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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2009 QUARTERLY REPORT



JANUARY 2010

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Cover Photo: Eighteen Buddhist monks from Polonnaruwa district participate in a 'Dialogue Forum' on Buddhist practice and social engagement in November 2009. Photo by SuRG Partner.

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
APS	Annual Program Statement
CaFFE	Centre for Free and Fair Elections
CDG	Community Development Groups
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
CMEV	Centre for Monitoring Election Violence
COHRE	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
COP	Chief of Party
CORE	Connecting Regional Economies Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWRP	Campaign for Women’s Representation in Politics
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DG	Democracy and Governance
DS	Divisional Secretary
EP	Eastern Province
FR	Fundamental Rights
FY	Fiscal Year
GA	Governing Agent
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GS	Grama Sevaka
HR	Human Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
LA	Local Authority
LG	Local Governance
LTTE	Liberation Tamil Tigers of Elam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Muslim Peace Assembly
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIC	National Identity Card
NMA	National Muslim Assembly
OLD	Official Language Department
PAFFREL	People’s Action for Free and Fair Elections
PD	Polonnaruwa District
PF	People’s Forum
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan

PS	Pradeshya Sabha
Q	Quarter
SE	Social Equity
SLCJ	Sri Lanka College of Journalism
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLPI	Sri Lanka Press Institute
SL. R	Sri Lankan Rupee
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNP	United National Party
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WDF	Women's Development Federation
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

INTRODUCTION

In March 2008, ARD, Inc. was awarded Contract No. 383-C-00-08-000501-00 to implement the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Sri Lanka Supporting Regional Governance Program (SuRG). The three-to-five-year initiative was designed to build on USAID/Sri Lanka's democracy and governance efforts to address development needs resulting from the ongoing conflict. The program supports regional governance in the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District by focusing on four program components (social equity, local governance, community empowerment and transformation, open dialogue) with intertwining activities that reinforce governance improvements around the betterment of human and community security. After the defeat of the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) in May 2009, SuRG expanded its programming to include the Northern Province.

This report covers the period from October 1–December 31, 2009, and details progress on contract implementation activities and management and administration. Highlights for the quarter include:

- Grants were awarded to all three major election monitoring groups for voter education and monitoring the January 2010 presidential election in the Northern Province: CaFFE – SL Rs. 4,940,575; CMEV – SL Rs. 5,549,750; PAFFREL – SL Rs. 5,374, 050.
- Eight fundamental rights cases and one *habeas corpus* case were filed in the Supreme Court.
- Fifty-one participants completed a six-month human rights education program in Trincomalee.
- Fifty-three human rights lawyers from the Northern, Eastern, North Central and Western Provinces were trained on legal strategies and techniques to defend human rights victims.
- Sixteen SuRG scholarship recipients completed the Sri Lanka College of Journalism 2009 Journalism Diploma Program. Graduation will be held in February 2010.
- Research on the “Study of the Legal Protection of Life/Liberty Rights in Sri Lanka” and “Liberty Rights At Stake; the Virtual Eclipse of the *Habeas Corpus* Remedy in Sri Lanka” was completed and will be published after peer review in the coming quarter. The reports analyze an unprecedented 875 judgments and orders of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal relating to *habeas corpus* as well as 37 briefs and orders of the Northern Provincial High Court.
- Twelve thousand and five hundred signatures were collected in signature campaigns from Batticaloa, Jaffna and Colombo to secure a clause in the reform of the Local Government Elections Ordinance of 1989 mandating a 25% quota for women in the nominations presented by political parties for local government elections.
- The Peace Secretariat for Muslims set up Inter-Ethnic Forums in each of their five regional Muslim Peace Assemblies.
- Two hundred seven local authority staff and elected officials from 11 LAs continue Tamil or Sinhala language training.
- Two hundred forty-nine people participated in provincial consultations on the implications of the implementing of the 13th Amendment on regional development and governance and the Provincial Councils in the Northwestern, Central and Northern Provinces.
- CMEV deployed 300 monitors for the Southern Provincial Council elections in October.
- A grant for SL Rs. 8,652,960 was awarded to for the “Mobilization of Community-Based Human Rights Defenders” project.
- A grant for SL Rs. 5,061,000 was awarded to for the “Promoting Social Engagement through Buddhist Practice” project.

