

UNITERRA VOLUNTEER COOPERATION PROGRAM



ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

April 2010 - March 2011

SUMMARY

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1. INTRODUCTION

External context

In 2010-2011, economic difficulties and the international situation exacerbated social tensions and provoked severe crises. Several countries, in particular Guinea, Niger and Burkina Faso, experienced social and political troubles with repercussions on program implementation. In Latin America, organized crime and drug trafficking engender a climate of violence and corruption, especially in Guatemala. In Asia, the socio-political situation in Nepal stabilized and Vietnam continued its growth with stable governance.

In response to these crises, several governments and funding agencies changed their development policies and investment priorities. The work of our partners and volunteers was directly affected by one or more of the following factors: the priority given to economic questions and a rise in public investments in agriculture; the decrease in funding for health and education; cutbacks in public funding for civil society organizations; multiplication of security problems and the forced evacuation of volunteers; instability of institutions; population movements; and natural disasters.

Despite the difficult context and the persistent negative impact of the economic and food crises, the results achieved by the Uniterra Program in 2010-2011 exceeded expectations.

Internal context

All sectoral planning was finalized with the partners from the 13 countries, as it was for the regional gender equality program in West Africa.

In 2010-2011, 460 volunteers contributed 48,046 person-days in support of 136 partners. They produced 1,281 management, training and communications tools, and they trained and coached 40,836 persons in order to build the capacities of partner organizations.

Leave for Change continued its development within Uniterra (71 volunteers this year) and put in place a growth strategy with the goal of doubling the number of volunteers by 2014. In addition, 84 young persons from Canada did professional internships with Students without Borders as part of the Uniterra Program, two groups of *Québec sans frontières* interns went to Burkina Faso and Mali, and two QSF interns from the South came to Canada.

Following the reconsideration of our public engagement strategy, we launched a public awareness campaign on gender equality. Furthermore, we support volunteers, partners and campus groups as they communicate the achievements and results of partners from the South and as they encourage their personal and professional networks to pose gestures of solidarity and support our work. To this end, we've started to disseminate volunteer and partner profiles, success stories and case studies. The new Uniterra website will be launched in the near future. According to the on line reports filed by our public engagement champions, we informed 148,000 persons, 22,000 of whom took concrete actions. We also produced 160 eye-witness personal accounts and media publications, thereby adding to the number of persons directly informed via our public engagement activities.

2. PROGRESS OF RESULTS IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

In the economic sector, Uniterra's objective is to improve the socio-economic conditions and food security of under-privileged and marginalized populations, in particular women and youth, in 9 countries: Burkina Faso, Guatemala, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Senegal and Vietnam.

The Program's strategy is to concentrate, for the most part, on building the capacities of partner organizations in the farming sector. However, it also focuses on occupational training, particularly in Vietnam. There are five main programming priorities:

- Support for crop and livestock sub-sectors
- Supporting the development of social entrepreneurship (collective and individual) for women

- Promoting natural resources sustainability and approaches for doing so;
- Strengthening policy dialogue between civil society organizations and government authorities; and
- Strengthening technical and entrepreneurial skills (i.e., employability), particularly among youth and women.

In 2010-2011, Uniterra strengthened over 75 organizations in terms of their core managerial capacities and their capacity to supply services. These organizations include: *Kiej de los bosques* in Guatemala in order to promote better market access for their products; *la Mutuelle d'épargne et de crédit dans la pêche artisanale* (the Traditional Fishers Savings and Credit Union) in Guinea to improve the credit services offered to fishermen and women fishmongers; the Lalitpur District Milk Producers Cooperative in Nepal in order to improve their milk refrigeration installations and management for the benefit of their members; RENAPESS (the National Network to Support the Promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy) in Mali in its dialogue with the government in favour of elaborating a national social economy policy; and the Hai Phong Community College of Vietnam in order to improve vocational training curricula and programs, as well as instructors' competencies regarding more participatory techniques.

