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REINTEGRATION AND STABILIZATION IN THE EAST AND NORTH (RISEN)

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2010

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REINTEGRATION AND STABILIZATION IN THE EAST AND NORTH (RISEN)

ANNUAL REPORT: JUNE 2009 – JUNE 2010

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

On June 15, 2009 DAI signed contract number DOT-1-00-08-0035-00 with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement the Reintegration and Stabilization in the East (RISE) program in Sri Lanka executed under the Support Which Implements Fast Transitions (SWIFT) III indefinite quantity contract.

After 25 years of intermittent civil war, the Government of Sri Lanka has redrawn the map of control over the country's diverse provinces and peoples. In 2002, the year the Ceasefire Agreement was signed, the picture was of a series of government-controlled provinces in the south and a largely Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)-dominated north. The remaining area in the East—ethnically mixed, politically charged, and economically deprived—was a patchwork of real estate controlled in some parts by the government and in others by the LTTE. Both sides have long considered the east to be critical to their respective goals; ruined infrastructure and lost lives have been the result of their fight to claim it. Today, the map is dramatically different: the government has re-asserted itself in all areas of the country that were previously under LTTE control.

Since late 2007, with the “liberation” of the east, the government has promised the citizens of the Eastern Province that life would improve and development would be forthcoming. However, the presence of the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) and other armed groups, particularly in Batticaloa, seems to have replaced one paramilitary paradigm with another. If people of the east do not perceive changes soon, their optimism will be lost again, reducing support for the government's legitimacy and plans. The downside scenario is easy to elaborate: alienated by war, neglect, and reprisal, many may return to violence. Change will be sought through fighting between the disenfranchised and those in control.

Set against this backdrop, USAID/Sri Lanka's RISE program, through its integrated series of tasks and activities, was designed to embrace the widest possible range of conflict-prevention mitigation measures and post-conflict interventions to create, advertise, promote, and value stability and public confidence—not just for Eastern Sri Lanka, but for every inhabitant who today feels compromised, left out, at-risk, hopeless, or militant. RISE's overall goal, to promote stability by improving human and economic security in targeted communities, provides support and opportunities for at-risk youth, and is building public confidence that core conflict issues are being addressed. The RISE program falls within USAID's integrated strategy for Eastern Province stabilization, transformation, and development. It contributes to the overall U.S. Government goal in Sri Lanka of promoting enduring stability and working for the betterment of all citizens in Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic Eastern Province. Achieving this goal will promote the stability that is needed to secure peace in the country's conflict-affected areas.

A total of \$4.195 million was obligated to the contract in June 2009 to implement activities over two years across three primary focus areas:

Community-focused reintegration: USAID/RISE will identify communities where militant recruitment has historically been high. It will collaborate with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and consult with the Government of Sri Lanka and other donors to develop the program activities. The needs identified by the community will be addressed by promoting collaboration between the local authorities and the public to proactively address security issues, both human and economic.

Institutional capacity to address rehabilitation needs for at-risk youth, especially ex-combatants:

Conflict-affected young men and women need support and assistance to successfully reintegrate into civilian life. They need training for market-driven jobs and, in some cases, specialized support to cope with war-induced trauma. USAID/RISE will help improve the quality of vocational training services, provide job-related guidance, deliver psychosocial counseling, and increase access to services for these conflict-affected people.

Access to reliable news and information: Access to information is critical to the success of a stabilization or community security effort. USAID/RISE will promote creative approaches to gathering and disseminating news and information to improve public confidence in the positive transition underway, including community-focused reintegration.

The Government continued its push against the LTTE in the North in early 2009. Following several months of intense fighting, the Government declared its military victory over the LTTE in May 2009. The military defeat of the LTTE came at a high price with an untold number of civilian casualties, more than 300,000 displaced from their homes, significant damage to basic infrastructure, and the disruption of livelihoods and economic activity. But the end of nearly 26 years of war has also created the best chance for peace in Sri Lanka in as many years.

On February 17, 2010 a contract modification was approved, transferring administrative responsibilities from USAID/Sri Lanka to the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives, Washington and increasing the obligated amount by \$3,360,411. Additional funds from the US Department of Defense's Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) appropriation through the US Pacific Command (PACOM) will support the return of displaced persons to their Eastern Province communities through the rehabilitation of schools and health facilities. Additionally, with funds from the Department of Defense Section 1207, USAID/RISE will provide new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings at the Kallady Police Training College in the Batticaloa District.