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

The SuRG Social Equity (SE) team continued to support and monitor ongoing partner activities while also helping potential new grantees both in the Eastern Province and at the national level to develop proposals for new initiatives. In addition, the SE team began development and preparation for upcoming training for judges from the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The SE team also began preparations for a Rule of Law Assessment scheduled to be conducted in February 2010. ARD identified and contracted three consultants to conduct a targeted analysis of the status of the rule of law development in Sri Lanka. The assessment will lead directly into a strategy for justice sector and rule of law assistance that prioritizes areas that could benefit from USAID and broader United States Government (USG) intervention, and will include recommendations for programming.

I.1.1 GRANTS AND SUBCONTRACTS

In this quarter, the following new grants were awarded and activities initiated.

- ARD010 – “Strengthening Housing, Land and Property Rights in Eastern Sri Lanka”; and
- ARD022 – “Mobilization of Community-Based Human Rights Defenders.”

ARD010

After USAID approval at the start of the last quarter, a grant was signed to 1) support the partner’s participation in the development of a National Resettlement Policy; 2) train both local government officials and civil society from the Eastern Province in issues pertaining to housing, land and property rights, including domestic procedural and legal obligations related to land; and 3) undertake a comprehensive land survey and map the changing patterns of land ownership in the east over the past 15-20 years to determine the factual basis of fears and rumors of land grabbing and planned ethnic redistribution.

During this reporting period, with the assistance of a SuRG-funded international consultant, the partner initiated its research project on land patterns. The consultant worked with the lead researcher to develop objectives for the report and draft methodology and an overall strategic vision. The report tentatively entitled, “Study of The Land Issues Prevalent in the Eastern Province,” will be an evidenced-based analysis of current land disputes and tensions in the Eastern Province. It will explore fears, sources and perceptions of those fears and analyze evidence that supports those fears. The report will address issues emanating from the following broad areas: armed conflict, ethnic tension, state land allocation policy, natural disasters and other issues such as claims for prescription, servitudes, tenancy rights and cultivation rights. A desk review of sources is underway and a preliminary set of questions for field research drafted. The first field visit to the

east was scheduled to take place in December but had to be postponed until next quarter due to flooding in the east.

ARD022

In November, a grant of SL. Rs. 8,652,960 was awarded for the “Mobilization of Community-Based Human Rights Defenders” program. With this grant, the partner will expand an ongoing program funded by the European Union to organize and strengthen communities through human rights education and community engagement, in addition to providing legal aid. SuRG support will go toward the formation of 12 new Community Development Groups (CDGs) in Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya Districts. The project will build a community at the grassroots who understand their rights and possible means of redress, and have the ability to mobilize communities in defense of their constitutional rights and against human rights violations. Under this project, the partner will also provide free legal aid for victims of human rights abuse in Trincomalee and Vavuniya Districts.



Fifty-one students received a certificate of completion of the partner’s 6-month Human Rights Education Program in Trincomalee at a ceremony commemorating International Human Rights Day.

The partner has begun to identify the 12 additional communities and the motivators it will work with through this project. In addition, the partner commemorated human rights day (December 10) in Jaffna. A group of approximately 1,500 people, including project participants and the general public, walked from Weerasingham Hall in Jaffna to the town center to create awareness on the importance of respecting human rights.

ARD005

The partner continued, this quarter, to provide legal assistance to victims of human rights violations. They filed eight new fundamental rights applications in the Supreme Court and one *habeas corpus* application in the High Court. The partner also took steps necessary to transfer 45 *habeas corpus* cases back to the Jaffna High Court on behalf of those that disappeared from Navatkuli, Kaithady, Pasaiyoor and Gurunagar in the Jaffna peninsula. In 2004, the partner had filed these applications at the Jaffna High Court. The cases resulted from a fact-finding, which led to 160 applications for cases received from family members of people that disappeared in 1996-1997. All of the 45 cases brought to court by the partner were granted leave to proceed at the Jaffna and Chavakachchery High Court. Subsequently, all 45 cases were transferred to the Anuradhapura High Court in response to a request made by the respondents. With the change in the security situation in the Northern Province, the partner is now attempting to have all 45 cases transferred back to the Jaffna High Courts.

In November, the partner conducted a three-day residential human rights training program for 53 (50 males and 3 females) of the partner’s panel lawyers from the Northern, Eastern, Central, North Central and Western Provinces. Training topics included applying international tools domestically, forensic research, torture, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Emergency Regulations and writ applications.

