



**USAID** | **SRI LANKA**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

JANUARY - MARCH 2010 QUARTERLY REPORT



APRIL 2010

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by ARD, Inc.

Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development, USAID Contract Number 383-C-00-08-000501-00

ARD Home Office Address: ARD, Inc.  
159 Bank Street, Suite 300,  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Tel: 802 658-3890, Fax 802 658-4247  
[www.ardinc.com](http://www.ardinc.com)

Cover Photo: Participants from the East Timor Land Study Tour discuss plot demarcation with East Timorese land officers.

# SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

JANUARY – MARCH 2010 QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 2010

## ***DISCLAIMER***

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.



# CONTENTS

- ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS ..... III**
- INTRODUCTION ..... I**
- I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES ..... 2**
  - I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY ..... 2
    - I.1.1 Grants and Subcontracts ..... 2
    - I.1.2 Rule of Law Assessment ..... 4
  - I.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION ..... 4
    - I.2.1 Grants ..... 4
  - I.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE ..... 9
    - I.3.1 Language Training ..... 10
  - I.4 OPEN DIALOGUE ..... 11
    - I.4.1 Grants ..... 11
  - I.5 CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES ..... 12
    - I.5.1 Annual Program Statement (APS) ..... 12
    - I.5.2 Land ..... 13
  - I.6 CRISIS MODIFIER ..... 14
    - I.6.1 Election Monitoring ..... 14
- ATTACHMENT I: SUCCESS STORIES ..... 15**



# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
APS	Annual Program Statement
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDG	Community Development Groups
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWRP	Campaign for Women's Representation in Politics
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EP	Eastern Province
FY	Fiscal Year
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
MLGPC	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Muslim Peace Assembly
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NMA	National Muslim Assembly
OD	Open Dialogue
OLD	Official Language Department
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PS	Pradeshya Sabha
Q	Quarter
RDO	Rural Development Officer
SE	Social Equity
SL. R	Sri Lankan Rupee
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
ToT	Training of Trainers

UC	Urban Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
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 [SE], local governance [LG], community empowerment and transformation [CEaT], open dialogue [OD]) 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 January 1–March 31, 2010, and details progress on contract implementation activities and management and administration. Highlights for the quarter include:

- Sixteen SuRG scholarship recipients were awarded diplomas for their successful completion of the 2009 Sri Lanka Journalism Diploma Programme.
- Partners pursued 102 human rights violation cases in courts.
- Twelve central and regional government officials and one researcher traveled to East Timor for a land study tour to look at land tenure and security.
- A team of three international experts conducted a rule of law assessment based on interviews with 47 government officials, civil society leaders, donors and representatives of the legal community and judiciary in Colombo, Trincomalee, Jaffna and Kalutara.
- A two-phased national land tenure assessment was completed including a desk and a field study designed to identify government perspectives, operations, capabilities and needs in land administration, internally displaced persons (IDPs) resettlement and restitution of property, tenure arrangement underlying smallholder agriculture, land-related dispute resolution targeted to the north and east; determine the landscape of donor and NGO interventions; and identify opportunities for a new land tenure program.
- One thousand three hundred eighty-three election observers were trained and deployed three partners in the Northern Province to monitor the January presidential elections.
- Nine NGOs from the Eastern Province (7) and Polonnaruwa District (2) were awarded grants totaling SL. R. 24,079,675 to conduct a range of social equity (SE), community empowerment and open dialogue (OD) activities to be held in 84 villages in 16 divisional secretariats (DSs).
- Twenty-one language teachers completed a Training of Trainers (ToT) course and were certified by the Official Language Department (OLD) for teaching the official Tamil and Sinhala language course.
- Tamil and Sinhala language training for 449 local government officials from 27 local authorities (LAs) in the Eastern Province commenced.
- A partner reached out to over 4,000 rural women with street dramas and awareness-raising sessions on gender issues, engaging LAs, good governance, and social issues.
- Partners conducted awareness-raising programs on voting rights and procedures prior to the presidential election. Approximately 21,000 people attended these events.

# I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

## I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

The SuRG Social Equity (SE) team continued to support and monitor ongoing partner activities with partners while also helping new and prospective grantees both in the Eastern Province and at the national level to develop proposals for new initiatives. The team worked with the partners on closing out grants under which activities were completed last quarter and on developing new proposals. In addition, the SE team supported an international consultant team in Sri Lanka to conduct a rule of law assessment.

### I.1.1 GRANTS AND SUBCONTRACTS

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

- ARD017 – “Peace through Community Self-Protection and Inter-Communal Dialogue in the Batticaloa District.”
- ARD020 – “Raising Awareness of Human Rights in Vulnerable Communities of Ampara District.”
- ARD021 – “Raising Awareness of Human Rights amongst Vulnerable Women and Adolescents in Ampara District.”

The SE team is working with perspective partners in Jaffna and in Batticaloa on the development of two new grants for a human rights education course and support to the land registry in Kalmunai.

In March, SuRG brought together a former grantee from Trincomalee, a new grantee from Ampara and a prospective grantee from Jaffna to discuss human rights education. The former grantee has now conducted four six-month human rights certificate courses for NGO workers. Others are planning similar programs in their districts. At the meeting, experiences about appropriate curriculum, methodology, selection criteria for participants and selection of resource persons were shared. Others discussed previous experience working with lawyers and the University to deliver similar programs on gender-based violence and other related topics. Through this meeting, all three organizations were able to exchange ideas, materials and contacts to enhance each of their programs or perspective programs.