In light of evolving political and social dynamics, a further modification, increasing the contract ceiling to \$50m and obligating an additional \$1,170,000 was signed on May 21, 2010, to expand under the revised name RISEN (Reintegration and Stabilization of the East and the North) to explore possibilities for programming in the North in addition to the East, including potential national-level initiatives that address the relationships between the East, the North and the rest of Sri Lanka, and to respond more completely to the post-war needs of Sri Lanka.

The initial goal for the USAID/RISEN Program is: to assist with the reintegration of former combatants and provide transitional assistance in the reestablishment of economically viable and socially cohesive communities.

The following report details the major accomplishments during the program's first year of implementation from June 15, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

PROGRAMMING

COUNTRY SITUATION DURING THE PERIOD

In May 2009, the Government of Sri Lanka declared the end of the conflict with the defeat of the LTTE's final stronghold in the north.

During the initial start-up phase many areas of the country were still in the throes of celebrating the government's victory and patriotic fervor in areas outside the conflict zone escalated. Banners and billboards depicting the President and the victorious armed forces were erected throughout the country. Following the victory, the government also announced that local government elections would be held.

In Batticaloa, the geographic focus for programming, checkpoints continued to operate, although they were less prominent in some areas and gradually over the course of the reporting period the extent of some of the military camps in the area were reduced, releasing property and land that had been in the control of the security forces for many years.

On November 23, 2009, President Mahinda Rajapaksa called for presidential elections to take place on January 26, 2010. The electorate split between President Rajapakse and the challenger and former leader of the military, General Sarath Fonseka, an unlikely and expected political adversary. Running on an anti-corruption platform, General Fonseka brought together the most unlikely coalition of opposition parties, including previous political foes the United National Party (UNP) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Throughout December political rallies were conducted throughout the country and while there were a few incidents of violence, there were no major disruptions to the political process during the December run-up to the elections.

In Batticaloa, with the improved security situation there was a general relaxation in the checking protocol. People were less afraid to travel at night and to congregate after dark, a situation best demonstrated by two peaceful night-time events sponsored by political rivals. In late October, Chief Minister Sivanesanathurai Chandrakanthan, better known as Pilliyan, sponsored a musical event on the Kalady beachfront, which was attended by over 50,000 people. Not to be outdone, Vinayagamorthy Muralitharan, better known as Karuna, held a musical show at the Weber Stadium, which is said to have been attended by close to 100,000 people.

There was also evidence that companies from Colombo and beyond were once again looking at Batticaloa as a viable market for their products. Major brand names were once again seen in shops and branch offices began to advertise their return. On December 29th, for the first time in 30 years buses from Batticaloa to Jaffna resumed daily operation.

On 26 January, 2010 Sri Lanka went to the polls to elect a new President. The two main contenders, the incumbent President, Mahinda Rajapakse and, his once close ally, now arch rival, representing the opposition United National Alliance, the former leader of the military, retired General Sarath Fonseka.

Political tensions were very high prior to the election, with sporadic violence in various parts of the country, at least 4 political activists were killed and almost 1,000 election-related incidents of violence

were reported. Although heightened security was in place throughout the country at least two explosions were reported early morning in Jaffna.

Early on 27 January, 2010 reports were circulated of soldiers surrounding the Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel in Colombo where General Fonseka had been staying during the election. No detailed information about the reason was immediately provided by the government except to say that it was for his "protection.", however, rumors had also been circulating that the General may have been trying to organize a coup.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa won the election with 58 %t of the vote, while General Fonseka received 40%, notably winning in all the Tamil-dominated areas of the north and east. The General, along with the UNA, comprising the United National Party (UNP), the People's Liberation Front (JVP - Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) immediately rejected the outcome alleging fraud and manipulation of the result. Opposition supporters staged a protest on February 3, in response the government arrested supporters and closed down pro-opposition newspapers, sparking fears among human rights groups that the government was becoming more repressive and intolerant of any kind of opposition.

Concerns had also been raised about the ability of IDPs and others in the north to cast their vote. A report released by the CMEV indicated that approximately 24,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were registered on the 2008 electoral register. Of them, 16,000 IDPs had applied to cast their vote within the Vavuniya District while 8,000 were eligible to cast their vote in other areas. The CMEV reported that they were informed by the Government Agent (GA) Vavuniya that 55% of IDPs in Vavuniya were able to cast their vote with only 8.3% voting in Mullaitivu District. In addition CMEV reported that they were informed by the authorities in Jaffna that there was a turnout of 22% in the Jaffna District and only 3.5% in Killinochchi District

Under tight security, with over 3,000 security personnel deployed, Sri Lanka's 62nd Independence Day celebrations took place on February 4th in Kandy. However, in protest at the alleged "unjust and undemocratic" presidential election some opposition parties boycotted the celebrations.