ARD003

The partner completed its “Support for War-Affected Widows and Human Rights Education in Trincomalee District” program this quarter. Under the support for war-affected widows component, the partner continued its monthly meetings providing advice and counseling. In addition, livelihood support was extended beyond the 30 original women who have been assisted since project inception to include an additional 18 women who have been part of the partner’s grief and psycho-social counseling, basic life skills and human rights awareness-

raising programs but had not received livelihood funds. The partner used surplus grant funds available due to a reduced number of students attending the Human Rights Education Program. The partner will provide ongoing follow-up to these women and their families over the next year at no cost to SuRG.

The partner's six-month human rights education program concluded in December. Fifty-one participants successfully completed their final examinations and received a certificate of participation at a ceremony held to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

ARD001

The partner concluded its "Analysis of the Judicial/Prosecutorial System Regarding the Right to Life/Liberty in Sri Lanka" project this quarter. The research resulted in two reports, "Research on the Study of the Legal Protection of Life/Liberty Rights in Sri Lanka" and "Liberty Rights At Stake: the Virtual Eclipse of the *Habeas Corpus* Remedy In Sri Lanka," which together analyze an unprecedented 875 reported and unreported judgments and orders of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals relating to *habeas corpus* as well as 37 briefs and orders of the Northern Provincial High Court. The reports will be published after peer review in March 2010. The partner also submitted a preliminary advocacy plan, which will provide the basis for a follow-up project in early 2010.

1.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

1.2.1 GRANTS

ARD004

During this quarter, the partner conducted seven monthly regional Muslim Peace Assembly (MPA) meetings. MPAs engaged in several community advocacy initiatives.

In response to a government requirement that all internally displaced persons (IDPs) register their name for resettlement with the Ministry of Rehabilitation, the partner along with MPAs prepared a public notice to help inform IDPs of the new requirement. Awareness was raised through mosques, provincial council members and other local organizations, and almost 10,000 applications were issued through the regional partner offices and MPA members.

In October and November, a series of workshops were conducted for MPAs in all five regions, to improve the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of MPAs. The program included an introduction to the concept of conflict resolution, conflict analysis tools and the role of MPAs in their communities.

Each MPA launched an inter-religious dialogue forum to build consensus with other communities.

Launch of the National Muslim Assembly was scheduled in this reporting period. However, in order to complete a strategy document, the launch has been rescheduled for February 2010. The strategy paper is currently under development by members of the Executive Committee. In addition, they will develop position papers after consultations in the field on the following priority issues that were identified by the NMA One position paper which has already been developed and circulated for discussion. The paper was discussed in Puttalam and Mannar. It is being revised based on input from these discussions. After further consultation, findings will be communicated with appropriate institutions, agencies and key personalities.

To expand representation, four new members were added to the Executive Committee.

ARD006

The partner continued to make progress empowering women through Women's Rural Development Societies (WRDSs) under their "Anangu Women with Mysterious Powers" program. This quarter they facilitated a range of activities including training programs, awareness raising, discussions with local

authorities, study circle groups, film discussions, radio and TV programs, commemoration of international days that reflect priority issues and advocacy for women's quota in local authority nominations.

Training

Accounting, management and administration training was conducted for 15 WRDSs in all four project districts. Four hundred ninety-seven women participated in the 15 one-day programs. Results from the training include:

- Fourteen participating WRDSs opened a bank account.
- Regular meetings are being conducted and documented in meeting minutes.
- Roles and responsibilities of officers (president, secretary, treasurer) in accordance with each WRDS's constitution have been defined.

The partner also conducted training on proposal writing for six WRDSs. After the training, five WRDSs prepared and submitted proposal for funding to address priority issues in their communities.

One of the primary strategies the partner employs to increase local women's power in their community and help them participate in local decision making is to help WRDS members understand the role and responsibilities of local government officials and agencies. Toward that end, in this quarter four WRDSs in Batticaloa District held discussions with the Batticaloa Municipal Council and Mayor, Kattankudy Urban Council, Manunaipattu Pradeshya Sabha and the Eravur Pradeshya Sabha.

The partner organized meetings for members of two WRDSs on the laws, procedures, governing functions and the elections of local authorities. Participating WRDS members then participated in their Local Authority Council meetings in November.