#### **ARD010**

The partner began work on training materials for upcoming sessions to be held in the north. Materials used in two trainings held in the east during the last reporting period are being amended to include lessons learned from those sessions. The materials, along with the program, will be finalized after assessment trips to Jaffna and Vavuniya are made in April/May. These visits will provide the partner with contacts and information

needed to ensure training is relevant to the target groups and addresses priority issues and concerns on the ground.

In addition to its ongoing desk research, the partner conducted three field missions of one week each over the quarter, covering all three districts of the Eastern Province. A fourth mission is planned for early April. The initial meetings focused on discussions with government and nongovernmental stakeholders with latter field visits focusing on discussions with community members and civil leaders who have had firsthand experience in land disputes.

The partner has had to readjust its strategy on lobbying for a comprehensive and consistent housing, land and property restitution policy due to government changes in its approach to policy. Previously the partner was working closely with a group under the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief charged with developing this policy. This process was halted and authority for IDP return and resettlement vested in the Presidential Task Force. The partner will continue to advocate for this; however, they are now in the process of developing a new strategy. After parliamentary elections in April and a new government is named, the partner will finalize its strategy.

#### **ARD022**

SuRG support to the partner covers Community Development Group (CDGs) in 12 villages. This work is carried out as part of a larger initiative of the partner funded by the European Commission in 61 villages of eight districts (Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, Polonnaruwa and Hatton in addition to the three districts mentioned) to allow for greater efficiency and cost savings.

To date, the partner has set up 62 CDGs with 1,000 members. In Mannar, Vavuniya and Jaffna, members are still being identified.

The partner has focused its activities in this quarter on community development and advocacy work. This work has gone a long way in helping CDGs gain the trust and respect of the villages where they are working. They have conducted *Shramadanas* (communal volunteer work projects); helped villagers obtain missing birth certificates; advocated with local authorities to enhance community services; and facilitated a community loan program from the Thrift Co-operative Societies in Vavuniya.

The partner also trained their project staff and motivators on voter rights and election issues so they could conduct a voter education awareness program prior to the January presidential elections. Voter awareness programs were conducted in Jaffna, Hatton and Ampara districts.

Through this program, the partner also provides legal assistance. This quarter, 51 cases were pursued in court.

#### **ARD005**

During this quarter, the partner provided legal representation for 117 (66 ongoing and 51 new) cases including fundamental rights, magistrate court cases, high court cases and one court of appeals case (see details in table below). Of these cases, 8 were concluded this reporting period. One hundred forty-two people requested legal advice and assistance, resulting in 31 cases filed. The remaining cases were referred to other organizations, will be taken up next quarter, or were rejected based on the partner's inability to handle the case or because the detainee already had or obtained other representation.

The partner continues to provide legal assistance in spite of challenges, which include but are not limited to, reluctance of detainees to admit when confessions were obtained through coercion; lack of privacy when consulting with detainees; translation and communication difficulties for cases transferred; increasing incidents of surrenderees being sent to a detention center, even though the court has ordered they be sent to a rehabilitation center; confusion over procedures and status of clients and the process of ordering rehabilitation; and undue delays in indictments.

## **ARD001**

The partner's research 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" completed last quarter were sent for peer review this quarter. Professor Ratnapala completed his review at the end of this quarter and the comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the final reports for publication and dissemination next quarter.

## **ARD020**

The partner initiated activities of its "Raising Awareness of Human Rights in Vulnerable Communities of Ampara District" project soon after signing the grant this quarter. Staff were appointed, initial discussion meetings to introduce the project were held with six of eight DSs and approval was obtained at these meetings to implement the project. Initial discussions were held with Grama Sevaka, Samurdhi Animators (government social welfare representatives) and other relevant stakeholders. The partner also conducted 44 meetings with community-based organization (CBO) leaders in 11 project villages from six DSs.

### **1.1.2 RULE OF LAW ASSESSMENT**

SuRG organized a rule of law assessment conducted by an international team. The team conducted a targeted analysis of the status of rule of law development in Sri Lanka. In addition to a review of primary and secondary documentation and journal articles, the team relied heavily on in-depth interviews with Sri Lankan and foreign experts for data, insights and opinions about Sri Lanka's efforts to develop a working rule of law. While in Sri Lanka, the team conducted 47 interviews in Colombo, Trincomalee, Jaffna and Kalutara. They met with officials from the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, Judicial Services Commission, Law Commission, Attorney General's Department, Government Analyst's Office, Bar, CSOs and donors.

A first draft was submitted to the Mission on March 12. A final draft incorporating USAID feedback and comments was submitted to USAID on March 31.

## **1.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION**

### **1.2.1 GRANTS**

In this quarter, the following new grants were awarded. Activities will get underway in the next quarter.

- ARD011 – "Promoting Peaceful Co-Existence through Social Mobilization of Women and Youth Groups."
- ARD012 – "Promoting Peaceful Co-Existence through Multi – Ethnic Community Participation."
- ARD014 – "Community Empowerment and Mobilization for Muslim and Sinhala Co-Existence Project."
- ARD016 – "Relationship Building between Diverse Social Groups in Muslim and Tamil Communities."