On February 8, a week after General Fonseka's offices were raided by police, he was arrested, to face a court martial on charges of conspiring against the government while he served as head of the armed forces. In addition, a number of the General's staff and some senior military officers were arrested, the President citing them as a threat to national security

Violence flared in Colombo on February 10 following the arrest of General Fonseka. Opposition members protesting outside the Supreme Court were attacked by pro-government supporters, prompting clashes that left at least eight people wounded. The Police eventually dispersed protesters. Similar protests took place in Ampara, Galle and Matara. On February 14, violence again erupted, this time in Tangalle at a protest organized by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Clashes between pro-Fonseka supporters and the police resulted in three policemen sustaining minor injuries.

As anticipated, Parliament was dissolved by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on February 9 with the announcement of a General Election to be held on April 8. Nominations for the General Election closed on February 26.

The General Election was won by the ruling UPFA, however, votes fell short of a small number of seats to total the 150 required for a two thirds majority and the power to make changes to the existing constitution. The 7th Parliament convened on Thursday April 22. Two hundred and twenty five (225)

political representatives of the people were sworn in; 144 UPFA, 60 UNP, 14 TNA (Tamil National Alliance), 7 DNA (Democratic National Alliance/The General's Party). A veteran member of the SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party), D.M. Jayaratne pledged his allegiance as the country's fourteenth Prime Minister.

Although in custody the retired General Fonseka was allowed to take his oath as a parliamentarian. At the time of writing he remains incarcerated awaiting trial.

The announcement by the UN Secretary General of the appointment of an advisory panel on Sri Lanka's human rights accountability issues was met with the anticipated opposition from the Government. The advisory panel appointed by the UN Secretary General will be chaired by a former Indonesian attorney General. An American attorney and a South African are also included in the panel. The Government of Sri Lanka has rejected the move and called it "unwarranted and unnecessary interference with a sovereign nation". Demonstrations, held opposite the UN compound in Colombo, protesting the appointment of the Panel commenced immediately; one by the Buddhist nationalist party "Jathika Hela Urumaya" (JHU) and the other by the general public, allegedly instigated by a Minister. At the end of June intensified protests were underway.

The Ministry of Economic Development, headed by Basil Rajapakse, the President's brother was established after the General Election which encompassed a number of earlier ministries, including the Ministry of Nation Building and Infrastructure Development, the former line ministry for USAID/RISEN. In addition, the Presidential Task Force, created earlier as a mechanism to coordinate activities in the north still exists. Confusion surrounding procedures and protocol regarding access and approval to work in the north has delayed planned program implementation. As at the end of June USAID was still seeking approval for DAI to visit the area to undertake an assessment.

OVERALL PROGRAMMING

In the first year of implementation 12 grants were cleared, totaling almost \$500,000. Grant development started in earnest after the initial strategy session in October 2009 which confirmed the decision to strategically focus on Batticaloa in the east. Targeting specific geographic areas based on feedback from IOM's Information, Counseling and Referral Services Program. Vakarai Divisional Secretariat was initially selected for programming.

The first series of grants were cleared in November 2009, encompassing provision of vocational training, capacity building of vocational training service providers, media components, and monitoring and evaluation

Strengthening the Vocational Training Sector in Batticaloa – To support coordination among VT providers and improve quality of training provided, RISEN is supporting a program through the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) to build the capacity of the Batticaloa VT Providers' Forum Activities through training, exposure visits, and mentoring for all stakeholders involved in VT in the district.

Improving Livelihood Skills for Communities in Transition – Two vocational training programs, selected based on market needs – outboard motor mechanics and bakery products - are being implemented in Vakarai DS Division to improve local opportunities for sustainable livelihood activities.

Supporting Community Reintegration through Media – As a pilot project Internews was awarded a grant to implement a 2.5-month project in Vakarai. Internews, with the support of a short term consultant employed through DAI, conducted a series of consultations at the community level to identify local issues. In addition newspaper, video and radio drama workshops were implemented for conflict-affected young adults in Vakarai. Following the workshops, the trained youth produced content on local issues for newspapers, radio drama programs, and a video documentary which were showcased at a public event in Vakarai in March.