Meetings for WRDS members were also set up with Divisional Secretariats, Pradeshya Sabhas, Ministry of Health offices, the Consortium of Humanitarian Assistance, United Nations Development Program, Sri Lanka Electricity Board, World Vision and others to advocate for more efficient services of the respective agencies. Discussions on good governance ("*Kutti Arasaangam*") were held in Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

The partner organized activities in each project district to mark World Temperance Day, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and International Human Rights Day. These activities were organized under the Anangua project but with funds from other donors. Commemoration of these days provided a vehicle for WRDS members to raise awareness and share their experiences on how these issues affect their lives and villages. In addition to these discussions, a range of activities was organized. On World

Woman of Mysterious Powers: President, of a Women's Society, Puttalam

A Muslim village situated in Puttalam district with a population of nearly 2,200 families is divided geographically into two sections—A and B. Most residents are IDPs evicted from the north. A Women's Society was formed in for one community on 8 March 2007.

The President is now a young schoolteacher. When she was a small girl, her family was evicted from Manar district; they have been living in Puttalam ever since. She was elected President of her Women's Society in 2008.

The Society was slow getting off the ground due to a lack of funding. However, they did what they could, including participating in partner Study Circle and Film Circle discussions and workshops on community mobilization in 2008.

In October 2009, with support from the Anangua project, the Society was registered under the Ministry of Women's Affairs. They have since increased their membership from 30 to 60 members. All of their regular meetings are conducted by the relevant committee on time and carefully documented with meeting minutes.

Committee members developed a work plan for 2010 after conducting a community assessment. Their plan will now serve as a guide for other WRDSs to improve their planning. The partner's support has been instrumental in building the capacity of the Society as well as its members. In the words of their President,

"We now have the courage to mobilize Tamil women to join our society. Recently, we asked the Puttalam Public Health Inspector to conduct a Dengu awareness program for Society members. We have also asked the partner to conduct a seminar on legal awareness in relation to domestic violence. We are deeply grateful to them for having made all these activities possible."

Temperance Day, a lecturer at the National Institute of Social Development appeared on TV and radio to discuss “Alcohol and Domestic Violence. On Human Rights Day, the partner facilitated a discussion on the 17th Amendment to the Constitution and participants were given a copy of the 17th Amendment. Fifty-five members from four WRDSs participated in this discussion. Following the session, WRDS members sent a letter on disappearances to the Human Rights Commission. Five participating WRDSs each committed to sending a letter to the Human Rights Commission every month highlighting the issue.

Sixteen Study Circle discussions were held in 13 WRDS villages on issues including domestic violence, alcoholism, freedom of expression—especially by women, the importance of reading, education rights, democracy and human rights, the 17th Amendment of the Constitution of Sri Lanka and sustainable peace and the importance of women’s participation in the politics.

The project also facilitated 15 Film Circle discussions with participation of 15 WRDS. At each event, a film is screened to initiate a discussion around the issues raised in the films. The following films were shown: “Kathal” (teen marriage), “Priyanga” (domestic violence), “Aaitha Eluththu” (social issues and reality), “Sivakasi” (youth and violence), and “Pallikoodam” (promotion of social harmony and collaboration).

As part of the Campaign for Women’s Political Representation’s advocacy to secure a clause in the reform of the Local Government Elections Ordinance of 1989 mandating a 25% quota for women in nominations presented by political parties for local government elections (described in detail below), Viluthu organized rallies and signature campaigns in Batticaloa and Jaffna. In Batticaloa, approximately 560 individuals (Tamil, Muslims, Sinhalese) participated and 5,500 signatures were collected. In Jaffna, 426 (Tamil, Muslims, Sinhalese) individuals participated and 5,000 signatures were collected. These activities, while part of the Anangua project, were conducted with funds from the American World Jewish Service.

CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS (CWRP)

CWRP is a volunteer effort to campaign for increased women’s political representation, focusing on women in local government and provincial councils, initiated in May 2009. The campaign is characterized by its ability to rally the support of existing women political leaders irrespective of party affiliation and to join leading women’s groups and supporters together in a broad network interested in expanding women’s participation in politics and local government. A member of the Western Provincial Council and Secretary of the Women’s Organization of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and a member of the Central Provincial Council and a member the Lak Vanitha group of the United National Party (UNP), serve as lead advisers to the campaign.

SuRG issued a purchase order for SL Rs. 877,000 in October for the CWRP’s campaign to secure a clause in the then pending reform of the Local Government Elections Ordinance of 1989 mandating a 25% quota for women in the nominations presented by political parties for local government elections. The bill was expected to be taken up by Parliament in December of 2009; however, due to the focus on upcoming national elections, the bill was not taken up. The CWRP has remained active and is using SuRG funds to complete activities as planned to maintain interest and build awareness on the issue.