## **ARD004**

The partner's one-year grant came to a close on February 28, 2010. In spite of numerous challenges, both political and administrative in nature, the partner was able to maintain and build the presence and effectiveness of its regional Muslim Peace Assemblies (MPAs) in Puttalam, Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Galle. The MPAs were able to bring together different political actors and create a common platform to discuss issues pertaining to Muslim communities. They were able to build linkages between political and civil society leaders, enabling grassroots advocacy and the resolution through open discussions and mediation of priority local issues. Each MPA took on a range of diverse issues, resolving 23 of 53 issues taken up. Those issues that have not been resolved continue to be addressed by each MPA.

The partner also formed youth, women and inter-religious dialogue forums to expand their reach and link to key constituencies and other religious groups/forums in the respective regions. The demand for these forums was high and commitment among participants strong. However, these sub-forums are still in a very nascent stage requiring significant work by the partner to build them into functioning and effective forums. Youth and women's forums were formed in all five regions; inter-religious dialogue forums were formed in all regions except for Batticaloa.

At the national level, the partner was plagued with funding issues and staff issues. Without core funding, the partner has not been able to retain a team of qualified professionals which has undermined its efforts to act as a national center representing the needs of a diverse Muslim community. This, combined with ongoing political changes in the country as well as within the Muslim community, hampered efforts to implement the National Muslim Assembly (NMA) as planned. The executive committee of the NMA was able to conduct regular meetings and formulate two papers: a strategic paper for Sri Lankan Muslims and a position paper for the resettlement of northern Muslims. However, due to political and power struggles within and between the partner and the executive committee as well as within the broader Muslim community, the NMA was never formally launched.

Activities in this quarter focused on the training and continuation of MPA advocacy.

A review of regional programs begun last quarter was completed in a workshop for representatives of the regional offices held from January 9-10, 2010. The discussions on MPA effect led to the identification of three significant impacts: 1) the utilization of MPAs by the Muslim community as a means to voice and raise concerns; 2) increased ability of youth and women to address issues relevant to them through the sub-forums; and 3) creation of a common consensus and position on Muslims through the MPAs.

Lessons learned by the respective MPAs included maintaining the identity of the MPA at the regional level in order to liaise and interact with other stakeholders more effectively; the need for members to build adequate capacity to address issues at the community level; the need to identify the most relevant and pertinent issues in order to carry out advocacy efforts; and the need to carry out advocacy planning at all levels to ensure effective solutions to priority problems.

In addition, regional advocacy plans for policy and action changes were prepared. An action plan for 2010 and 2011 for MPAs and a plan to transfer knowledge gained in the review meeting to the other MPA members at the regional level (Echo meetings) was also prepared.

In January and February, a series of workshops were conducted for MPAs in all five regions to improve advocacy knowledge and skills. The program included advocacy planning, process management, networking and challenges faced in advocacy. One hundred and four MPA members participated in the training.

All regions hosted youth and women's forum meetings in January and February to discuss their plans for 2010.

The members of the youth forums identified issues to be raised ranging from the lack of access to standardized education and opportunities for higher education to political issues such as the sidelining of youth in the political processes, political manipulation of vulnerable youth by politicians, false and unfounded allegations against youth handling weapons, and increasing divisions among the Muslim community on political and religious issues.

Issues related to the resettlement process were also raised with many youth voicing concern about their elders' willingness to resettle in the north and the youth's reluctance to move. They highlighted the need to educate the younger generation on the resettlement process. The lack of awareness on legal and human rights among youth and the lack of media attention focused on Muslims and their issues were also noted as matters of concern.

Members of the women’s forums focused on the role of women in advancing the interests of the community as a whole. Stereotyped attitudes of women which prevent them from actively participating in politics, lack of financial resources, the denial of the right to education for Muslim girls, lack of support from family and the community to actively participate in community activities and the impediment to women’s participation due to male domination were cited by women as primary concerns.

The process, which resulted in the identification of these issues, was included in an advocacy plan submitted to the respective MPAs. The forums plan to work closely with the MPAs in taking on some of these issues and raising awareness at the community level.

Inter-religious dialogue forums to build consensus with other communities in Trincomalee, Ampara, Puttalam and Galle also continued to meet during this quarter.

SuRG worked closely with the partner and the executive committee of the NMA to ensure the NMA was launched before the end of the grant period. However, several factors worked collectively toward cancellation of the event. Although funding was readily available for the launch, it became evident to SuRG that the staff of the partner lacked the necessary capacity to oversee such a launch at the national level. On the advice of SuRG, a pre-launch seminar was conducted, enabling the partner to strategize and finalize a plan for the launch. However, poor planning—presidential and general elections during the last two quarters—led to the cancellation of the launch several times. Coordination between the partner and NMA, personal differences, lack of understanding and confusion over roles and responsibilities of the two entities further exacerbated the situation.

Therefore, one of the key deliverables of the grant was not achieved over the grant period. However, a strategy paper has been developed and finalized by the members of the Executive Committee on return and resettlement of displaced Muslims, regaining the land of Muslims, and confidence building following consultations in the field.

A position paper on the “Return of Northern Muslims” was finalized in this quarter and handed over to the presidential candidates prior to the January elections. The paper pushed candidates from the government and opposition to comment on the situation of northern Muslims. The partner and NMA will follow up with the elected president on this issue.

