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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

JANUARY-MARCH 2011 QUARTERLY REPORT



APRIL 2011

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Tetra Tech ARD Home Office

Address:

Tetra Tech ARD
159 Bank Street, Suite 300,
Burlington, VT 05401
Tel: 802 658-3890, Fax 802 658-4247
www.ardinc.com

Cover Photo:

Following unprecedented rainfall and floods in the Polonnaruwa District, a SuRG grantee organized a *shramadana* for community members to help clean a school.

Photo courtesy of SuRG

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
AG	Attorney General
APS	Annual Program Statement
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Civil Defense Committee
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
COP	Chief of Party
COTR	Contractor's Technical Representative
CM	Community Peacebuilding Meetings
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DS	Divisional Secretary
EP	Eastern Province
ER	Emergency Regulations
EWS	Early Warning System
FMPC	Forum of Members of Provincial Councils
FR	Fundamental Rights
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GN	<i>Grama Niladbari</i>
HLRP	Housing Land Restitution and Property
HR	Human Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JI	Judges' Institute
JSC	Judicial Services Commission
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Legal Aid Commission
LG	Local Government
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupee
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLGPC	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MSI	Management Systems International
NECCDEP	North East Coastal Community Development Project
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIC	National Identity Card

OLD	Official Language Department
PC	Provincial Council
PGF	Participatory Governance Forum
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PS	<i>Pradeshiya Sabha</i>
Q	Quarter
RLF	Revolving Loan Fund
Rs.	Rupees
SE	Social Equity
SLCJ	Sri Lanka College of Journalism
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
TDMS	Trincomalee District Media Society
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TT	Tetra Tech
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIN	Women In Need
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society
YATV	Young Asia Television

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 initiative was designed to build on USAID/Sri Lanka's democracy and governance efforts to address development needs resulting from the then ongoing conflict. The program was intended to support 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 crosscutting activities that reinforce governance improvements around the betterment of human and community security. After the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) in May 2009, SuRG expanded its programming to include the Northern Province. In December 2010, USAID extended ARD's base period from February 2011 to June 2012.

During this quarter, SuRG continued to work with and support our national and regional partners through grants, technical assistance, research and training. Early in the quarter, the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District were hit with extremely harsh rains causing severe flooding. This delayed implementation of many field activities as partners were engaged in supporting their communities and providing relief and reconstruction in any way they could, both as individuals and organizations. Project community groups, stakeholders and partners mobilized to support flood-affected communities and families, showing the importance of SuRG activities in the field. Although SuRG funds cannot be used for relief and rehabilitation, SuRG projects in a number of communities served as a basis from which relief and rehabilitation activities were launched. Community groups organized by one partner secured loans for Muslim and Sinhala families in Polonnaruwa; youth groups organized by another partner in Trincomalee secured funds for livelihood assistance for flood-affected families; partner women's groups established a revolving loan fund for vulnerable women; and yet another partner renovated flood-damaged roads during project *shramadana* activities.

SuRG staff-initiated End-of-Grant Reviews held in the latter part of the quarter also underscored the contribution of APS grant activities to their communities. These reviews assessed grantees' performance and project impact and will assist SuRG in making a decision on future programming. The meetings created a space for grantees and program staff to have open and frank discussions about what went well during implementation and what the challenges were and how they were addressed. In the process, SuRG and the grantees were able to identify which aspects of programs should be continued, cancelled and/or expanded during future grants either with SuRG or other donors. Grantees were also given critical feedback on their implementation and grant management and given ample opportunity to respond to any concerns and suggest alternative practices based on their lessons learned.

Grantees prepared presentations on their programs in a structured format which required them to analyze their own performance by grant components and identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges and how the challenges were dealt with. They also presented information on their burn rates and achievements against targets. This format of presentation by implementing partner and review by staff provided opportunities to look critically from both a macro perspective and a small detailed perspective on programming. In March, reviews were held with eight regional grantees. One review was not considered an End-of-Grant Review as the grant will continue into the latter part of 2011. The remaining grant reviews of grantees from Polonnaruwa are scheduled for early April.