Promoting Social Reintegration – This activity is being implemented in an effort to measure the impact of RISEN interventions in the east. The M&E strategy was developed and agreed upon by USAID and DAI. Michael Gilligan, Professor at New York University, and his colleague Cyrus Samii of Columbia University, are leading the process. The strategy is designed to measure whether RISEN meets its stated objectives and will be implemented on a rolling basis. Community observatories have been established in “treated” and “control” communities to regularly provide feedback to the program on attitudinal and behavioral changes among individuals and communities as a result of RISEN interventions.

Continuing the focus on Vakarai DS Division towards the beginning of 2010, and as a result of field based discussions further grants were designed to provide vulnerable community members, particularly at-risk youth, with opportunities for skills training, and an increased confidence in economic security.

Marketable Training for ‘at risk’ Youth in Vakarai - Real or perceived lack of economic opportunity could have a destabilizing effect on communities transitioning from conflict to peace, particularly in areas previously under LTTE control where communities are going through a sensitive reintegration process. A need for appropriate skill training and the on-the-job training for former fighters and other "at risk" youth to increase sustainable or self-employment opportunities was identified as crucial to reintegration. For many years, the community infrastructure in Vakarai was neglected, and what was there has been damaged or destroyed by the conflict. With efforts to build back better underway, skilled construction machinery operators are in high demand, however, due to lack of available skilled operators, contractors bring in most of these from outside the area. Creating a pool of skilled labor in Vakarai will allow a greater involvement in the rehabilitation and development process, providing a greater sense of achievement and ownership and encouraging community reintegration. This grant is supporting the provision of construction machinery and life skills training for 25 selected youth, including former combatants, giving them marketable skills and greater access to jobs that will help stabilize former conflict-affected populations and increase trust between host community and former combatants. In addition to the marketable skills training the grant also includes provision of soft skills, such as career orientation, health and safety, first aid, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and Sinhala and English language.

Turning on the Power for Ice in Vakarai – This grant is supporting the regeneration of fishing a viable livelihood activity in Vakarai by providing the means to connect a flake ice plant, previously provided by World Vision, to the national electricity grid. Vakarai is an area highly economically dependent on fishing, both marine and lagoon. Fishing in Vakarai has high export market potential for fish, prawns, crabs and other shellfish. Prior to the government gaining control of the area in 2007 the entire market was controlled by the LTTE; business men from Colombo and other Districts bought the fish directly from the LTTE- controlled selling points, limiting individual profits. In addition, the restrictions imposed during the conflict also affected the ability of the fishing community to generate an income beyond a food-security level. With the restrictions now lifted there is greater opportunity for improved fishing for both the local and export market. In order to help meet this ice demand, World Vision invested over Rs. 4 million in 2008 to provide a flake ice plant and some other small buildings for administration and value

addition activities such as drying fish. However, the flake ice plant never functioned due to lack of electricity supply. Through a grant to the local Fishermen's Society Welfare Organization (FSWO), a transformer has been installed to provide electricity to the ice plant. In addition, the transformer will also enable access to electricity for the local hospital, rice mill and houses in the surrounding community— comprised of former combatants and non-combatants alike. FSWO members are also receiving training in marketing, sales, financial management, and business planning and, utilizing local expertise, a detailed business plan is being developed to ensure the sustainability of the plant and, where appropriate, the expansion of services to the communities through the FSWO.

Leadership and Human Development for 'at risk' Youth in Vakarai – Due to decades of conflict, Vakarai has had limited access to external influences and exposure to the outside world. Leadership and social responsibility skills, particularly among youth are very low. They seldom become involved in village level activities or development issues. A vital component to successful reintegration is the ability to socialize and be an active member of a community. Left idle there is potential for unaddressed social problems to emerge, which influences a community's ability to move ahead and build a positive future. Leadership and human development skills are being instilled upon 60 youth from Vakarai; the aim being to empower youth as catalysts in the community-focused reintegration process. The activity includes six one-day workshops and two three-day residential workshops on leadership and human development, one two-day residential workshop on community project management, and an exposure visit to the North-Central Province district of Anuradhapura to link with active youth leaders from varying ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The training program and exposure to different points of view will help participating youth to conceptualize potential community-impact activities that will potentially be funded through a series of small follow-on grants.