In a context of economic catch-up, our partners made significant contributions in the area of youth and women's employment and in the fight against poverty. They contributed to relaunching agriculture in West Africa and to local processing of products by women. Over 2,000 new jobs were created in shea butter processing and rice parching, which contributed to more than doubling the incomes of the women affected. Other partners were very active in reconstruction in Guatemala after the hurricanes there and in the relaunching of handicrafts and community tourism. Six community colleges are Uniterra partners in Vietnam. They play key roles in the technical and vocational training of one million young persons a year, in response to the needs of a rapidly growing labour market. In Bolivia and Mali, Uniterra accompanied the dialogue between the state and civil society and directly contributed to the elaboration of new economic policies favourable to local and community economies. In Nepal, the strategy of FSC certification for forestry cooperatives is continuing as 10 new cooperatives joined the 20 existing ones. Women now account for 50% of the membership in Forest Users Groups, a remarkable milestone in terms of gender equality.

The skills of over 22,400 members, administrators, employees and unpaid volunteers (14,427 women, i.e., 64%, and 7,991 men) who are active in all of these organizations were strengthened in the areas of organizational management, communications, marketing, strategic planning, monitoring/evaluation, community service, funding development, new information and communications technologies, as well as in dozens of technical fields.

In collaborations between partners and volunteers, 566 tools, policies, procedures, leaflets and guides were developed to improve organizations in terms of their management, core competencies and visibility.

Several partnerships were supported and consolidated in this sector, including between RENAPESS from Mali, *le Chantier de l'économie sociale du Québec* and INPSSE. Another example is the partnership between two agricultural producers federations from Burkina Faso and Mali and Quebec's *Union des producteurs agricoles* (UPA) in the context of the producer to producer internship "Viens Marcher ma Terre" ("Come Walk on my Land").

The Program is also involved in a feasibility study carried out by CECI concerning the creation of a social economy enterprise specializing in the importing of large quantities of shea butter produced by women in West Africa.

Several partner organizations also benefited from support enabling them to better structure their policy dialogue on sectoral issues. Mali's RENAPESS is an example. It is engaged in an ongoing and productive dialogue with the Malian government on elaborating a national social economy policy. The same holds for several umbrella organizations representing farmers which developed their lobbying and communications strategies aimed at the governmental authorities of their respective countries, such as for example the framework for concerted action of the peanut producers' of Senegal.

Lessons learned:

- Until 2009, support for the UGPPK/SZ emphasized the decentralization of shea butter production, which entailed a product traceability system. While this system for sharing out work fostered greater accountability from women producers, it did not enable comprehensive quality control of the butter marketed by the UGPPK/SZ. In addition to inconsistent butter quality, there were issues of high costs of production and the UGPPK/SZ's weak capacity to respond to new orders, especially from international customers. To address these issues the UGPPK/SZ's Board of Directors decided to institute a pilot centralization and production mechanization process.
- Solid support for partnerships between the state and civil society organizations can result in a significant change in the functioning of relations between the public and private sectors. Mali's policy on the social and solidarity economy is an example offering many lessons. In effect, after the department in charge of SSE issues officially recognized the RENAPESS this led to institutional support in the form of the provision of office space.
- The gradual appropriation of Uniterra monitoring and evaluation tools, developed for planning, monitoring and reporting purposes, and the adaptation thereof by certain partners in the context of their own activities, enable these partners to strengthen their governance and transparency through improved systemization of the achievements of the projects and programs they implement.
- Building the capacities of local partners can lead to the development of partnerships at the international level. Thus, thanks to support from volunteers, Mali's *Union des coopératives Si Yiriwa* established a business partnership with *Chimitex de Marseille* for the manufacture and sale of soap.

3. PROGRESS OF RESULTS IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

In the health sector, Uniterra endeavours to improve the living conditions and health of youth and women infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS in the regions where its partners are active. The HIV/AIDS sector is comprised of three countries: Burkina Faso, Malawi and Botswana. In addition, in Mali there is also a community health cooperation project with FENASCOM.

The Program's strategy focuses on building the capacities of partner organizations to deliver programs designed to respond to the pandemic through prevention or by managing the care of infected and affected persons and managing palliative care or by providing screening services and advice on behaviour modification.