In general, these reviews underscored the importance of SuRG's small regional grants program and the work being done at the community level. SuRG grantees are reaching out to the most vulnerable communities. The vast majority of beneficiaries of these activities are people who do not receive assistance from the

government or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and who have generally been neglected by society at large. In most instances, the partners have effectively completed their deliverables as set out in the grant agreements and are making necessary programmatic adjustments during the implementation period to ensure attendance and participation among beneficiaries improves and ensure the relevancy of program activities. There were challenges surrounding the senior management of a few of the organizations who appeared to either be incompetent or acting in a counter-productive fashion leading to a high staff turnover. Grantee project staff implementing activities are considered by SuRG to be motivated and productive, but with poor leadership, they are often mistreated. Another important trend noted is related to the mobile legal clinics. The lack of staff lawyers within the NGOs can create trouble for the partners in managing cases. Once cases are taken in, the partners rely on outside legal consultants or other NGO service providers to handle the cases. They then often struggle to get status updates and beneficiaries are frustrated by a lack of response from the legal aid provider. As such, SuRG partners are reconsidering their plans to continue with mobile clinics. The numbers of people attending these clinics show the need to continue these mobile clinics and argue for funding project lawyers so partners can take on, follow up and handle new cases directly.

During this quarter, SuRG also conducted a review of its local government technical training program. The review, originally scheduled for January, had to be postponed when local elections were called for March 17 and local authorities dissolved. The workshops were held after elections and gave participants in the training and representatives from all participating local authorities the opportunity to discuss how they felt the training helped their local authority engage citizens, manage their offices, finances and responsibilities and provide services to their communities. Further information and conclusions from the reviews are provided below in Section 1.3.1.

This report covers the period from January 1–March 31, 2011, and details progress on contract implementation activities and management and administration. Highlights for the quarter include:

- A SuRG partner completed two reports: 1) The Right to Liberty, 2) Virtual Eclipse of the Habeas Corpus Remedy.
- A SuRG partner identified four new Fundamental Rights (FR) cases and filed one of them in court. It continued to pursue 130 cases filed earlier in courts.
- A partner conducted two trainings in Jaffna for 95 GNs in housing, land, restitution and property rights.
- A partner provided legal assistance to six victims of human rights violations including three referrals to a legal aid provider for cases to be filed in court.
- Three flood-affected villages received quick relief as a result of messages sent out by a partner's early warning system.
- A partner provided legal assistance to 163 persons through three mobile legal clinics during the quarter.
- A partner conducted seven legal clinics which provided legal assistance to 114 persons in seven villages.
- A SuRG partner conducted six *shramadanas*, renovating six roads damaged by the recent floods.
- Partner community groups provided support to 53 Muslim and 19 Sinhala households affected by flooding, through the disbursement of 72 loans valued at LKR 1,145,842 for cultivation and self-employment.
- Thirteen women's groups formed by a partner established a revolving fund worth LKR 110,370 to provide loans to vulnerable war-affected women for starting income-generating activities.
- Eleven of 15 partner-formed youth groups were registered with the Divisional Secretariat.
- Fifteen female aspiring journalists completed a partner Diploma in Media course. This is the first such course to be conducted in the Trincomalee District.
- Twenty students from the north, east and estate sector were awarded a SuRG scholarship to attend the 2011 SLCJ Diploma in Journalism Programme and completed their first semester.

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

The Social Equity (SE) team continued to support and monitor ongoing partner activities with national partners. Field staff worked closely with regional partners to monitor their activities and provide ongoing technical assistance in program management and implementation.

A SuRG Partner Referral Meeting for Ampara and Batticaloa was conducted to discuss case referral mechanisms, coordination and information sharing among human rights implementers. The 22 persons representing these eight organizations were accompanied in the meeting by other legal aid service providers from the region.

A general theme that emerged from the meeting and similar SE meetings with legal service providers is related to the lengthy delays that one provider appears to have in following up on cases. During this meeting, one partner reported on persistent frustration with follow-up on a number of referrals. The partner has been struggling to handle the caseload from their mobile legal clinics and relies on referrals to provide the legal services offered. The partner is concerned about the legal aid provider's lack of presence in the region (the partner is located in Valachennai and the legal aid provider's office is in Batticaloa) and poor attendance at the partner's office to meet with beneficiaries. To address this issue, the legal aid provider's representatives in attendance at the meeting agreed that the referring agency would take responsibility to check-in on the status of cases, while the legal aid provider would spend more time in the field providing direct legal assistance. Future coordination meetings will take place in the coming months and will focus on specific case discussions. This coordination was initiated soon after the meeting and is already shown to be helping.