During the last quarter 5 grants, totaling \$171,723, were cleared, 3 of them within the last week of the quarter, some encompassing the newly agreed geographic areas of Valachenai, Kiran and Chenkalady.

Reintegration through Sports - This grant supports the re-establishment of a strong youth network in the Vakarai DS Division. In conjunction with the National Youth Services Council the grantee is developing a network of youth clubs with a sport-oriented focus through provision of coaching, team building and mentoring skills. The activity was launched through a traditional sports festival held soon after the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in mid-April, providing the community with an opportunity to come together and publicly display their commitment to reconciliation. Activities also include an exposure visit for some of the youth who, because of the conflict, have not traveled far from their homes and will conclude with a sports carnival showcasing the newly acquired talents of local youth, former-combatants and non-combatants alike.

Language as a Connector for Reintegration - Through the Official Languages Act the Government has committed to provide public services in all three national languages -- Sinhala, Tamil and English -- though to date progress has been uneven across regions and generally slow. Both national and local minorities -- particularly speakers of Tamil -- still face many challenges accessing services in their own vernacular. Many official forms are still only available in Sinhala, including those related to land ownership, birth/marriage/death certificates, payment vouchers and claim requests. In addition, in villages within the multi-ethnic Eastern Province or along the edges of the predominantly Tamil-speaking Northern Province, it is the Sinhalese-speaking local minorities who are sometimes unable to access services in their own language, creating divisions among neighboring communities. Lack of access could be perceived by communities as a deliberate attempt by the government to prevent them from obtaining

essential services or entitlement, which could have a destabilizing effect on ongoing resettlement and reintegration. This grant is providing support to identify and eliminate language-related obstacles to the public's ability to access services. Issues are being prioritized through community consultations, and help desks established at local government offices. Activities include, but are not limited to translation of official documentation, multi-lingual signage and development of sustainable structures and processes to resolve local language-related issue. Providing documentation and services in all three languages is helping to promote equity among communities and encourage the ongoing reintegration process.

Cage Fish Culture - One of the major water resources in Vakaraï DS Division is the 24.8 km lagoon that extends from Verugal to Kayankerny. Fishermen from Panichchankerni depend on this lagoon for their livelihood. Up until recently security restrictions limited the use of the lagoon, with the reduction in those restrictions greater opportunities exist for the lagoon fishermen, however although the opportunity exists the fishermen only know the traditional methods, therefore, have limited capacity to improve their livelihoods. Using traditional methods the fishermen's average monthly income is very low, barely enough to sustain their families' food security needs which may encourage involvement in illegal activities and destabilize communities. This grant is supporting a local fishing cooperative to transfer cage fish culture technology to fishermen and provide cages and fingerlings to establish the culture in the area. The fishermen are receiving training in cage maintenance, food preparation, culture practices, savings and credit, business plan preparation, marketing (packaging/value addition), accounting/book keeping/ record maintenance, gender and leadership skills. It is anticipated that through providing an opportunity to improve their livelihoods and standards of living feelings of security will improve and encourage reintegration.

Agricultural Machinery Training for 'at risk' Youth in Batticaloa District - With improved access to new technology, paddy farmers are using combined harvesters, some individually owned and some rented during the harvesting seasons. Trained skilled harvester operators are rare in Batticaloa District. The farmers are employing skilled operators from outside the District, which proves expensive and risky in terms of availability as required. Improving skills within the District is not only helping the farmers but also providing much needed employment opportunities for unemployed youth in the area, supporting improved livelihoods leading to increased stability.

This grant provides for combined harvester and life skills training for 30 selected youth, including former combatants, providing them with marketable skills and greater access to jobs that will help stabilize former conflict-affected populations and increase trust between host community and former combatants. Selected through a competitive process, in collaboration with IOM, the trainees will participate in a 7 month training program that includes soft skills -- such as career orientation, health and safety, first aid, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, heavy vehicle training, and Sinhala and English language -- prior to the market-demand-driven, on-the-job training as combined harvester operators.