The issues and programming priorities, which largely overlap, translate into programs focusing on prevention and HIV/AIDS related health care. This strategy is comprised of three programming priorities:

- 1) improving access to services for preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, particularly for women and youth;
- 2) improving access to managed care and support for PLHIVs and other affected persons; and
- 3) strengthening the governance and professionalism of partner organizations.

In Burkina Faso, it has been recognized that the work of community organizations is the key to success in HIV/AIDS prevention. The prevalence rate there fell to 1.2% in 2010. The government hopes to replicate the success of the participatory approaches used in the AIDS campaign as it goes forth with new maternal and infant health initiatives.

In Botswana, the prevalence rate has been cut in half to 17.6% thanks to the national strategy centring on free access to medicines. However, a study by the Tertiary Education Council, carried out with support from a Uniterra volunteer, indicates that the strategy's prevention efforts targeting youth were a failure, notably due to the fact that free health care fostered nonchalant attitudes. Worried by these results, the partners of the Health Care Sectoral Committee are at the forefront of civil society advocacy for reorienting the fight against AIDS towards the prevention based approaches that made all the difference in Burkina Faso.

In 2010-2011, Uniterra strengthened the capacities of more than 24 partner organizations and their members to improve the quality of their services. In Malawi, doctors and nurses from palliative care centres received training on pain recognition and treatment. The City of Blantyre improved its early childhood education services for orphans and vulnerable children. MANET+ now has a web-based resources mobilization team. WOFAD, Chinsapo Home Based Care and the Likuni Hospital have improved their nutrition services for persons living with HIV and AIDS by, among other measures, planting vegetable gardens. MANASO has a resource centre in Mzuzu that improves access to information on HIV/AIDS for its members.

In Botswana, capacities for producing and disseminating information and advocacy documents were enhanced. In Burkina Faso, *la Coopérative Jeunesse Africaine* started income-generating activities, notably the production and sale of soap by students to pay for their school supplies. ADIPS improved the quality of its presentation of laboratory results analyses and the quality of its presentations on nutrition. REVS+ now has a working theatre company. REVS+ and SEMUS have improved their supply of managed care services and reduced the number of missed treatments thanks to the purchase of bicycles and a motorcycle for doing follow-ups.

Over 12,000 persons, 55% of them women, from the health and HIV/AIDS sector strengthened their competencies in information sharing and reporting, communications, women's rights and human rights, networking/resource mobilization, organizational management and health care delivery. Four hundred and seventy-five tools were produced: posters, charts, educational leaflets intended for patients afflicted with HIV/AIDS, pain tables and charts, nutrition guides, psychosocial accompaniment, etc.

As for partnerships, ADIPS in Burkina Faso initiated a partnership with *le Réseau de la coopération du travail du Québec* (RCTQ) to promote African Youth Cooperatives. Malawi established a partnership with the Canadian Medical Foundation and Providence Health Care to strengthen partners' capacities in palliative care. Malawi formed a partnership with a local organization specializing in gender equality issues, the Forum for African Women Educationists. Botswana established a partnership with the Botswana Business Coalition on HIV-AIDS (BBCA) which will enable this organization to offer additional services in the business community.

Santé Mali cooperation project with FENASCOM

In 2010-2011, Uniterra's support enables FENASCOM to consolidate three partnerships with Canadian community health organizations: *CSSS du Littoral*, *CSSS de la Vieille Capitale* and *le Réseau québécois des intervenants et intervenantes en action communautaire* (RQIIAC). Working with these partners enabled FENASCOM to position itself as a leader in promoting community health in Mali.

RQIIAC supported FENASCOM and stakeholders in general in the process of harmonizing the training modules used by community health associations. Teams of trainers were given training on these modules, which constitute references for community health in Mali.

