifically, to explore female perspectives in the context of developing regions, the West African country in which this study was conducted. Global feminist theory is concerned with the ways in which what happens in one part of the world (e.g. in developed, Western nations) can disempower and marginalize women in another part of the world (e.g. in developing, non-Western nations) (Tong, 2009). Mies (1993) argues

that marginalized workers in developing regions pay the costs for Western materialistic lifestyles. To build global equality, Westerners must sacrifice their materialistic lifestyles. Thus international and global feminism is undermined by the economic self-interest of the West. This was relevant to my research because I explored ways that WW, a Western NGO, works to empower women, socially and economically, through its educational programs. If one subscribes to Mies's (1993) arguments, such programs are biased and doomed to produce little real change because of the conflict of interest inherent in Western participants and facilitators.

However, Mies's position is based exclusively on economic self-interest and does not take into account the philanthropy of NGOs. The deep altruism exhibited by WW's Western employees and volunteers and the lasting commitment of its founders to the local women are the primary motivating factors for all of WW's efforts and specifically its relationships with the local producers. Thus, despite Mies's pessimism, WW appears to be working to effect changes successfully by aligning with the principles of fair trade. WW is recognized as a fair trade manufacturer and distributor by the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and the North America-based Fair Trade Federation (FTF). By maintaining its commitment to fair trade, including fair wages, good working conditions, and opportunities such as the educational opportunities that form the CBP, WW ensures that its business practices, while designed to supply goods to Western markets, are not marginalizing or disempowering the women in West Africa.

WW's published statistics are evidence of the organization's commitment to fair trade. According to the organization's reports, WW producers earn on average 75%

more than the national minimum wage, approximately 30% more than their industry peers, work 40-hour workweeks, have access to paid maternity leave, health care and retirement funds; only 8% of craft industry workers have access to similar benefits. While the findings of the present study can neither confirm nor dispute the published statistics, I observed that WW's employees, volunteers, and affiliates all valued, respected, and upheld the principles of fair trade. While some may argue that fair trade business practices are an insufficient solution to neoliberal economic policies, globalization and Western colonialism, in the context of the present study, fair trade appears to be making inroads that respect and empower women in developing regions and support the work towards the UN's MDGs (2013b).

Practice

NGOs play a significant role in the worldwide provision of adult education (Desjardins, 2013) and are acknowledged by the UN (2008, 2013b) as key contributors. The present study develops the literature base about NGO educational programs but also have applications for adult education practitioners in a variety of roles. For NGO administrators or program managers, the findings indicate that NGOs could likely benefit from the involvement of adult education professionals when planning, designing and delivering educational programs. Stifter (2004) touched upon the reliance of NGOs upon volunteers for the organization at the center of her study. Her findings indicated that the NGO programs in Ecuador were influenced by the activities that were perceived to attract Swedish and German volunteers. As Desjardins (2013) argued, volunteers are an unsustainable resource for adult education programs and diminish program quality

over time. WW's reliance on student volunteers to design and facilitate its training events was a key contributor to some of their less successful qualities. While volunteers can make important contributions, professional adult educators in training or management positions over volunteers could alleviate the challenges WW experienced with program quality.

On a related note, Alfred and Nafukho (2010) cite financing as a major challenge for the future of international adult education programs. Of course, limited resources are also an intrinsic characteristic of NGO operations. Many NGOs operate with tight budgets and therefore the supporting an educational mission, such as WW's, can be financially challenging. Concrete recommendations on how best to structure and fund NGO educational programs will have to account for this inherent tension among priorities. NGO administrators need to develop a vision for the organization that is made explicit to employees and volunteers to avoid miscommunications and devaluation of educational initiatives in favor of economic programs.