Solar Power Fishing in Vakaraï - This grant is supporting environmentally sound fishing practices as well as the establishment of a rural fisheries bank (a micro credit bank) in Vakaraï DS Division for the benefit of members of the Fishermen's Social Welfare Organization (FSWO). Since the restrictions on fishing have been lifted most of the fishermen who live along side the lagoon in Vakaraï have re-started their prawn fishing. The lagoon fishermen involved in prawn fishing use petrol max, which runs on kerosene, to attract prawns. With the relative normalcy in Vakaraï the Government is starting to introduce and impose official legal requirements. One such requirement under the Government's Environmental Act, is the restriction of the use of petrol max due to the kerosene mixing with the lagoon

water which subsequently harms the fish and prawns. Over time the use of petrol max will be phased out. In addition, the fishermen are spending Rs. 200 per day on kerosene, and although they are comfortable with the traditional methods at the moment, once this practice is stopped it will severely affect their ability to fish. Introducing an environmentally, economically effective alternative will satisfy the fishermen and the environmental requirements. In addition, proposing this alternative earlier as a 'choice' rather than an imposition will help communities feel empowered and support stability. One hundred and fifty solar power lanterns will be distributed to members through the FSWO on credit basis to establish a revolving loan fund. In addition selected members will be trained on savings, credit and insurance schemes.

IMPLEMENTATION

The initial start-up phase of the Program was completed in a timely manner and all major deliverables and tasks required during the period were successfully achieved.

The office in Batticaloa was opened in August 2009; the DAI office in Colombo, formerly the Sri Lanka Transitions Initiative (SLTI) office, was maintained for the Program until December 2009 when it relocated to smaller premises. With the latest contract modification in May an office has been established in Vavuniya to focus on the north and an expanded Colombo office is relocating to commercial space.

In October, 2009 the first program meeting was held in the Chaya Citadel in Kandy. In addition to RISEN staff, proposed RISEN partner organizations WUSC, IOM, Internews and the Professional Psychosocial Counseling Center, along with USAID representatives from Colombo and Washington participated. During the meeting, RISEN staff and partners worked to develop a draft action plan for immediate implementation.

The first grant to be cleared, in November 2009, with World University Services of Canada (WUSC), Livelihood Skills for Communities in Transition, involves provision of vocational training programs, implementing nationally recognized skill curricula in outboard motor mechanism and bakery production through the Vocational Training Authority. The training programs have been specifically selected based on market research in the area identifying skill gaps and marketability. Initially it was



planned to conduct leather products training, however, during the market research the need for bakery production was identified as a priority over leather production and a subsequent amendment was approved. Interviews to select beneficiaries were conducted in mid January, with 19 being selected for the outboard mechanism and 25 for bakery production. The six month training also includes soft skills; career orientation, gender, health and safety, first aid, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and life skills – which commenced early



March 2010. The official inauguration of the vocational skills courses took place on 26th March 2010, with the Divisional Secretary presiding as Chief Guest, due to the delay in commencing the training the grant has been extended to facilitate the course completing at the end of September 2010 when trainees who successfully complete the course will be awarded nationally recognized certificates by the Vocational Training Authority, providing them greater employment opportunities.

Through a second grant with WUSC activities are being implemented to support improved quality and coordination of vocational training service provision throughout Batticaloa District. Ten members of the Batticaloa VT Providers' Forum participated in an exposure visit to Hambantota, visiting the VT Providers' Forum, the highly successful Chamber of Commerce and the Kavantissa Vocational Training Center. Topics covered during the exposure visit included innovative methodologies to motivate interest in vocational training and reduce drop out numbers, linking potential employers to vocational training at the onset of programs to improve employment rate, strategies for self sustainability, successful strategies used to track vocational training beneficiaries. During the visit to the Hambantota Chamber of Commerce participants were introduced to their database which is used to track unemployed youth and link them to potential employers, members of the Chamber of Commerce in Hambantota have offered to support the Batticaloa VT Providers' Forum to develop a similar database and create a link between the two to support inter District/Region employment opportunities.

In collaboration with RISEN WUSC developed the Terms of Reference to employ a short term consultant who is undertaking a labor market survey, the primary objectives of the survey being to analyze the existing job market and trends in the District and identify skill gaps. The study is focused on 4 areas in the District – Vakarai, Valaichchenai, Chenkalady/Kiran and Manmunai North.

One activity event that has unfortunately been delayed due to the Presidential Election in January and the subsequent announcement of the parliamentary election is the visit by the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training (MVTT), designed to raise awareness among VT forum members on national training standard requirements and how to attain accreditation as a training provider. This visit, although planned for March was rescheduled for May, however, has still to be implemented.

The media component of RISE was initiated through a pilot project in Vakarai. The grant, designed to foster informative and participatory communication around the reintegration process involves training in print, radio and video medium. Beneficiaries, selected through an informal process, participated in the training programs during February and March. Showcased at a public event in Vakarai on Sunday 28th March, with the participation of Max Richman, OTI Washington as Chief Guest, the audience watched the 20-minute news documentary called, '*Eluvoa Vaharai!*' (*Vaharai Renaissance!*) about the lives of fishermen, paddy farmers, and local traditional dance; they listened to '*Valaman Gramam*' (roughly translated to '*Village of Natural Resources*'), a gripping radio drama in three acts, subsequently aired over 3 weeks in April on SLBC; and they received three full-color newspaper editions of '*Baalam*' or '*The Bridge*', since distributed throughout the Batticaloa District. These finished products and the cultural event served to bring the community together and expose some of the challenges facing the area's residents today.



An additional positive outcome of the program, through links generated between RISEN staff and the INGO/NGO community was two of the trainees involved in the video production and one newsprint trainee were requested by UNIDO to document their training events which they have since handed over in draft for review. In addition, one of the trainees, who performed the role of radio drama producer during the training has been recommended by YATV, the resource people providing the training, for a national level scholarship for residential training in Colombo.

The monitoring and evaluation strategy adopted by RISE involves engaging community observers through a grant with the Vakarai Welfare Society, a local NGO, to provide regular narrative and photographic feedback on the situation on the ground, observing community attitudes and behavior over time to gauge the effect of RISEN programs on target communities. Reports are submitted bi monthly by each observer and compiled to a report to be submitted for analysis. In addition, community clean-up activities, solely reliant on voluntary labor are being implemented in selected communities, again as a



mechanism to measure changes over time in individual and community attitudes. A spin off to the grant through the establishment of the community observatories is that the grantee has become the focal point for communities and INGO/NGOs in the area. UNIDO have selected the Vakarai Welfare Society as the facilitator for a program on rural technology improvements, providing them with de-stoners, rice grinding machines, irrigation sprinklers and boat repairing tool kits which they will provide to individuals on a partial loan basis, repayments generating a revolving loan fund to introduce additional new technology to the area.

Heavy machinery training for 25 youth in Ampara has been ongoing since February and due for completion in early July. Prior to the heavy machinery training the youth were provided with soft skills training including English and Sinhala language skills. Discussion are ongoing with potential employers to provide opportunities to trained youth, ACCESS Engineering, a large construction company working in the area, has verbally committed to employing some of the trainees on completion of their training.

In February “Turning on the Power for Ice in Vakarai” was awarded to the Fishermen’s Social Welfare Organization (FSWO). The inaugural Steering Committee meeting was held in March, chaired by the Divisional Secretary of Vakarai, with the participation of members of the FSWO and RISEN and World Vision staff sitting in as observers. In late February a consultant was identified to support the FSWO



develop a business plan for future sustainability. The primary objective of the consultancy is to develop a comprehensive 3 year business plan for the flake ice plant by analyzing the existing ice market, demand and supply and to develop and implement a suitable financial system for the plant with the objective of profit sharing in the future. During March the Plant Manager and a Machine Operator were successful recruited. Regular steering committee meetings have taken place since the project commenced and flake ice is now being produced at the plant, benefiting the local community.

On 31st March 2010, another grant titled Leadership and Human Development Skills for at risk Youth in Vakarai” was activated. Currently ongoing, participants have been selected and are attending workshops

including six one-day workshops and two three-day residential workshops on leadership and human development and a two-day residential workshop on community project management. In addition, selected youth will participate in an exposure visit to the North-Central Province district of Anuradhapura to link with active youth leaders from different backgrounds. Training and experience sharing will lead to conceptualization of community-impact activities supporting socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants to be funded through follow-on small grants if applicable.

Sport is being used as a means to promote community cohesion, which was evidenced during the traditional sports festival held in April to mark the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. Hundreds turned out for the sports events which included tug o' war, climbing the greasy pole and a canoe race along the lagoon – the first time in over 20 years since the lagoon had hosted a recreational activity. Through provision of coaching, team building and mentoring skills youth clubs are being reactivated and providing a forum for young people to positively interact and demonstrate their skills. A sports carnival at the conclusion of the grant will allow the youth to showcase the newly acquired talents of local youth, former-combatants and non-combatants alike.



Under RISE009 consultation meetings with communities are ongoing to determine the language issues experienced in each of the geographic locations selected. The grantee, the ‘Changers Foundation’ commenced its inaugural "Help Desk" to the public at the Eravur Town Divisional Secretariat. During the first day 13 documents were translated; 10 for members of the general public related to pension claims and traffic violation issues, and 3 on behalf of the Divisional Secretary.