Examples of good results:

- The execution of the "*Prévention et prise en charge communautaire de la malnutrition*" ("Malnutrition prevention and community management of services") pilot project by the two CSSS enabled two ASACOs to improve their malnutrition prevention and treatment services. This pilot project also increased women's participation in the management of primary health services. An evaluation is planned to assess the impact of this intervention on pregnant women and nursing babies.
- 40% of the CSCOMs have integrated new services: laboratory, medical imaging...
- The pilot project "*Caisnes villageoises de solidarité santé*" ("Village Health Solidarity Funds") enabled FENASCOM to strengthen its capacities in planning, project development, supervision and monitoring and evaluation.
- FENASCOM participates in policy dialogue on universal access to health care.

Lessons learned

- Working with networks of organizations increases the Uniterra Program's impact, especially in terms of information and knowledge sharing, which is essential in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This underlines the importance of the sectoral committee which enables partners to share their practices and experiences.

- It is very important to maintain good relations with the different levels of government in order to influence them or to participate in the development of public policies, as for example in Burkina Faso where Uniterra partners contributed to the elaboration of the 3rd Strategic Framework for the Fight against HIV, AIDS and STDs (2011-2015). The Program also gained the participation of the Ministry of Health as a member on the Health Sector Advisory Committee.

4. PROGRESS OF RESULTS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The education sector includes three countries: Ghana, Niger and Senegal. However, the terrorism related troubles in Niger led to the gradual termination of Uniterra activities there. In Senegal, our work takes the form of a cooperation project (as opposed to complete sectoral programming) with partner organizations that worked effectively between 2004 and 2009. This success led Uniterra to continue its collaboration with them.

In the education sector, several results are veritable exploits given our partners' chronic lack of funding. Thirty-one organizations and their members in six countries received support from Uniterra. In Ghana, as in Senegal and Niger, progress is slowing regarding the number of persons taught to read and write. In this context, the Girls Club strategy in Ghana has proven advantageous for girls' education. In effect, the school enrolment rate is above average in areas where such clubs are active.

In Ghana, Uniterra's objective is to increase educational attainment among girls and enhance their employment-related aptitudes, thus enabling them to realize their full potential. The issue then is to ensure that girls attend school and, more importantly, complete their studies. Ghana has just reviewed its strategic education plan for 2010-2020 and discovered that despite the rise in school enrolment rates in recent years, girls' school completion rates at the secondary level remains low. In effect, drop-out rates rise the further girls progress in their studies.

The main problems hindering girls' education are 1) the quality of the curriculum, 2) the shortage of teachers and 3) an unsafe school environment. Uniterra's partners are working to resolve these issues, notably via:

- The increase in the number of girls clubs, which focused on children's rights this year. In addition to the girls clubs, there is also an Annual Girls' Camp which in 2010-2011 enabled 40 girls to increase their confidence in themselves and their achievements so as to encourage them to continue their schooling.
- Teacher training. About 100 girls' education instructors were trained on quality of teaching and girls' learning issues, as well as on how to ensure girls' safety in schools.
- Partners' elaboration of a Girls' Education Policy to counter the problem of violence against girls.

In Senegal, our partners work in the **non-formal education** sector. Their work is done in collaboration with our partners in economic development, which is Uniterra's main programming sector in Senegal. In 2010-2011, our literacy training partners strongly focused on developing strategies and tools to improve the quality of literacy programs. Their work enabled improvements in approaches to literacy training that contribute to economic development, agriculture and promoting the status of women.

The North-South partnership between ALPHADEV and RGPAQ (*Réseau des groupements populaires en alphabétisation du Québec*) is both consolidating and broadening to encompass new aspects, beyond sharing experiences around the REFLECT approach. This relationship takes the form of two annual exchange missions (one North-South and one South-North), which have enabled the development of the REFLECT approach among literacy-training organizations in Canada and the designing of innovative teaching materials in Senegal. The two organizations are developing potential avenues for collaboration in the coming years.

In total, 2,900 actors in the basic education and non-formal education sector strengthened their competencies in, by order of importance, the implementation of educational services, research-action, knowledge sharing (sensitizing girls on child labour and their rights, life skills courses), organizational management, project development, etc.