Planning for a northern and eastern judge's training got underway this reporting period. The workshop, scheduled for April, is intended to be the first participatory interactive workshop on emerging legal issues in the post-war period for judges from these regions. The workshop will attempt to address issues relating to the documentation of deaths, succession, and the partition of land. The courts from the north and east lack access to basic legal resources such as recent legislation and case law, and as such, relevant documents will be prepared and circulated at the workshop. This type of workshop will hopefully result in improved access to justice as judges will be more adept at dealing with issues emerging from the resettlement of internally displaced persons to their former homes in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The SE team presented a concept paper to the Judicial Service Commission (JSC). The concept note and training were approved by the Chief Justice but with changes in the resource people. Appointed for the training were Justice Weerasuriya, a retired judge of Supreme Court for sessions on partition; Justice Eric Basanayake, a judge of the Court of Appeal for sessions on succession and testamentary action; and Justice Sripavan, a judge of the Supreme Court for sessions on judicial ethics. Twenty-six Magistrates and District Court judges are scheduled to participate in the workshop.

The SuRG Gender Team began working on a proposal for support against gender-based violence (GBV). The proposal was originally submitted to USAID/Washington and included in USAID's request for a budget realignment in February 2011. After a careful review of the proposal, SuRG met with partner staff to discuss revisions based on SuRG criteria, objectives and time frame. A revised proposal is expected early next quarter.

The gender team also initiated an assessment this quarter of a partner's support to female head of households. The assessment, although focused on the partner's program, is intended to provide insight into the needs of the extremely large population of women in the north and east who after the war were left to raise their children and support their families on their own. The assessment will be carried out by an anthropologist who has been doing research and analysis for development in Sri Lanka since the early 1990s. She developed a survey which she will distribute to women who have been supported by the partner. Her research, including 2 ½ weeks in Trincomalee and Muttur will include individual interviews and focus group discussions with partner beneficiaries and staff. Her report will provide recommendations for the partner as well as suggestions for broader programming to support the recovery needs of this extremely vulnerable population in the north and east.

1.1.1 GRANTS AND SUBCONTRACTS

ARD010

The partner continued its trainings for government officials on legal concepts pertaining to land and property and improving the understanding of practical issues related to Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) restitution as authorized by the Ministry of Public

"I appreciate the effort of the partner and funding agency USAID for this very important workshop on land. As a Grama Niladhari who has worked in the former LTTE controlled areas, I can safely say that issues relating to land are a major worry in the Northern Province. At the same time, as an official who works closely with the people, I had never before received a workshop of this nature. This workshop is very useful for our daily work particularly because the government forms on landless people and the process under the government circulars were not only explained in detail, we also received copies of these documents for our future reference.

Therefore, I am now confident that I'm able to help address some of these issues relating to land matters in the capacity of Grama Niladhari of a resettled village.

Grama Niladhari, Mullativu

Administration last October. Workshops were held with 43 *Grama Niladharis* (GNs) in Jaffna and in 52 in Vavuniya this quarter. Participants were selected based on a pre-workshop assessment conducted among local government officials through the Government Agent's office to ensure that the training was relevant to the GNs' responsibilities. GNs reported being in the process of distributing state lands to those resettling their land and found the training on gender issues in displacement particularly helpful as they are involved in selecting beneficiaries for housing projects and distribution of state lands.

The partner finalized its third policy brief, entitled *Post Conflict Development and the Right to Restitution—Implications for National Policy*. Five hundred copies will be distributed next quarter. Research for a fourth policy brief, analyzing policy responses to different categories of displaced persons is underway.

The partner was awarded a no-cost extension this quarter to continue their activities until June 2011 due to delays in approval for trainings in the north as well as delays in coordination resulting from the unexpected departure of their Country Director when his Sri Lankan visa was revoked.

ARD042

As of the end of the quarter, the partner has represented 181 clients under its grant, with 134 of those cases ongoing. Fourteen of the 148 open cases at the beginning of the quarter have been concluded (1 release, 1 indictment, 2 sent for rehabilitation; 10 abandoned/closed on the request of detainees). Further, there are

Support for Family Visits to Detainees

A thirty-four year-old is one of thousands who fled the Vanni during the last stages of the war in May, 2009 and sought refuge in IDP camps in Vavuniya set up by the Sri Lankan government. Within ten days of their arrival, her husband was arrested and detained by government forces. For nearly two years, he has been held in a detention centre while his wife struggles to make ends meet and find the time and money to visit her husband.

“Soon after I returned home to Trincomalee and settled down with our two children, I approached the SuRG partner and registered with them to seek help. When I was asked to come and speak to the Director, I didn’t, fearing he would ask for money.” The partner continued to seek her out and she eventually agreed to meet the Director. As a result, the partner, through its USAID/SuRG-funded project, provided financial support so she could visit her husband at the detention center. The partner also provided a package of essential items comprising soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, tea and powdered milk for her to give to her husband when she visits him.

For the past 5 months, she has made regular visits to the detention center and always takes one of her children with her. The visits allow her to monitor her husband’s health – he is recovering from surgery on his spinal cord - and provides an opportunity for the children to spend time with their father.