#### **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, training of resource people, local advocacy and the formation of district WRDS federations in Batticaloa and Puttalam. The chart below details the range of activities that the partner conducted this quarter and their reach among project WRDSs and community members.

<b>Key Activities and Participants</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>WRDSs</b>
Documentation Training	28	760	28
Accounting Training	41	1082	41
Proposal Development Training	18	490	18
Gender Training	21	601	21
Study Circles	71	709	30
Film Circles	54	404	26
Street Dramas	10	1,865+	10
<i>Kutti Arasanagam</i> Discussion sessions	7	144	07

In addition, research and data collection on early marriages continued in four districts and voice-cuts from 10 WRDS members were recorded for 10 radio and television discussions.

Results from these activities were noted in WRDSs from all four project districts. They include:

- One WRDS submitted documentation to the Divisional Secretariat (DS) in Trincomalee and they obtained their registration.
- One WRDS submitted documentation to the DS in Trincomalee for registration—the application is still pending.
- Bank accounts were opened and are being maintained by seven WRDSs.
- Monthly meeting minutes of one WRDS in Trincomalee are shared with members and the Rural Development Officer (RDO).
- A WRDS in Puttalam District began to deposit membership fees into their bank account rather than keeping the cash. Prior to the partner’s training, they were unaware of how to use banking facilities.
- The partner invites and reaches out to local government officers for training and other events. The RDO, after attending the partner’s training on documentation and accounting, requested the training be repeated for all village WRDSs within the district.
- The table below highlights proposals submitted for funding by WRDSs after receiving training in proposal development writing.

“Actually we didn’t know much about the WRDS and its power [before joining the society]. We thought that only the Rural Development Society (RDS) is an officially formed organization which can function at village level. Now we are very much clear about our society’s roles and responsibilities and have started to voice our ideas for our rights.”

*Member WRDS, Trincomalee District*

<b>Women’s Rural Development Societies (WRDSs) Proposal Development</b>			
<b>WRDS (District)</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Submitted to</b>	<b>Funds Requested (SL Rs.)</b>
(Jaffna)	Livelihood activities and construction of a community center	Care UNDP Kopi DS	1,100,000
	Livelihood support for female-headed households: incense sticks, sweets, tooth powder production	Kopai DS	558,512*
	Community center	Kopai DS	511,000*
(Jaffna)	Construction of community building	Kopai DS	850,000
	Road rehabilitation for Achchelu north		7,000,000
	Five sewing machines		100,000
	100 school bags and shoes for children		62,000
(Jaffna)	Instruments and furniture for beauty center	Jaffna Municipal Council Human Development Centre (HUDEC)	150,000
(Trincomalee)	Road construction	Provincial Council	n/a
	International Women’s Day	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	100,000**
	Rice cleaning machine	UNIDO	In-kind*

\*Indicates funding obtained

\*\*DRC provided gifts for participants at the event

Underlying all these training and outreach programs is the project’s goal of empowering women through their WRDS to raise their voices about local development and community matters and provide them with the motivation, confidence and skills to participate in community bodies and engage directly with local authorities. *Kutti Arasaangam* (good governance) discussions are the basis through which the partner begins to

encourage WRDSs and their members to advocate with local authorities and other community leaders to address their needs and resolve community concerns. For example, a WRDS in Trincomalee District identified unlicensed meat vendors as a concern and took up the issue with the PS. Meat vendors complained to the local Mosque community, which had already attempted to hamper WRDS activities, as they were concerned about the role of women in public decision making. The issue remains unresolved but members of

### **Promoting women's participation in local decision making**

Partner's staff's participation in the coordination meetings of an Urban Council in Batticaloa led to a request from the UC to include WRDS representatives on their advisory committee. The committee makes important recommendations to the UC on village development. Four women from project WRDSs now sit along with a Muslim staff member from the partner on this committee. It is the first time a Muslim woman has been included on the Advisory Committee.

WRDSs in four adjoining villages have joined the women. The women have even gained support from some men in the village who wrote to the Mosque leaders to stand up for a woman's right to participate in social activities. (Please see Attachment I for more details on the advocacy efforts of the Pulikkudy Bazaar WRDS).

Despite the partner's many activities and results, they and project WRDSs regularly face several challenges implementing activities and promoting women's participation. As the level of education among WRDS members is relatively low, the partner has had to commit much more time than planned for training WRDS officers and members on accounting and proposal writing.

In addition, cultural barriers in many Muslim communities can prevent young women from participating in WRDS activities. The Mosque committees, in Trincomalee in particular, put pressure on parents to prevent women from participating.

Furthermore, the high level of political mobilization in communities has resulted in political pressure being brought to bear on WRDSs. This is most evident in Puttalam District, where organizing events has been delayed because the Mosque presidents and the Grama Niladhari (village officer) delay permission needed to conduct the events.

The formation of the WRDS federation in Batticaloa was delayed due to lack of support from the district officer and the DS. In Trincomalee, a WRDS lodged a complaint with the Human Rights Commission against the Secretary and elected members of the Thampalagama PS in response to political pressure.