Over fifty tools were produced, including public awareness tools: posters, charts, educational leaflets, nutrition guides and psychosocial accompaniment manuals.

Lesson learned:

The key to success in eliminating obstacles to girl's education lies in concerted action, i.e., the collaboration of the government, NGOs, civil society and teachers/educators, as attests the success of the Annual Girls Camps in Ghana. These Annual Camps are a vector for changing how girls envision their future. This in turn enables girls to contribute to changes in the attitudes and practices of their families and communities on the importance of educating girls.

5. PROGRESS OF RESULTS IN THE GOVERNANCE SECTOR

Uniterra tackles governance from the standpoint of strengthening civil society, both in terms of coordinated action among stakeholders and of establishing of policy dialogue with governmental authorities.

The governance sector includes two countries from the Americas, Bolivia and Peru, and a region, francophone West Africa (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal) where 6 coalitions of women's organizations are engaged in networking work and regional policy dialogue, efforts that contribute to gender equality (GE) and the promotion of women's citizenship.

Although issues and programming priorities differ from country to country, one issue that Bolivia and Peru do share is social management of water and the strengthening of local municipal authorities. As for the sector's regional GE component, it centres on an issue common to all five countries: the adoption of a protocol on the defence and promotion of women's rights in West Africa in partnership with the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre and the Wildaf-WA network.

The aim of programming in Peru is to improve the management capacities of municipal water utilities, as well as improve the services they supply in urban areas, while at the same time strengthening popular participation in the management of these services and in the conservation of water resources. This was a year of election and change for municipal authorities, which directly affected our sector partners, EPS (*Empresas Municipales de Servicios*). That did not, however, prevent our nine volunteers from participating in the production and dissemination of over 100 analysis and methodology tools, as well as in developing the knowledge and skills of over 1,877 water users, 56% of them women. Two major experiences are worth highlighting: 1) the creation of forums for exchanges between the population and the managers of potable water services in Tacna, a major city; and 2) the strengthening of project development and management capacities of women's organizations with links to *la Red nacional de promoción de la mujer* (National Network for the Advancement of Women), in accordance with the results-based approach and GE issues.

In Bolivia, the political context is quite conducive to attaining results in the three programming areas: local development, democratization of the economy and women's rights. Although policy dialogue between the population and the authorities has become more tense, due to major increases in the price of food and consumer goods, the government is showing openness towards the demands of marginalized populations. Projects in Bolivia have the following aims: strengthening policy dialogue on the local, regional and national levels; improving rural communities' access to water, sanitation and health services; improving the access to markets of social economy actors, and the institutionalization and recognition of their contribution.

This year, Uniterra supported rural municipalities in developing economic activities such as community ecotourism and solid waste management. In addition, Uniterra contributed to the organization of a fair trade fair and the adoption of a ministerial policy favourable to the social economy and fair trade. The 17 volunteers who worked with our partners trained over 1,069 persons, 58% of them women.

The GE regional component in West Africa proceeded in a context that was more conducive to governments taking into consideration women's rights and equal rights between women and men. Gender equality policies were adopted in Senegal and Mali. As such, they constitute precedents and

models for other countries in the region. In terms of the international women's movement, African women, notably Congolese women, benefited from solidarity and an exceptional international platform during the World March of Women (WMW) in South Kivu. Networks of women's organizations from West Africa and Canada, which are Uniterra partners, participated in this event. The contribution made by nine volunteers, including six from the South, proved very useful in energizing our partners and building their capacity for action. A privileged relationship has developed with the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre, a strategic institution as regards the adoption of a gender protocol in the ECOWAS region. In total, 495 persons, 86% of them women, benefited from the regional component's training and networking activities.

In the governance sector, 28 organizations, mainly composed of national or regional groupings, were supported in 7 countries, 35 volunteers were mobilized to support partners, and 3,441 persons, including 2,157 women (62.7%) enhanced their skills.

Over **181 tools** were produced by volunteers and partners: special dossiers on particular issues, communications and promotional tools, polls and surveys, educational programs, videos, business plans, lists of funding organizations, national strategies, etc.