Adult education practitioners can increase the efficacy and impact of NGOs and their programs worldwide by addressing the challenges and opportunities derived from the literature and reinforced by the present study. The first pitfall, neoliberal influences (Timmer, 2009) can be avoided in part by being active and present locally, as WW is in this case, basing one of the founders and executive directors there, employing both locals and Westerners, and holding themselves accountable to their global client base as well as the women producers and entrepreneurs. In the same vein, WW is conscientious about striking a responsible balance between its various stakeholders, including donors,

retailers, producers, volunteers and employees. Similarly, WW is fortunate to operate in a country that recognizes the value of NGOs and has subsequently avoided some of the challenges NGOs in inhospitable regions must face, such as governmental mistrust (Kurbanova, 2010). Because WW's work does not overlap with any governmental services, there is no danger of undermining or replacing local efforts in contrast to many NGO that serve to fill a gap in governmental services (e.g. Stifter, 2004).

The last challenge described by the academic literature is the aptitude of NGOs to work with locals as equal partners (Bochman, 2011; Macpherson, 2009) and is a concern for NGO administrators, program managers, adult educators, and volunteers. In this respect, WW is inconsistent but serves as an important example regarding the necessity of continuous vigilance. As previously described, negotiating the differences in communication and philosophies of business between Western and West African contexts was a challenge even for this 10-year-old organization. One might expect that WW has long overcome any cultural barriers that might exist, but the findings indicate that communication and miscommunication are still rooted in cultural differences. Issues of trust stem from insufficient communication plans and can undermine operations. WW's use of the term *vendor* and the resulting fallout is a prime example of a way in which a seemingly small communication mistake can become a critical morale or production hurdle even in an organization that would generally be considered stable and successful. To further develop the literature and the relationship between the present findings and recommendations for practice, the following section suggests some recommendations for future research.

Future Research

The existing body of academic literature on NGO educational programs is still rather meager (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Desjardins, 2013). Given the potential impact of NGOs in developing regions and the UN and UNESCO's advocacy of collaboration with NGOs to address the MDG's, this line of research seems relevant and timely. Future research should continue to explore a variety of types of NGOs operating in diverse contexts. Additional considerations for future research include the following:

- The influence of key individuals. For example, further investigation into the impact of Gloria, the local manager of the Kundu CBP, in this study would have been useful for understanding the communication issues between the Western business operations and the local women entrepreneurs because she serves a gatekeeper role in the organization.
- The value of business-focused workshops versus trainings that address a comprehensive picture of the women's lives. In other words, how might the impact of bookkeeping or quality control programs differ from that of health related or goal-setting programs?
- What interventions or supports would be most appropriate and impactful for volunteers with little or no teaching experience running training events?
- What is an appropriate standard for the educational programs of organizations like WW? On the one hand, NGOs provide valuable opportunities that might otherwise not exist but, as described in the literature and the present study, those opportunities might be made much richer with a new or revised approach.

In effect, the present study has taken a broad overview of WW's educational programs. Future research should begin to delve more deeply into specific aspects of the trainings (within this organization or others) and ways in which those trainings may become more effective and valuable.

Conclusion

This study was organized into five chapters, including an introduction and problem statement, a literature review, the methodology, findings, and summary, discussion, and conclusion. Chapter I introduced the problem and motivated the conceptual framework, purpose of the study, research questions. Vella's (2002) 12 principles of adult learning and global feminist theory formed the two-part conceptual framework. Vella's principles suggested best practices for planning and delivering adult education programs in diverse cultural settings. Global feminist theory provided a lens through which international development initiatives for women may be critiqued (Mies, 1993; Tong, 2009).

Chapter II contained a review of the academic literature from multiple disciplines regarding the educational programs of NGOs and specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities for international organizations operating in developing regions. Chapter III presented a detailed description of the methodology guiding the research, including the qualitative case study design, case selection, data collection and analysis, and ethical issues. An overview of the case and findings from the data analysis formed Chapter IV. Major themes were (a) ongoing cultural and communication barriers, (b) a precarious balance between economic and personal empowerment, and (c) limited

educational program resources. A discussion of the findings and recommendations for practice and future research were addressed in Chapter V.