A key element of the CWRP strategy is a signature campaign. Prior to receiving SuRG funding, 50,000 signatures had been secured from every district except Jaffna (signatures in Batticaloa were secured at a partner event funded through its Anangua project as described above). With support from SuRG, CWRP teamed up with a SuRG partner in Jaffna to secure an additional 5,000 signatures at a public meeting with the participation of six Sinhala women political leaders from the South.

In Colombo, an event was organized at Mel Park Slave Island/Union Place. Two thousand signatures were collected.

In addition to the signature campaign, the CWRP consolidated its support from women political and civil society leaders at a partner meeting held in Colombo, through regular updates of its website on legislation and key issues; and via email and text messages to CWRP's network of parliamentarians, local government authorities, and civil society members and organizations. CWRP also compiled the only comprehensive list of the country's 13 women parliamentarians, 15 provincial councilors and 40 local authority representatives.

Throughout the quarter, CWRP continued to lobby provincial officials at their public events described above as well as in private meetings. Representatives of the campaign met with the Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government, the Minister of Social Services and Welfare and the Chief Minister of the Eastern Province Provincial Council. The project also enrolled the Minister of Housing and Common Amenities as an advisory group member.

ARD023

The partner launched its "Promoting Social Engagement through Buddhist Practice" program this quarter after signing the grant at the end of last quarter at an orientation meeting in Colombo with 11 Buddhist priests from all three project districts (Ampara, Polonnaruwa, Monaragala).

Dialogue Forums followed in each project district.

Based on the discussion, participants in the Dialogue Forums prioritized the following areas:

1. Empower monks and nuns in order to reclaim the heritage of socio-spiritual transformation.
2. Focus the attention of monks and nuns on contemporary social critical transformative knowledge and skills that have emerged from international Buddhist research and study.
3. Encourage monks and nuns to resolve conflicts, problems and crises by following the cannon as well as the contemporary knowledge of social sciences.



Buddhist monks from Monaragala District take a lunch break during a 'Dialogue Forum' on Buddhist practice and social engagement.

4. Build up selected temples as centers of study/research/training and community service create a space for monks and nuns to learn/share the knowledge and skills of planning, organizing and managing temple activities.
5. Build up a support base of lay patrons around selected temples.
6. Transform monks and nuns into powerful community leaders empowered with contemporary knowledge and skills as well as Buddhist discipline.
7. Build up inter-religious space by realizing that the religious/cultural diversity of Sri Lankan society is a cornerstone for the delivery of goodness and piety.

The partner also launched a monthly newsletter to facilitate a dialogue among the monks and nuns on themes relating to social engagement through Buddhist practice. The monthly newsletter will provide space for diverse opinions and discussion.

Tamil language classes for 20 monks in the Polonnaruwa District were initiated this quarter. In this quarter, eight classes were held. The classes are held once a week and each class runs for two hours.

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

SuRG continued work with its 11 local authority partners this quarter. SuRG working groups in each of the LAs met regularly; 33 meetings were held during the quarter. The meetings proved a useful forum for follow-up to the Participatory Planning and Budgeting training that was held last quarter, as all LAs were required to submit their 2010 budgets to the Provincial Council for approval. The SuRG local governance (LG) team provided support to these efforts in the monthly meetings so that by the end of the quarter, nine of SuRG's 11 LA partners had completed their 2010 budget.

The LG team also completed plans to expand SuRG's work with LAs in the Eastern Province to include all 37 Pradeshya Sabhas (PS) in the province. A detailed work plan was submitted by EML Consultants to provide a series of training workshops for LA staff and elected officials over the course of the next 14 months. The program, designed to begin in January 2010, is pending approval of the EML subcontract by USAID.

Once the program plan was agreed upon with EML, USAID and regional stakeholders, SuRG entered into discussions with the Ministry of Local Government to develop an MOU between SuRG and the Ministry. A draft MOU has been developed and reviewed by the Additional Secretary, and is pending approval by the Secretary.



The Honorable Rajitha Senarathne, Minister of Construction and Engineering addressing a Provincial Consultation on Regional Governance and Development: The Role of Provincial Councils in Kurunegala organized by ICS.

1.3.1 LANGUAGE TRAINING

Two hundred and seven LA staff and elected officials from SuRG's partner LAs began Tamil and Sinhala language classes this quarter. The training is moving ahead faster than expected and most courses will be completed earlier than originally planned. The chart below shows progress to date for each LA.