Partnerships between organizations from the South and organizations from Canada

The partnership ties established between six coalitions of women's organizations are effective and are driving a dynamic on the national and regional levels conducive to real consideration of women's rights, both at the popular level and within governments.

The partnerships with the World March of Women, WILDAF and AWID also constitute important spaces for strengthening the competencies of members and the knowledge capital of organizations on global issues affecting women. Moreover, there were sustained ties between *la Fédération des femmes du Québec* and West African women's networks over the entire year.

In Peru, the Program's partners are mainly from the public sector and its municipal structures. However, a new partner from civil society has joined the Program: The National Network for the Promotion of Women. In Bolivia, the sectoral partners are civil society organizations, including an organization of social entrepreneurs, youth groups and women's organizations, and rural municipalities including a federation of indigenous municipalities.

Lessons learned

- Uniterra's partner coalitions constitute a source of support and an undeniable pillar in terms of organization, information sharing and synergies in activities to promote major changes in women's rights.
- The strengthening of women's organizations from West Africa in the area of policy dialogue, as effected through their participation in international events (e.g., WMW in Congo, WMW in Rimouski, *Conférence de l'ARUC*), constitutes a relevant means of transferring knowledge and simultaneously enabling these organizations to envision gender issues and women's empowerment in new and different ways.

6. PROGRESS OF RESULTS IN TERMS OF GENDER EQUALITY

The application of Uniterra's gender equality strategy benefited from a particularly favourable international context for making governments, civil society organizations and populations aware of the importance of continuing concerted action to improve the status of women in the world.

Internationally, the creation of UN Women was the culmination of a long-standing demand of women's organizations and actors in the development community in favour of consolidating the UN's interventions in this area.

As for the women's movement, many public awareness events coordinated by the World March of Women took place in over 70 countries. This culminated in a major event that drew the entire world's attention to the situation of raped and abused women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Many countries also highlighted the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day (March 8). Activities were organized to commemorate women's struggles to improve their living conditions, their social and political representation and respect for their rights. In Ghana, women's organizations demanded more financial resources from the government, especially in order to support their actions to eliminate violence against women and girls.

In Africa, the year 2010 saw the proclamation of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020), which should raise the visibility of women's issues and spur governments to introduce mechanisms to improve the status of women and improve respect for their rights. The adoption of *la Loi sur la Parité* (the Parity Act) in Senegal, the National Gender Policy in Mali, quota laws in Burkina Faso and Niger constitute significant advances for these governments and an important lever for women's organizations. In Guinea, an increasing number of women participate in elections and are appointed as cabinet ministers and to high level positions in the civil service. On the other hand, the mobilizations against *le Code de la Famille* (Family law) in Mali indicate that major obstacles exist to changes in mentality in favour of gender equality.

The Unitererra Program's gender equality strategy is based on a two-track approach: 1) the cross-cutting application of gender issues in every project and component of the Program, and 2) a sectoral approach, within the framework of governance sector activities.

In terms of access to Program resources and benefits, in 2010-2011, women represented **62% of the 40,836 persons who received training or were direct beneficiaries**; that translates into more than 25,306 women with increased skills and knowledge, equipped to contribute to the economic and social development of their communities, to the effectiveness of their organizations and to the general welfare of their country. Unitererra's objective was to reach at least 60% in terms of the proportion of women beneficiaries, a target it exceeded in 2010-2011 by a small margin.

Moreover, the various country sectors allocated an average of **16.8% of their sectoral funds to GE**, with the notable outliers being West Africa's GE component (100%) and Ghana (60%) due to its programming centring on girls' education. This represents major progress in that GE's share rarely topped 5% in the previous Program (2004-2009).

The Program counts on the support and contribution of partners specializing in GE related issues. In addition to the **13 national women's networks** associated with the sectoral committees and partners from 11 of the 13 programming countries, these partners include Tra Vinh University in Vietnam, the SADC in Botswana, the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre and WILDAF in connection with the regional GE component in West Africa. Canadian partners such as *le Conseil du Statut de la Femme du Québec*, *la Fédération des femmes du Québec* and the World March of Women are actively involved in the Program and in accompanying partners from the South.