In conclusion, the educational work at the center of the present case study highlights the challenges and opportunities for an international NGO wishing to collaborate with and support the economic growth and empowerment of women in a developing region. Others in similar circumstances or with similar mandates for social or economic justice through education may draw from the present study to inform their educational agendas. Widespread incorporation of culturally appropriate and effective adult learning practices into NGOs' education programs may be an important and relevant objective for international adult education researchers and practitioners working towards the UN's MDGs and UNESCO's objectives for adult education worldwide.

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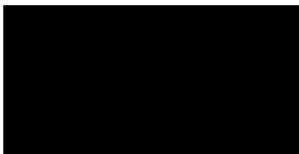
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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THE NGO



Date: Monday, May 6, 2013

To: Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board

Subject: Letter of Support for Jill Zarestky's Dissertation Study IRB Application

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am the Executive Director of [REDACTED]. My organization has given its approval for Jill Zarestky to conduct her dissertation study with us. The purpose of this letter is to indicate our support for her work.

Ms. Zarestky has shared with us the purpose of her study, which is to investigate the benefits and experiences of participants in our programs and of our employees and volunteers. We understand she will be observing the activities of our organization and interviewing people associated with [REDACTED]. It is our intention to support her research by allowing her access to our operations and introducing her to potential study participants.

If you have any questions, please contact me using the information included below.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF CULTURAL EVALUATION

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



Date: May 7, 2013

To: Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board

Subject: Letter of Cultural Evaluation for Jill Zarestky's Dissertation Study IRB Application

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. Larry W. Yarak; I am a historian of Africa and Associate Professor of history at Texas A&M University. I have traveled to and collected historical data in [REDACTED] numerous times over the last thirty years. Jill Zarestky, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development, approached me to provide my cultural expertise regarding the design of her study.

Based on my experience conducting research, I have found that [REDACTED] are a friendly and open people who value relationships based on trust rather than rules or procedures. The participants and goals of the study will best be served if Ms. Zarestky takes a friendly, casual approach rather than a formal or procedural one. [REDACTED] are also, in general, used to participating in surveys and are unlikely to respond or participate if they do not wish to do so. The likelihood of participants exposing themselves to unnecessary risk or being coerced into participation is, in my opinion, quite small.

Regarding the study Ms. Zarestky proposes, I make the following recommendations based on my knowledge and understanding of the [REDACTED] research context:

- Recruiting participants through the organization with which she is working, [REDACTED], is appropriate and non-coercive. Utilizing [REDACTED]' network of contacts and resources for recruitment is acceptable and even recommended. Allowing participants to select their own location for the consent and interview process is appropriate.
- Compensation for participation is appropriate and non-coercive. A small gift object, like a coffee mug or notebook, or a small gift of money, less than US\$5, would be suitable for demonstrating a researcher's appreciation without exerting undue influence.
- The use of a consent form or a formal verbal consent script is likely to intimidate or discourage participation. The study would be most appropriate if consent is obtained from [REDACTED] participants verbally and using casual, everyday language.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Larry W. Yarak'.

Larry W. Yarak, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of History
Texas A&M University
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APPENDIX C

LETTER DETAILING MY VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT

General Information

<i>Volunteer Name:</i>	Jill Zarestky
<i>Dates of Volunteering:</i>	July 25 – August 25, 2013
<i>Housing Arrangement:</i>	Volunteer House (Kundu)
<i>Volunteer Support:</i>	[Margaret] based in Kundu [Gloria] based in Kundu [Executive Director] based in US

Project Description

We are excited to have you volunteer with us. You will be based in Kundu with some possible travel to other locations if time allows.

Project Name: Worldwide Women's Capacity Building Program

Description: Worldwide Women is committed to creating prosperity for women in Africa. A major component of our mission is to build the capacity of our producers to achieve their personal goals, manage and grow their businesses, manage their personal life (health, finances, family), better understand fair trade, better understand Worldwide Women, and so on. Our staff and volunteers have developed and delivered countless training programs over the years with great success (and certainly a few flops). We have done a better job of implementing our capacity building program in our first location of Kundu, but we need to do more in other locations. In addition, most of our training

programs were developed with the entrepreneur in mind, but we now employ about 75 women (and men) who could benefit from training as well.