### **THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS (CWRP)**

CWRP's efforts were greatly curtailed this quarter as a result of ongoing election campaigns. Scheduled signature campaign events had to be postponed so they would not be hijacked for political purposes or construed as political rallies. CWRP was able to hold a media event in Kandy from January 8–9. The event provided information and helped media personnel and political leaders better understand the issue of women's representation in the context of local government and the devolution of power. Sixteen members of the media, 13 women councilors, 19 young councilors, three professors from the University of Peradeniya and six special guests attended the event.

CWRP convened a strategy session and a press conference in February. The session was held the same week that nomination lists were being finalized for the general election, so CWRP engaged the support of the Women and Media Collective to conduct the press conference. The event was carried on national TV in prime time on the same day.

CWRP has been granted an extension through the end of May to complete its activities. The remaining activities, two signature campaign events, are planned for early May.

### **ARD023**

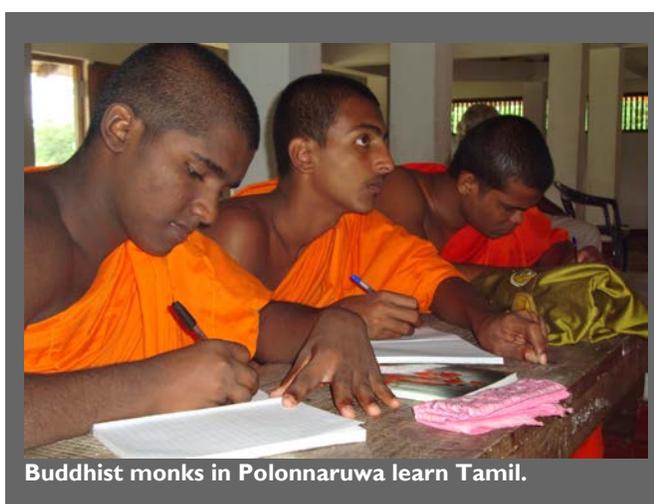
The partner continued its work with monks and nuns from Monaragala, Ampara and Polonnaruwa through their "Promoting Social Engagement through Buddhist Practice" program. During the quarter, they held

seven dialogue forums at which 55 clergy members from all three districts participated. At each forum, the partner employs a teaching module developed for the program by expert resource people. The forums include a three-hour presentation of the materials in each module followed by a three-hour facilitated discussion on the materials. The teaching modules being employed and the authors are as follows:

1. *Democracy and Citizenship*
2. *Understanding Crises and Problems of Contemporary Society through the State*
3. *Evolution of Religious Consciousness and Incorporation of Religions*
4. *Let Us Re-read Thripitaka* (Buddhist cannon)
5. *Well-being of the Society and the Community of a Sangha*
6. *Dealing with Conflicts Constructively*

Dialogue forums for monks, nuns and lay people scheduled for this quarter were postponed at the request of monk and nun participants who felt they were not yet at an appropriate level to lead discussions with lay people. The schedule was further delayed as participants were fully engaged in harvesting paddy during the quarter.

Tamil language classes continued for project clergy in Polonnaruwa. To date, 24 hours of class have been held. The program will sponsor a total of 40 hours. Classes in Monaragala and Ampara were postponed until next quarter due to difficulties in getting the appropriate teachers. The partner has scheduled a review evaluation of the language component in May.



Overall, the program, although moving slowly, is providing a unique and important forum for monks and nuns to discuss contemporary social issues and their relations to the *Sangha* (Buddhist clergy) community. Their discussions range from broader social and governance issues to those which are of particular concern to the Sangha community. These are highly controversial issues and project dialogues help participants to address them in the broader context of contemporary issues and society. Furthermore, the partner has seen through program activities and discussions how participants are beginning to realize the need to engage lay people on the issues they deem important. In the words of a participating monk from Monaragala District,

*This program offers an opportunity to discuss issues facing the lay community in our society. We have had adequate theoretical knowledge on Buddhist philosophy. What this program provides us is the in-depth and critical understanding of the issues faced by the communities. And that kind of knowledge adds value to our sermons when we preach to the community.*

### **I.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

SuRG continued to work with its 11 local authority partners in this quarter. SuRG working groups in each of the LAs met regularly; 33 meetings were held during the quarter. The outcome and progress of language classes as well as expected SuRG training for 2010 were discussed during the meetings.

The SuRG LG team also started discussions with the additional 27 Pradeshya Sabhas (PS) in the province on its proposed training plan. Although scheduled to begin in this reporting period, approval from USAID for a

subcontract to EML Consultants, the proposed training providers, was not received until the last week of the quarter. The training and technical assistance program will begin next quarter.

In addition, SuRG expects to sign an MOU with the MLGPC soon after parliamentary elections take place in April. The MOU was developed and agreed upon last quarter, but due to the elections has been put on hold at the Ministry.

SuRG is providing support to the Assistant Commissioner of Local Government (ACLG) in Trincomalee for publication of a quarterly newsletter which provides information on special activities conducted in the local government sector, ongoing/new programs and activities and events and details of the district LAs. The newsletter is published in Tamil and Sinhala and distributed to LAs and interested agencies throughout the district. With SuRG support, the newsletter will include space for SuRG news and SuRG articles on governance issues. The first issue to include a SuRG contribution will be published in April.

### 1.3.1 LANGUAGE TRAINING

Language training was completed this quarter for staff in nine of SuRG's 11 partner LAs. The class for the Ampara Urban Council (UC) was conducted in the conference hall of the UC building. Throughout the quarter, the facility was used for election-related meetings and other work, so classes were not completed as scheduled. Classes are expected to be completed early next quarter. In Seruwila PS, classes were not held in December as the instructor was studying for his Master's degree examination. Classes are rescheduled for March and April.



Government officials from Namal Oya PS in Ampara study Tamil.

Language classes have been well received by participants and officials in the Eastern Province. However, the program has proven much more useful for government staff than for elected officials. With elections and other political commitments, many of the elected officials who originally registered for the class opted out of the program over the course of the last six months.

A second phase of language classes for the remaining 27 PSs in the province was organized in response to requests from the Commissioner for Local Government (CLG) and in accordance with SuRG's expanded strategy to work with all 37 PSs and Ampara UC. SuRG coordinated with the Official Language Department (OLD) to identify and select teachers to participate in a

ToT program. The program was conducted by OLD from January 15-20 and held in Colombo for 10 Tamil teachers and 11 Sinhalese teachers. Five additional teachers selected as trainers had received the training previously and therefore did not attend the ToT.

The CLG and the ACLGs requested that SuRG give priority to elected officials for training. However, as with the previous language program, political commitments and ongoing elections kept selected elected officials from attending classes and so classes are made up almost entirely of government staff.

The classes, for 166 Sinhala and 283 Tamil medium students, began the first week of March. The chart below provides a gender and ethnic breakdown of the participants by LA.

## Language Training for 27 PSs: Participants

Name of LA	Total	Female	Male	Tamil	Muslim	Sinhala	Studying Sinhala	Studying Tamil
Trincomalee Town and Gravets PS	19	12	07	18	01	-	19	-
Kanthale PS	34	21	13	-	-	34	-	34
Gomarankadawala PS	10	01	09	-	-	10	-	10
Morawewa PS	10	-	10	-	-	10	-	10
Kuchchaveli PS	24	12	12	24	-	-	24	-
Padavi Sripura	08	03	05	-	-	08	-	08
Kinniya PS	11	02	09	-	11	-	11	-
Akkaraippattu PS	08	02	06	-	08	-	08	-
Sammanthurai PS	30	12	18	01	29	-	30	-
Pottuvil PS	11	01	10	04	07	-	11	-
Navithenveli PS	10	04	06	10	-	-	10	-
Addalaichenai PS	10	01	09	-	10	-	10	-
Damana PS	20	14	06	-	-	20	-	20
Dehiyattakandiya PS	15	08	07	-	-	15	-	15
Padiyathalawa PS	14	03	11	-	-	14	-	14
Mahaoya PS	15	08	07	-	-	15	-	15
Lahugala PS	10	02	08	-	-	10	-	10
Thirukkivil PS	15	03	12	14	01	-	15	-
Karaitheevu PS	15	07	08	12	03	-	15	-
Namaloya PS	11	07	04	-	-	11	-	11
Uhana PS	19	08	11	-	-	19	-	19
Koralaippattu PS	38	15	23	35	03	-	38	-
Manmunaippattu PS	16	08	08	16	-	-	16	-
Eravurppattu PS	18	09	09	16	02	-	18	-
Manmunai South Eruvil Pattu PS	14	06	08	14	-	-	14	-
Koralaippattu North PS	13	02	11	13	-	-	13	-
Koralaippattu west PS	31	14	17	06	25	-	31	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>166</b>

## I.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

### I.4.1 GRANTS

In this quarter, the following new grant was awarded. Activities will get underway in the next quarter.

- ARD013 – “Strengthening Media in Trincomalee District”

#### ARD002 / ARD031

Sixteen SuRG scholarship recipients for the 2009 Journalism Diploma Programme successfully completed their course last quarter. A graduation ceremony was held on March 4 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. The United States Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Ms. Valerie Fowler, was Chief Guest at the ceremony and awarded the diploma certificates to program graduates.



Ms. Valerie Fowler, U.S. Embassy, Deputy Chief of Mission awards a diploma to SuRG journalism scholar.

A second grant for scholarships for the 2010 Journalism Diploma Programme was approved and awarded this quarter. The grant for Rs. 3,900,000 provides full scholarships for 26 students from the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The first semester of the 2010 diploma course began in January and will be completed next quarter.

#### **ARD025**

The partner conducted a regional consultation in Sabragamuwa Province. The consultation included presentations and discussions on the implementation of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, its practical challenges and practice, and fiscal management. Participation in the workshop included regional political and civil society leaders, legal practitioners and policymakers. The workshop also included participation by national leaders including the Advisor to the President, Vasudeva Nanayakkara.

The next provincial consultation is planned for the Western Province in May 2010.

The partner proceeded in its development of a booklet on provincial experiences. Data and information has been collected in spite of the delay. A first draft was completed and reviewed by the editors. The final draft is targeted to be ready early next quarter.

## **I.5 CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES**

### **I.5.1 ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)**

#### **ROUND I**

Grants were approved for nine organizations from the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District. Grants were signed for all but one of the nine this quarter. The final grant signing has been postponed until after parliamentary elections are held in April.

These grants together will support communities in 84 villages across 16 DSs in Ampara, Batticaloa, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee Districts, as well as 50 journalists working throughout Trincomalee District with activities that address key SuRG objectives in social equity, community empowerment and transformation, local governance and open dialogue. Each project is 12 months in duration. The total value of sub-grants awarded in this first round of the APS was Rs. 24,079,675.

Representatives from all nine organizations attended an orientation and quarterly planning workshop at the end of the quarter. Conducted with the aim of improving the management and performance of the individual projects, the workshop focused on increasing the partners' understanding of SuRG standards, monitoring and evaluation tools and effective reporting mechanisms. Each organization presented its project work plan. Targets and expected results under each activity were reviewed and when necessary, revised.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for participants to share with and learn from each other.

#### **ROUND II**

Concept notes from 63 CSOS were received at the end of last quarter for a second round of APS grants. The concepts were reviewed and translated and, after completing an initial institutional assessment, 16 organizations were invited to participate in a proposal development workshop and submit a full proposal to be considered for funding. Proposal development workshops (one in Tamil and one in Sinhala) have been scheduled for May. The chart below shows the distribution of organizations selected to attend the workshops by district.

<b>Concept Papers Selected to Submit Proposals under APS Round 2 by District</b>	
District	Number Selected
Ampara	4
Batticaloa	3
Trincomalee	6
Polonnaruwa	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

## 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 is addressing 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, this quarter SuRG organized a study tour to East Timor for national and regional government officials, and completed a desk review of existing research and materials on land tenure and a comprehensive field-based national land tenure assessment.

### LAND STUDY TOUR

SuRG organized a study tour to East Timor (February 20–27) for 12 central and regional government officials and one researcher. The study tour was intended to highlight issues of tenure security, secondary occupation, and the importance and difficulty of developing land policies in a post-conflict environment. The tour was hosted by ARD staff from USAID’s Strengthening Land and Property Rights in Timor-Leste Project and included discussions with the Timorese National Director and District Land and Property Director of the National Land National Directorate for Land, Property and Cadastral Services; and a range of international and local agencies, NGOs and civil society representatives working on land issues. Field visits were made to land data collection and project sites in and around Dili and in the adjoining district of Liquica. Key representatives of the group also met with the USAID/Timor-Leste Mission Representative and his staff from the Program, Economic Growth and Democracy and Governance Offices. The group learned about the historical and present context of Timor-Leste, land issues, policies and practices, and the Timorese government’s response to the IDP crisis from 2006-2009.



**Mr. Boralessa, Commissioner-General of the Land Commission discusses the public display of land claims with an East Timorese official.**

The tour provided participants with an opportunity to examine land issues in Sri Lanka from a fresh perspective and explore new and innovative solutions. The tour also consolidated relationships among participants, SuRG and USAID.

## **NATIONAL LAND TENURE ASSESSMENT**

SuRG completed a national land tenure assessment begun last quarter. The two-phase assessment was conducted by a team led by an Associate and land tenure specialist from ARD's home office, an international consultant and a national consultant with expertise in state reforms and ethnic conflict and included 1) a desk review (with limited field work) of existing reports, assessments, circulars, legislation and other material; and 2) a field assessment.

The desk review conducted in January and February involved a review of existing reports, assessments and other material; provided a contextual analysis; and identified critical issues relating to IDPs (from the conflict and the 2004 tsunami) and challenges in resettlement and restitution, secondary occupation and encroachment, informal and formal high security zones, development projects combined with military buffer zones without legal acquisition of land, lack of trust in land administration and dispute resolution, lack of timely response mechanisms and ethnic land disputes. The desk study provides a succinct analysis of the literature highlighting these important issues.

The desk study was submitted to USAID for approval on February 18, 2010.

The field study was designed to identify government perspectives, operations, capabilities and needs in land administration, IDP resettlement and restitution of property, tenure arrangement underlying smallholder agriculture, land-related dispute resolution targeted to the north and east; determine the landscape of donor and NGO interventions; and identify opportunities for a new USAID land tenure program. The field assessment builds on the desk study highlighting additional information obtained from interviews conducted in Colombo, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

The assessment was submitted to USAID for approval on March 31, 2010.

## **1.6 CRISIS MODIFIER**

### **1.6.1 ELECTION MONITORING**

The January 26, 2010 presidential election was the first island-wide electoral contest since the military defeat of the LTTE in May of 2009. The outcome will have a 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. Last quarter, SuRG awarded grants to the three primary election monitoring groups. Through these grants, SuRG supported the training and deployment of 1,383 election monitors throughout the Northern Province.

# ATTACHMENT I: SUCCESS STORIES



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**SRI LANKA**

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY: PULIKUDDY BAZAAR WRDS



*Ms. Nazeera, President of the Pulikkuddy Bazaar WRDS presents a separator secured by the WRDS to rice mill owner Mr. Hanimullah.*

For the past few years, women in Pulikkuddy Bazaar (a Muslim village 29 km from Trincomalee town within the Thampalagama Divisional Secretariat) have met informally to organize activities benefiting women and the community at large. Activities range from spearheading cleanup programs to discussing the role of women in community activities. Due to the success of many of these efforts and the women's commitment to their community, Viluthu reached out to the Pulikkuddy Bazaar women's group in 2009 as part of its USAID Supporting Regional Governance Program-funded "Anangu Women with Mysterious Powers" program.

Members of the women's group have been active participants at several trainings focused on the management and administration of a Women's Rural Development Society (WRDS) that include topics such as documentation, accounting, proposal writing, local governance and gender issues. Viluthu also supported members in their effort to register the group as a government-recognized WRDS. In late 2009, they received official recognition from the Divisional Secretariat of Thampalagama.

This was just the beginning for the organization. Members of the new society collected and compiled data on female-headed households and differently abled within their community. According to Ms. Nazeera, the WRDS President, "We can now create linkages with other organizations to secure their assistance because women headed households and the differently-abled are the most vulnerable. We need to seek out assistance and help them".

The trainings, particularly on local governance, have proven to be a catalyst for mobilization and advocacy. The women approached their local council seeking solutions to two key issues: resuming construction on a partially finished road within the community for which funds were allocated; and an issue that also affected other neighboring communities—curbing the sale of meat by unlicensed meat sellers. In both instances, the response to the WRDS efforts was positive. Construction work on the road resumed, and in spite of resistance from powerful community groups and leaders, local council members are currently looking into the problem of meat sellers operating stalls without proper licensing.

In addition, the WRDS is organizing activities and seeking funding from a variety of sources. The Danish Refugee Council provided cooking utensils for participants in the International Women's Day celebrations. The WRDS secured a separator machine from UNIDO for the village mill owner to help in separating stones and sand from harvested paddy rice. The WRDS-negotiated agreement will ensure that the mill owner pays back 50 percent of the cost of the machine to the WRDS.

The rapid rise of the WRDS as a powerful advocacy group within the community has given rise to praise—Thendral, a government-run regional radio station, recently featured interviews with society members highlighting their activism—as well as opposition from political, religious and community leaders within and outside the community. Such opposition seems only to strengthen the determination of society members. When WRDS members were being unduly pressured by elected council members, the society responded by lodging a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission.

Hence, even in the face of opposition from certain quarters within the community, the WRDS continues to strive to improve the lives of the women and families of their community. As one member stated "the members of the WRDS have managed to get through many of these thorny issues. We are very strong and can withstand these challenges without faltering".

Actually we didn't know much about the WRDS and its power [before joining the society]. We thought that only the Rural Development Society (RDS) is an officially formed organization which can function at village level. Now we are very much clear about our society's roles and responsibilities and have started to voice our ideas for our rights.

*Ms. Massotha, WRDS member*



## FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN VERUGAL PRADESHIYA SABHA



*Mr. K Jeyapalan, Secretary of the Verugal Pradeshya Sabha conducts community needs assessment*

“At the time we were elected, this Pradeshiya Saba consisted of the Chairman, myself, and the council members. We moved around constantly since we had no allocated space. It is only now that there is a staff and we have a building, furniture and equipment”.

Mr. K. Jeyapalan, PS Secretary

When a recent request for proposals for community development projects from the Pradeshiya Sabhas ([PSs] village councils) of Trincomalee district in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province was announced, it came with a pre-condition: the proposed intervention must be a result of a participatory planning process. Meeting this basic requirement might have proved difficult for many of the PSs but to those of Seruvila, Verugal and Thambalagamuwa, the request was a boon. All three councils had already fulfilled the precondition of creating a list of priority development interventions within their respective divisions through a participatory planning process—facilitated by the participation of council members in USAID's Supporting Regional Governance Program's (SuRG) training program on participatory planning and budgeting.

Through SuRG's local governance component, 11 local authorities in the Eastern Province receive training and hands-on technical assistance in participatory governance. At the first in a series of trainings for all 37 PSs and one Urban Council in the east, elected members and staff involved in planning attended training on participatory planning and budgeting in July 2009. SuRG provided follow-up technical support to its 11 partners to help them apply their skills and techniques learned in the training. This support resulted in successful bids for funding for priority development initiatives by three SuRG local authority partners in the Trincomalee district.

Verugal PS pitched a project to rehabilitate a ferry in the division. The Council Chairman, Mr. S. Soundararaja explained, “We have several ferries that are used to transport people and goods. Most of these are in good working conditions, but one has been badly damaged by the conflict. To purchase a new one would cost over 10 million rupees. So we decided to propose the reconstruction of the ferry”.

The council's proposal was approved and is currently awaiting the release of funds for the project. “At present only people and bikes can be ferried. But once rehabilitated, the ferry can also transport vehicles”. The reconstruction project will be the responsibility of the PS and once complete, revenue of 200,000 rupees per annum is expected from the ferrying. Project monitoring will be carried out by the citizen committees appointed in the participatory planning process. These committees consist of three community members nominated by the community, two additional community members nominated by the council and one council member. The committees will monitor project progress in their respective communities, and check and approve cash transactions, thereby maintaining transparency and accountability.

Verugal, a Tamil community of just over 12,000 people living in 17 villages, was under LTTE control until 2007. When the council was elected and the PS formed in 2006, it was the first election held in over two decades. Even then, the PS, its members and constituents continued to endure displacement and conflict (see box at left). Prospects remain positive for the council according to the chairman, and council members are optimistic about the future. A 10-year plan for the Verugal division was submitted to the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils, the World Bank and GTZ. The Ministry has already agreed to provide partial funding for the construction of a community library.



**U.S. Agency for International Development/Sri Lanka**

44, Galle Road, Colombo 3

Sri Lanka

Tel: +94 11-249-8000

Fax: +94 11-247-2850

[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)