In 2010-2011, more than **29 Canadian volunteers specializing in GE** or institutional development accompanied GE and/or sectoral partners. Together, they contributed to training over **6,598 persons, including 3,972 women (60%) and 2,626 men (40%)** on issues directly related to gender equality.

One hundred and two tools were created, including: studies on gender relations within municipal potable water utilities, GE manuals and training modules, public awareness leaflets on violence against women, videos on social audits, gender-sensitive budget analyses, declarations on GE policies, a document on integrating GE issues in school curricula...

Partners have organized public awareness campaigns on GE related issues. In Botswana, the campaign aimed at youth on sexual violence and the "Aunties and Uncles" community program have become exemplary best practices for countering sexual abuses. Unitererra also supports the SADC in the implementation of the international "16 days against violence against women" campaign and the production of a newsletter distributed in member countries. In Ghana, girls clubs continue their advocacy activities on the importance of keeping girls in school and organizations have started a Gala for girl soccer players to encourage girls' participation in sports and community activities. In Mali, a Forum on the status of Malian women after 50 years of independence drew the attention of the public and the media.

Uniterra's **virtual gender resources network**, composed of 68 volunteers, partners, field and home office personnel, fostered the sharing of tools and information – in all three of the Program's official languages.

Lessons learned in terms of integrating GE issues

- In Mali, our partners see strengthening women's economic power as a determining factor in achieving true change in the social and political status of women in rural areas; they also emphasize the necessity of involving men in the process.
- As for the application of the GE strategy in the Program as a whole, it is fundamental to bank on the knowledge and seasoned judgement of personnel, the involvement of host-country partners specializing in GE, in particular women's networks, the volunteers who are messengers of this approach, statistical data on gender inequalities at the national and regional levels and the existing policies and international conventions signed by national governments.

7. PROGRESS OF RESULTS IN RELATION TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Beyond its development activities in the South, Uniterra organizes activities to inform and sensitize the Canadian public concerning development issues, international cooperation and gender equality.

In order to reach as many people as possible, Uniterra supports volunteers, partners and student groups as they communicate the achievements and results of partners from the South and encourage their personal and professional networks to take actions in solidarity and support our work. To this end, we've begun disseminating volunteer and partner profiles, success stories and case studies.

Uniterra also supports volunteers who have returned from an overseas placement to promote interest in development, ties of solidarity and knowledge among persons in their own personal and professional circles.

New public engagement initiatives

In 2010-2011, the Uniterra public engagement team elaborated initiatives, in line with the new public engagement strategy, in order to:

- Publicize development results and accomplishments
- Show how solidarity works between Canada and communities in Uniterra's programming countries.
- Give visibility to the presence of South-North volunteers in Canada
- Get volunteers, local committees and their personal and professional networks, engaged in action
- Get partners and their personal and professional networks engaged in action

In 2010-2011, some **148,143 persons were informed** and sensitized on development issues by networks of volunteers, partners and other participants in the Program. Among them, **21,927 persons undertook** concrete actions of solidarity through the voluntary activities organized by Uniterra's various networks; and over **166 personal accounts** about cooperation appeared in the print and electronic media.

Uniterra conducted its first annual campaign on gender equality: **Her challenge, your challenge**, which offers concrete ways for the public to get involved in favour of equality. By taking action, participants acknowledge that many women in the world still face major challenges and that these must be overcome if one is to speak of respect for their rights and equal opportunity between women and men. The results to date include the many persons who have become ambassadors for the campaign, the production of 53 videos and events on campuses and around International Women's Day.

Uniterra also participated in the **World March of Women** activities in the Republic of the Congo, as well as in activities in Canada, such as the visit of the president of the Siggil Jigeen network, a Conference on Africa organized by l'*Université du Québec en Outaouais* and the WMM's inaugural march. And, as it does every year, the Uniterra team participated in the organizing committee of **les Journées québécoises de la solidarité internationale (JQSI) 2010** in November 2010.