Language Training for Local Authorities: Progress to date		
Local Authority	No. of Class Hours Completed	% of Total Course Hours completed
Alayadivembu PS	72	66.67%
Ninthavur PS	62	57.41%
Ampara UC	52	48.15%
Poratheevupattu PS	56	51.85%
Manmunai South West PS	62	57.41%
Manmunai West PS	67	62.04%
Eravur Town PS	62	57.41%
Muthur PS	67	62.04%
Seruwila PS	44	40.74%
Thambalagamuwa PS	68	62.96%
Verugal PS	61	56.48%

Plans are underway to expand the language training to all PS in the Eastern Province. SuRG worked with the OLD this quarter to set up Sinhala and Tamil language training programs for key staff and elected officials in the 27 PS where SuRG is not currently supporting language training. The same process and format will be employed. Potential teacher candidates from each participating PS were identified by SuRG LG staff and interviews for attendance at an OLD Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop to be conducted in January 2010 were set up. The language classes will begin soon after the teachers are selected and trained.

I.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

I.4.1 GRANTS

ARD002

Scholarship recipients for the 2009 Journalism Diploma Program at the Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLCJ) completed their final internships, class work and examinations this quarter. Graduation will be held next quarter.

SLPI/SLCJ submitted a proposal for scholarships for students from the Northern and Eastern Provinces and Polonnaruwa District to attend their 2010 diploma program. SLPI/SLCJ called for applications from October 1 until November 30, 2009. SuRG supported their recruitment efforts by providing SLPI with a handbill in Tamil, Sinhala and English announcing SuRG scholarships. The handbills were distributed with their course announcement. SuRG also circulated the handbill to all partners and a wide range of contacts throughout the east, north and Polonnaruwa.

SLPI received 136 applications from across the island for 80 spots in the program. Sixty-seven of the applications were from the Northern and Eastern Provinces. There were no applications submitted from Polonnaruwa. A written entrance examination was held on 13 December and interviews took place from 18–21 December. Twenty-six students were accepted from the Northern and Eastern Provinces. A grant will be awarded to SLPI next quarter to provide scholarships to all of those 26 students. The charts below provide a detailed breakdown of applications submitted and selected from SuRG target areas.

ARD002

The partner's "Regional Development and Governance: The Role of Provincial Councils" project got underway this quarter with provincial consultations in the Northwestern, Central and North Central Provinces to discuss experiences of regional governance, and enhance participants' knowledge and understanding of the 13th Amendment. Participation in all three workshops was high and included regional political and civil society leaders, legal practitioners and policymakers. Each workshop also included participation by national leaders including the Minister of Reconstruction and Engineering, Advisor to the President, and a Member of Parliament.

The next provincial consultation is planned for Sabragamuwa Province in February 2010.

The partner also began work on a booklet this quarter; the first draft will be completed early next quarter and is scheduled to be discussed at a stakeholder meeting on 4 February 2010.

I.5 CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES

I.5.1 ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)

SuRG continues to review proposals and provide technical assistance to nine pre-selected Annual Program Statement (APS) grantees from the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa. Proposals are in the final stages of development and are expected to be submitted to USAID for approval at the start of the coming quarter.

Proposals have also been solicited for a second round of the APS. In November, the APS was distributed in all three languages to 86 organizations. Pre-application information sessions were held in Trincomalee, Ampara, Batticaloa and Polonnaruwa for organizations interested in submitting concept notes. Half-day sessions to explain the application process, criteria for selection and SuRG objectives and goals were attended by 76 organizations from all four districts.

Concept notes were due in mid-December; 63 NGOs and voluntary organizations submitted concept papers. The chart below shows the number of concept papers received by district.

Concept Papers Received under APS Round 2 by District	
District	Number Received
Ampara	18
Batticaloa	14
Trincomalee	12
Polonnaruwa	19
Total	63

Concept notes will be reviewed and preliminary selection completed by mid-February. After SuRG does an initial institutional assessment, selected organizations will be invited to participate in a proposal development workshop and receive technical assistance from SuRG before submitting a full application.

1.5.2 LAND

The lack of land tenure security has long been a root cause of conflict in Sri Lanka. As a governance and human rights issue, it is of concern and interest for the GOSL at national, provincial and local levels, and for the Muslim, Tamil and Sinhalese populations as well. Now that the war has ended, unresolved land matters threaten to be an impediment to sustainable reconciliation, reconstruction and longer-term development. SuRG will address land issues on two levels: through training and support for government officials developing and implementing land policy, and through research at both the national and regional levels.