Your Role - Organize Training Programs – IN PROGRESS

Our challenge to you is to gather up our 10 years of training programs in one place, review and evaluate them (ideally using actual feedback from the women who have attended the sessions). Once you have developed a database of all the trainings available we'd like to work with you to create a required and suggested curriculum or training plan for each type of producer/employee based on the skills needed to achieve prosperity, improve performance, and succeed within the Worldwide Women family.

For example, each of our producers who own their own business should be required to take the fair trade training program. Optional would be a workshop on merchandising their store. Our employees could be required to take the long-term planning workshop recently offered in Kundu. Everyone should be required to participate at least once in a session about Worldwide Women (mission, vision, values, locations, employees, operations, etc.). Our producers in Kundu have really enjoyed health improvement related sessions – this could be optional, but should be offered in each location. At a minimum we would like to offer at least one opportunity for training per quarter in each production location. Please work with Margaret and Gloria on evaluating the needs of each employee type and location and developing a training plan. They will be instrumental in rolling this out in all locations.

Modify & Improve Workshops

As noted above, many of our trainings were developed for the entrepreneur. Do you see any existing programs that could be modified to be relevant for our direct employees (i.e. – business financial management to personal budgeting and money management)? Do you see any programs with solid evaluations that need to be updated or could be improved? Please also generate a list of topics that you think are missing from our existing workshops.

Teach a Workshop

We very much hope you will pick a workshop or two (or develop your own if you identify an area of need where we don't have existing resources) and teach it. Work with Gloria to determine the area of greatest need.

Evaluation As Per Your Research – Jill I'm adding this here for my co-workers so that they are aware they will need to help you facilitate your research.

Here is the short version of my research - if you would like more detail, I can certainly elaborate on any point.

My field is adult education and one of the key ideas in program development for adult learners is that programming is co-constructed by the instructor/facilitator and participants to respond flexibly to learners' needs. How this reciprocity works in practice is what I am really interested in, and from what I've read online, I get the impression that it is important to WIP as well.

I'm in the process of refining my purpose and research questions but here is where they stand now:

The purpose of this study is to examine the exchange between an international NGO and the women enrolled in that NGO's educational program. Specifically, I would like to explore the ways the NGO and program participants influence one another.

Consequently, the research questions guiding the study are as follows:

- What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the women participating in the NGO's educational program?
- What are the benefits, perceived and realized, for the NGO as a consequence of working with the women participants?
- How does participating in the NGO's educational program influence the women's lives?
- How do the women participants influence the NGO's operations and programs?

I would like to interview your employees, volunteers, and the women producers, with each individual's consent, of course. I would also like to observe classes and daily activities and generally gain an understanding of the organization's operations.

Project Name: Worldwide Women Social Networking

Description: Social networking has become a large part of brand identity in recent years. Worldwide Women has joined the movement with Facebook and Twitter sites.

Your Role: Engage yourself in our social networking outlets to let our customers, friends and fans know what is happening in West Africa. Encourage your friends and family to check into the sites as well. Each site has a different mood and so your role for each site will be different.

Worldwide Women: our most formal site to keep our retail customers and fans up to date on Worldwide Women production on the ground in West Africa. If you have interesting stories or pictures related to production, our women or volunteer activities that you think would be fitting for the professional nature of this site, please pass them on to your site manager for review and posting.

[*Partner Organization*]: for informing future volunteers and fans about volunteer, intern and producer activities as well as showcasing volunteer and intern opportunities. Post pictures or share links to your blogs relating to your work, your time with the women, and your experiences in West Africa.

Worldwide Women Volunteers: a fun and less formal site where you can share the haps (and mishaps) of your adventures and peculiar life in West Africa with current and past volunteers. If down the road you are traveling around the globe, you can also dig into this network of “pre-approved” people with a similar West Africa bond and maybe you will find someone to show you around their city or even crash on their couch. To join our private group, please click on the link below and “Ask to Join Group” (button in upper right corner).