Uniterra volunteers in the media. In 2010-2011, returned volunteers were mentioned 90 times in articles or on the radio, including in interviews on CBC/Radio Canada. They also gave many presentations and talks in their workplaces, universities and communities. Volunteers also kept blogs for the duration of their mandates, used the new information and communications technologies, including social networking, and, let's not forget, conducted fund-raising for the benefit of partners from the South.

Local committees. In 2010-2011, students in local committees informed **59,153** of their peers and led them to participate **18,034** times in their activities: seminars, fund-raising activities for Bikes for AIDS, promoting ethical consumption, gender equality activities and other activities related to international development.

Activities were also organized with Canadian partner organizations and the members of the corporation of CECI and WUSC such as **CCEDNet's 2010 National Summit on a People-Centred Economy** and the 2010 seminar *le Regroupement québécois des intervenants et intervenantes en action communautaire (RQIIAC)*. Two Uniterra South-North volunteers, specifically Malian representatives from FENASCOM, participated in the latter event. This Malian participation in the RQIIAC 2010 seminar facilitated the initiating and consolidation of the North-South partnership relations that are part and parcel of Uniterra's programming. In Gatineau, the 280 persons participating in the seminar were informed about the project with Mali and about twenty of them took the further step of participating in the international workshop.

8. LESSONS LEARNED IN TERMS OF OPERATIONS

- Regarding success in volunteer placements, the following aspects are worth bearing in mind:
 - Interns and students benefit from being twinned with a long term professional volunteer for orientation, briefing on the local context, support and mentoring.
 - It's important to put volunteers in contact with other volunteers for professional and personal support.
 - It's important to maintain regular contact with volunteers throughout their placements to monitor how their work progresses. Moreover, regular meetings between the management team and volunteers strengthen group dynamics, as well as the feeling of belonging to the organization on the part of volunteer resource persons. Meetings strengthen ties between volunteers and are opportunities for them to exchange tools, create synergies, etc.
 - Recreational activities and tourism are important as well because they maintain group cohesion among volunteers and foster communication between the Uniterra team and volunteer resource persons.
- When a volunteer works for several partners, it is crucial that he or she be based with a principal organization before moving from place to place. This enables the volunteer to form a social and professional network that will facilitate his or her integration.

9. CONCLUSION

CECI and WUSC are very satisfied with the Year 2 results, both in the field and in Canada. We believe that the Uniterra Program is progressing smoothly after the transition phase. All personnel is trained and in place, management tools and systems have been updated and their use is increasingly appropriated.

However, it has not been a problem-free year. We were forced to deal with security issues and relocalize volunteers affected by crises in Nepal, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Niger. These situations are now stabilized. Our management of security issues proved effective. There were no victims among our volunteers. That said, a consequence of these issues is the unbalanced allocation of volunteers between risky regions, where placements are insufficient, and stable areas which sometimes have too many volunteers. We are presently reviewing our programming models to better deal with conflict

situations. We will also assess the question of adapting the program to the issues of food security, climate change and other emerging international issues.

As for the outlook in other areas, we've decided to double Leave for Change within three years in response to the interest of Canadian businesses for corporate volunteering and in light of the appreciation shown by our partners from the South, especially when short term missions are supported by long term volunteers. We are also presently assessing the integration of all Students without Borders internships in Uniterra. On the qualitative level, we will continue implementing impact indicators in order to better document the impact of our partners' activities on populations. Moreover, the Knowledge Management Unit will do five case studies that will be disseminated via international conferences and during the public engagement campaign on sustainable development. This research includes a paper on strengthening women's economic power in Burkina Faso, two studies on the social economy policies of Mali and Bolivia, a study on youth employment and vocational training in Vietnam and the experience of Ghana's girls clubs. These research studies will all highlight the accomplishments of Uniterra's partners and volunteers.

In conclusion, excellent results were achieved in 2010-2011 and the prospects for innovation to allow the Uniterra Program to remain a leader in international volunteer cooperation are good. None of which would have been possible without the funding and support of CIDA for which we are sincerely grateful.