A SuRG grant includes both training and research, and is described in detail above in Section 1.1.1. In addition, SuRG is organizing a study tour to East Timor for national and regional government officials and is conducting a national land tenure assessment.

LAND STUDY TOUR

Planning for a SuRG-led study tour to East Timor on land tenure for a group of 12 government officials got underway this quarter. Participants in the study tour will include officials from both central and provincial government offices including the Ministry of Nation Building, the Ministry of Environment, the Land Commission and the Eastern Provincial Council. The aim of the study tour is to highlight issues of tenure security, secondary occupation and the importance and difficulty of developing land policies in a post-conflict environment. The program will highlight the problems of returning people to their most recent place of residence, without also addressing competing claims. The group will study the various steps the UN took that institutionalized secondary and tertiary occupations of housing and the ensuing tensions and eventual conflict which occurred in 2006. If possible, the study tour will also look at legislative options the Timorese government enacted, titling schemes, as well as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for dealing with land disputes. The objective is to introduce the officials to issues they will face while trying to regularize the land and tenure situation in the east and north of the country as recent IDPs/returnees seek durable land and housing solutions.

The study tour is scheduled for February 2010.

NATIONAL LAND TENURE ASSESSMENT

SuRG will conduct a national land tenure assessment to provide USAID a better, more nuanced understanding of the relationships between land and several dimensions relevant to its programming, namely good governance, conflict resolution, human rights, economic growth and overarching stabilization through development assistance. In particular, the exercise will explore the relationship between land and conflict and conflict resolution. Accordingly, it should help inform the USG's (and potentially other donors) policy and programming options toward identifying, addressing and overcoming challenges and barriers. In particular, the assessment will help illuminate areas of need and opportunities for strengthening and enhancing democratic structures and practices underpinning the relationships among Sri Lankan land policy and program reforms; and political, economic and environmental policy and programming, including such focal areas as IDPs and housing land and property (HLP) rights, gender concerns and overall human rights issues.

The assessment will take place in two stages: 1) a desk review (with limited field work) of existing reports, assessments, circulars, legislation and other material; and 2) a field assessment. The desk study, which got underway this quarter, will provide a comprehensive review of extensive existing material, with the objective of framing a significant contextual analysis and identifying critical issues and policy and operational gaps. The field assessment phase will be informed by the key findings of the desk review, and is intended to go into greater detail for the necessary steps to yield policy and programming recommendations suitable for the design of a land reform activity.

The assessment will be conducted by a team led by an Associate and land tenure specialist from ARD's home office; an international consultant and former Country Director of COHRE Sri Lanka; and a national consultant with extensive research experience on land. The desk review will be completed in February. The field assessment will follow in early March.

I.6 WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

I.6.1 ELECTION MONITORING

The upcoming presidential election will be the first island-wide electoral contest since the military defeat of the LTTE in May of 2009. How they are conducted and their outcomes will have direct bearing on the transition of the country from a conflict to a post-conflict situation and on the prospects for genuine peace, reconciliation and national unity. Issues of constitutional reform, including the fate of the executive presidency and the 13th and 17th Amendments, are expected to be key issues in these elections. With the selection of General Fonseka as the candidate of elements of the opposition, the January 2010 presidential election has been transformed from a nominal contest into a real one. Much is at stake, and there are a number of challenges to the integrity of the polls. These challenges include:

- The militarization of certain areas of the country, including the presence of paramilitaries with political aspirations;
- The ongoing process of displacement and resettlement, as well as the continued presence of thousands of IDPs in Menik Farm and other camps, and the ability of IDPs and vulnerable minorities to exercise independently their right to vote;
- Possible limitations on the access of political parties to the IDP camps (including the Menik farm complex) and other areas of the north;
- The prospect of heavy pressure on the media, limiting independent coverage and analysis of candidates, campaigns and incidents; and
- The prospect of institutionalized misuse of public resources by the state and parties controlling the state.

The significance of the presidential election and the challenges posed to the integrity of the electoral process underscore the importance of civil society monitoring of the process. It is hoped that monitoring will help deter electoral violence and malpractice and is critical to providing an independent assessment to citizens of

how public officials exercise the public trust. Monitoring also engages civil society actively in protecting the integrity of the electoral process, which is the basic mechanism for choice and change in a functioning democracy.