Please Remember...

Although the objectives and planned activities may sound overwhelming, we will be here to support you every step of the way. Being flexible is a virtue as things change a lot in West Africa. The purpose of the description above is to help prepare you for your experience; however, the activities are subject to change.

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview Protocol for NGO Program Participants

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. This interview is being conducted for the purpose of my dissertation. I am interested in knowing what you think about the interaction and collaboration between [WW] and women, like you, who participate in their programs. The results will be published in my dissertation, and if you like, I will send you a copy of the study once it has been completed. What you have to say is important to me, and with your permission I would like to record the interview to ensure that I do not miss anything you say. Your name and identity will be changed on all transcripts made from the tapes, and on any reports made from the records, to protect the confidentiality of what you share. More details about these issues are available on the information sheet I've given you.

Date and time:

Location:

Recording#:

Participant description:

Approximate age:

Business:

Other comments/observations:

- How long have you been involved in the program?

- How did you come to be involved with [WW]? Why [WW]?
- Tell me more about the ways you've worked with [WW].
- What motivated you to start your own business?
- What is your vision for your business? How does [WW] help you with that?
- What do you think you get out of the program? What do you feel you are learning?
- In what ways do you give back to the program?
- Does [WW] ever ask for your opinion or input? If so, about what, and what was the result?
- How do you think the fact that [WW] is an American organization influences how the program works here in [West Africa]?
- Most of the products you produced are sold abroad. How does that influence the work you do?
- [WW] focuses mainly on women. Why do you think that is the case? What difference does that make?
- Has working with WIM/GP met your expectations? Why or why not?
- Tell me a time when you were really proud of your work.
- Have you ever had a conflict with [WW]? If so, what was it, and how did it get resolved.
- How would you describe your relationship with [WW]?
- How has your life changed since you started working with [WW]?
- Can you share with me something you are working on? Tell me about this piece.
- What else should I ask you about?

Interview Protocol for NGO Employees and Volunteers

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. This interview is being conducted for the purpose of my dissertation. I am interested in knowing what you think about the interaction and collaboration between [WW] and the women who participate in your programs. The results will be published in my dissertation, and if you like, I will send you a copy of the study once it has been completed. What you have to say is important to me, and with your permission I would like to record the interview to ensure that I do not miss anything you say. Your name and identity will be changed on all transcripts made from the tapes, and on any reports made from the records, to protect the confidentiality of what you share. More details about these issues are available on the information sheet I've given you.

Date and time:

Location:

Recording#:

Participant description:

Approximate age:

Job Title:

Other comments/observations:

- How long have you been involved in the program?
- How did you come to be involved with [WW]? Why [WW]?
- Tell me more about your job.
- What motivated you to do this work?

- What is your vision for the program and the work [WW] is doing?
- How do you choose projects and programs?
- How do you choose or recruit participants?
- What do you think participants get out of the program?
- In what ways do the participants give back to the program?
- How do you collaborate with participants?
- How do you think culture influences the NGO, its participants, or programs?
- What are the challenges for implementing successful projects?
- Most of the products produced by [WW] participants are sold abroad. How does that influence the work you do?
- What is the benefit of working with arts and crafts-based businesses?
- [WW] focuses mainly on women participants. What are the reasons for that decision and how do you think it influences your work?
- Tell me a time when you were really proud of your work or a [WW] project.
- Have you ever had a conflict with participants? If so, what was it, and how did it get resolved?
- How would you describe your relationship with participants?
- What else should I ask you?

APPENDIX E
OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

Date and Time:

Location/Physical Setting:

Persons Present:

[include descriptions/portraits of those not described elsewhere]

Events/Activities:

[include the purpose of the event/activity, outcomes, interactions/dynamics between individuals, context or relevance of the event/activity to the study]

Personal Reflections and Notes: