



# SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE TRAINING PROJECT

Melhorada Community

## SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

São Tomé e Príncipe is a small country of 220,000 people located in the Gulf of Guinea off the coast of west Africa.

Comprised of two islands, the nation gained independence of Portugal in 1975 and due to its warm, equatorial climate and volcanic soils, has been able to maintain an agricultural economy that revolves around cacao, palm oil, and coffee.

Malaria is endemic, and HIV/AIDS plagues the young population, 65% of which is under the age of 25. Primary school is only compulsory for four years, and options for secondary education are not as widely available.



# PARTNERSHIP WITH CHURCH

TerraMica is partnering with the local church to implement the My Healthy Home and the My Healthy Community curriculum and training programs. The Free Methodist Church (FMC) is active on the island and has been successful in planting several new churches in poor communities. The FMC has also been working closely with other denominations to meet the wide variety of challenges the people of São Tomé face.



## COMMUNITY AND NEEDS



The sense of hopelessness in São Tomé is palpable. When asked about plans or dreams for the future, the response is usually a blank stare and silence. The focus is very much on the present; survive today and worry about tomorrow when it comes.

This passivity is seen in other aspects of society as well. There is limited community organization, and families tend to live in walled compounds. Neighbors infrequently talk to each other in depth, and even when they are in need will not dare approach each other for help for fear of public shame. Many are waiting on the government to resolve their problems. Household roles and responsibilities tend to be very strict: mom is in charge of the children, cooking, and cleaning, and dad does the manual labor. Family frustrations are often resolved with domestic violence and “bateboca”, harsh verbal disputes.

Hard liquor “palm wine” is the refuge of choice for those seeking escape from all the household and community frustrations. Palm wine helps you pass the time, forget your problems, and even helps babies go to sleep.

There is a general lack of understanding of a healthy diet, and due to poor budgeting and low wages, the money and resources needed to achieve a healthy diet are often not available. Undernutrition is prevalent among adults and children. A lack of protein and iron in the diet leads to high rates of anemia, and dirty water leads to diarrhea, vomiting, and infections.

When used to clean wounds, the parasitic water creates worse infections, and access to clinics or hospitals is extremely limited.

## FAMILY

Silvana lives in Melhorada, a community of 300 families. She is 30 years old and is the mother of five children; the youngest are two-year-old twins. She is married to a civil engineer and has a part-time job as a cook at a primary school. Even with two incomes, the family struggles to make ends meet. They do not have enough money to buy food every day, and two to three times a week the children go to school without eating.

The days that they are fortunate enough to eat, they have only two small meals, breakfast and dinner. Out of the 300 families that live in Melhorada, Silvana estimates that 100 of them are in a similar financial struggle.

Silvana dropped out of school in 5th grade, and says her main goal now is to help her children. Malaria and high blood pressure have caused a lot of problems for her family, and she also complains of vomiting and diarrhea in the children. She doesn't do anything to treat the water before they drink it, and the family animals drink from the same water source as the kids.

Although the twins both need medical attention (one for a minor surgery and the other for an antifungal treatment), Silvana says that the distance and expense of taking them to a clinic is too much for the family to bear.



# TERRAMICA'S APPROACH

TerraMica intends to work with **875 families (5,250 people)** in four communities in São Tomé e Príncipe over the next three years. Our approach involves **training 200 church-affiliated community-change agents** who will facilitate ongoing family and community development as they receive and implement our My Healthy Home and My Healthy Community training and related small community-building initiatives within our target communities of Melhorada (300 families), Uba-Flor (300 families), Agua Viva (150 families), and Milagrosa (125 families).

Training content will be created and completed in year one, and training will occur intensively over years two and three as associated homework assignments and community initiatives ramp up accompanying the training. Our thirteen-lesson training course will include the following topics:

1. **My Healthy Home: Shalom**
2. **My Healthy Home: Family Relationships**
3. **My Healthy Home: Family Organization**
4. **My Healthy Home: Family Budget**
5. **My Healthy Home: Diet**
6. **My Healthy Home: Food Preparation**
7. **My Healthy Home: First Aid and Safety**
8. **My Healthy Home: Good Habits**
9. **My Healthy Community: Adult Literacy**
10. **My Healthy Community: Sports and Recreation**
11. **My Healthy Community: Music and Dance**
12. **My Healthy Community: Gardening**
13. **My Healthy Community: Cooking and Baking**

Each community will implement small-scale initiatives in adult literacy, sports and recreation, music and dance, gardening, and cooking/baking.

By the end of the third year, we expect all four communities to have significant awareness of all topics covered in trainings and have established, ongoing community initiatives related to all five My Healthy Community topics.

TerraMica's close partnership with local churches in each of the four selected communities will ensure sustainable activities and ongoing training in each community long after TerraMica's project implementation timeframe ends. Our established local relationships help guarantee future expansion to other communities in São Tomé e Príncipe as local community-change agents and churches absorb the training content and training methodology and use the training content and methodology to work in new geographic areas, thereby sustaining and multiplying the impact of initial investment and training.



## BUDGET

The total budget for TerraMica's three-year transformational training program with 875 families in four communities in São Tomé e Príncipe is **\$161,600**.

This total does not include an initial investment to be made by TerraMica in creation of the local training content in Portuguese using local stories and examples for powerful educational impact.

The total budget for sponsoring the three-year project implementation in the community of Melhorada is **\$55,000**.