A major concern for the Tamil minority, particularly in the north among IDPs and returnees, in this election will be the loss of personal identification documentation. The law requires the presentation of a national identity card (NIC) in order to cast a vote. It was reported in recent provincial council elections that the lack of valid documents prevented a considerable number of voters from casting their vote. While the entire Sri Lankan population is affected by this problem, voters in the Northern and Eastern Provinces suffer from specific problems connected to the post-war situation. Thirty years of civil war made it impossible to conduct an electoral census; as a result, the Election Commission relies on an electoral register from 1986 for most parts of Northern Province. This means that thousands of citizens are not in a position to cast their vote, unless officials take rapid action. In addition, thousands of people have been displaced within these two provinces—it is estimated that 451,000 people are not in a position to vote in their original electoral divisions and electorates. IDPs who have recently left the Manik Farm complex or still reside in this or other camps lack proper identification papers and do not have any idea about where they should vote since there has been no proper voter registration as well as no government plan to rectify these errors.

SuRG has awarded grants to the three primary election monitoring groups to support voter education and monitoring of the January presidential election in the Northern Province.

ARD028

The partner was awarded a grant of SL Rs. 4,940,575 for its ‘Voter Education and Monitoring Conduct in the Presidential Elections in the Northern Province.’ The partner will educate northern voters about the need to vote, how to obtain the needed documents to vote, where to vote, and how the preferential voting system works. In addition, it will advocate to the government for a correct and timely response to IDP concerns. Finally, it will monitor the provision of essential identity documents, the conduct of the presidential election campaign, and the actual election in the north. The partner already has 94 trained monitors in the north. However, to cover the pre-election period, election day and the post-election period in the north, the partner will require roughly 450 election monitors.

The partner will cover as many polling centers as possible out of the 829 slated to be established in the north, including all 624 polling stations in Jaffna. There will be some additional polling centers for the IDPs, most probably just outside or inside the IDP camps. Priority will be given to monitoring these IDP polling centers.

The partner will establish three coordinating centers in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar (Killinocchi, the islands and centers for IDPs will be coordinated through Jaffna Center) for a period of 50-60 days to oversee the monitoring process and to handle outreach activities.

ARD029

In December, a grant of SL Rs. 5,549,750 was awarded to the partner, to monitor the January 2010 presidential elections in Northern Province. The partner monitoring of the presidential election will adopt the modus operandi of its monitoring over the last decade, but with certain variations due to ground realities. Monitoring will focus on election related violence and malpractice during the campaign and on election day, and on the media’s election coverage. The partner will also mount a public interest media campaign against election violence. Under this initiative, the partner will interview, orient, train and deploy 195 field monitors island wide a month ahead of polling day, out of which 16 monitors will be assigned to the Northern Province. A two-day residential training program will be conducted in Colombo for all field monitors. In addition, a separate Jaffna-based training program will be conducted for monitors assigned to Jaffna and Mullaitivu districts due to the challenges posed by limited access to these districts.

The partner will monitor the election coverage of the electronic and print media during the period using standard content analysis techniques. Monitoring will assess the accuracy of media reporting, the impartiality

and completeness of voter education, and equity in political advertising and access. The information gathered will be used for media communiqués and other partner reports and a separate chapter in the partner’s final report on the conduct of the election that will address media coverage.

ARD030

SuRG awarded the partner a grant of SL. Rs. 5,374,050 for their “Monitoring the Conduct of Presidential Elections in the Northern Province” project. The objective of this grant is, through a community effort, to minimize election violence and election malpractices in the north, to observe the conduct of the election campaign and the election itself in order to document the abuses, and to make recommendations for improvement of the existing procedures and institutions pertaining to elections. The partner’s monitoring will cover the pre-election period, i.e., the period between December 17, 2009 to the day of the election; the day of the election; and a post-election period of two weeks after the day of the elections. The total number of polling stations to be established in the Northern Province by the Commissioner of Elections will be 829 in the 32 Divisional Secretary (DS) divisions. With support from SuRG in the north, the partner will assign monitors to each division to monitor and report on abuses, malpractices and violations of election laws in his/her area of operation during the campaign period. In addition, on election day, 160 mobile monitors will be formed into teams of five each and will be deployed in each of the 32 DS Divisions. They will be provided with vehicles to tour the divisions. The partner will also mobilize 829 stationary monitors through the partners in its network to be positioned in each of the polling centers. Apart from these monitors, 26 additional volunteers will be deployed to staff the temporary offices that will be set up at the district level. A total of 160 mobile monitors and 829 stationary observers are being trained in approximately 33 workshops of 25 to 30 participants each. These workshops will be held in central locations in the five northern districts.

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