OPERATIONS

CONTRACTS

In February 2010 a contract modification partially exercising what was known as Task 5 “High-Impact Community Activities for the East” and transferring administrative responsibilities from USAID/Sri Lanka to the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives was approved obligating a further \$3,360, 411. A request for proposals from qualified firms to provide engineering and construction management services to implement Task 5 was issued and subsequently awarded to Resouces Development Consultants (Pvt) Ltd.

In addition, on May 21, 2010 a contract modification increasing the ceiling amount to \$50m to expand activities to the north, obligating a further \$1,170,000 was signed enabling an additional office in Vavuniya to be established and expansion of the Colombo office.

ADMINISTRATION

The first quarterly Program Meeting for RISE was held on October 14 and 15 2009 in the Chaaya Citadel Hotel in Kandy.

The two-day conference was facilitated by Laurie Pierce. In addition to RISE staff, the Program Meeting was attended by RISE partner organizations WUSC, IOM, and Internews, and USAID representatives from Colombo and Washington. During the Program Meeting, RISEN staff and partners worked to develop an action plan based on the proposed strategic locations: Vakarai, Chenkalady, Kiran, and Valachenai.

The Colombo office relocated to smaller office premises in December 2009, however, in May 2010 with the contract modification to expand to the north an office has been established in Vavuniya and new larger office space located in Colombo. With the expansion the COP was relocated from Batticaloa to Colombo.

In June 2010 the newly expanded Program, RISEN, held a Start Up/Strategy Session at the Chaaya Village in Habarana to develop a 3 month action plan. It was agreed that RISEN should focus on early recovery communities, avoiding emergency and long term development needs, resulting in proposed strategic locations in each of the four Districts making up the ‘Vanni’ being identified for consideration.

STAFFING

During the first quarter of the year under report changes to DAI home office personnel were affected.

In June 2009, Sarah Stemmler replaced Vince Broady as Project Coordinator. Ms. Stemmler’s experience in organizational administrative support, coupled with her experience in working with refugees from Sri Lanka during her internship with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Malaysia, positioned her well to serve as the Project Coordinator for USAID/RISEN.

Keith Doxtater replaced Salamah Magnuson as USAID/RISEN Home Office Technical Backstop. Mr. Doxtater, a member of the DAI staff since 2004, specializes in managing the implementation of small grants programs to promote stability, political transition, and good governance in conflict-affected communities. In addition, he has extensive knowledge of Sri Lanka—from 2006 to 2009, Mr. Doxtater was a Regional Program Manager for the SLTI program, during which he oversaw the regional offices in Matara, Batticaloa, and Colombo. Mr. Doxtater has developed tailored program administration and operations management skills, including in local staff recruitment and training, as well as strong skills in program financial management, procurement, and reporting.

Tanja Lumba replaced Pavla Cornejo as the Management Information Systems Development Specialist for USAID/RISEN, providing both start-up TAMIS short-term technical assistance and home office support. Ms. Lumba specializes in information systems and management training for DAI projects in the Asia region. Ms Lumba has recently been replaced by Sudharshini Dharmawardane, former DCOP on USAID/RISEN who has taken up a new corporate role as Management Information Systems Development Specialist. Mr John Ames joined the team in June 2010, replacing Ms Dharmawardane as DCOP.

With the contract modification in February 2010 obligating funds for specific infrastructure in the east, former DAI staff, Anton Thambimuttu, Engineer and Richard Welington, Technical Officer, joined the

RISEN team in March 2010. They will work as part of the infrastructure team dedicated to implement the community infrastructure activities, formerly known as Task 5. Jordan Simjanoski, Senior Infrastructure Officer, joined the team in early April to manage the infrastructure portfolio.

In anticipation of an additional contract modification OTI pre authorized limited expenditure allowing DAI to start the recruitment process for the expansion to the north. As a consequence of the expansion a revised staffing structure was developed in line with the additional responsibilities. Asha Harrsion will join the team as Regional Program Manager for the East in early July 2010 and the process to identify an RPM for the North is ongoing.

SECURITY

Apart from incidents reported during election campaigns no major security incidents were reported throughout the year. Restrictions on civilian travel have continued to ease, with less visible checking by military and police, however, incidents of extortion and reports of armed groups re-establishing in the more rural areas of the east have circulated.