Despite the many challenges, she remains hopeful for the future and is thankful for the support she receives. “If not for the partner, my children and I would not be able to visit my husband at the detention center regularly. Also, the financial assistance lifts the burden from my shoulders so that I now have a little more money to spend on food for the children.”

engaged a total of 103 lawyers and 10 activists on the issue of the *habeas corpus* remedy and challenges to its application in Sri Lanka, far exceeding the original targets of 12 lawyers and 10 activists.

Complementing its research and consultation on *habeas corpus* in Sri Lanka, the partner met with the Judges’ Institute, concerning the feasibility of conducting training for judicial officers and law students on the law on *habeas* remedy. As a result, *habeas corpus* has been introduced as part of the Administrative Law syllabus for the Law College as of January 2011. Further, the University of Peradeniya has invited the partner to conduct a session on *habeas corpus* for its students.

ARD041

During this period, the partner completed its Certificate Course in Human Rights. Thirty students, including 21 Tamils and 9 Muslims, participated in the program. The final exam was conducted during this reporting period with the certificate award ceremony scheduled for early May 2011. The partner’s planned Advanced Course in Human Rights, on the other hand, was cancelled due to poor attendance. Recruitment for the course took place in August 2010 and due to delays in receiving the funding, it did not start until late 2011. As a result, a number of prospective participants were not available when the course started. Furthermore, a number of prospective participants from both NGOs and the government had been transferred from the east to the north. The partner’s budget has since been realigned to use the remaining funds from the course to pay

some promising developments involving the Attorney General’s Department (AG): the Hambantota High Court questioned the legitimacy of a repeat indictment, ordering the AG to investigate whether new evidence to support the claim exists. The AG has also indicated its intention to recommend rehabilitation for one client represented by the partner. Similarly, the partner is holding off the filing of a Fundamental Rights case at the request of clients who have been told that they will soon be released. In the meantime, the partner has taken on four new Fundamental Rights cases during the quarter (1 filed; 3 to be filed next quarter.)

Visits to a detention camp and a prison yielded two new cases and one prisoner being sent to rehabilitation.

ARD040

The partner completed its comprehensive research on *Liberty Rights At Stake: The Virtual Eclipse Of The Habeas Corpus Remedy In Sri Lanka*, with its peer review and fine-tuning based upon input from the consultation workshops conducted over the past three quarters. In January, the partner completed the last of the consultations in the east and central regions that had previously been delayed due to flooding. With the addition of 39 lawyers from the Ampara and Kandy Bars, the partner has

for a second Colombo-based lawyer to assist with legal assistance activities at the national level (see below for additional detail).

The partner made progress in the formation of an alumni network for graduates of their Certificate Course during this quarter. Ten members, including 8 male and 2 female graduates, were selected to participate in the network and held two meetings to finalize a human rights awareness-raising session to be held next quarter. The session will address issues such as responsibilities of parents towards children; laws pertaining to domestic violence; alimony/maintenance issues; basic civil laws pertaining to children such as child abuse and compulsory education; and current human rights issues pertaining to youth.

The partner provides legal advice and legal representation services for human rights violations. The services include representation at the Trincomalee and Muttur courts, as well as representation before the Supreme Court. During this quarter the partner filed 11 Fundamental Rights cases at the Supreme Court in Colombo using SuRG-funded Colombo-based lawyers. The partner's caseload was already at 11 cases which increases its caseload to 22. Six additional cases are ready to be sent to Colombo for filing in the next quarter.

The partner prepared its second of four human rights awareness pamphlets for printing. The pamphlet, which focuses on Maintenance Law, will be distributed in both Tamil and Sinhala languages in April 2011.

The partner also continued its assistance to families with members held in welfare, detention and rehabilitation centers. Fifty beneficiaries were supported with care packs and travel expenses on three occasions during this quarter. The partner continued its livelihoods and psychosocial support program for 30 female heads of households. Six beneficiaries received livelihoods support packages during this quarter. Due to the heavy flooding which occurred during the early part of the quarter, five beneficiaries from the previous quarter had their livelihoods support washed away. The livelihoods activities affected include three livestock support grants, a small business grant and an agriculture grant (paddy field). Using their own, unrestricted funds, the partner intends to support those beneficiaries by partly reimbursing them with a grant valued at two-thirds of the original grant plus a loan valuing one-third of the original grant.



The partner continued its support workshops for all 30 selected livelihoods beneficiaries focusing on small business management including business promotion and business development.

ARD020

At the end of March, the partner completed its "Raising Awareness of Human Rights in Vulnerable Communities of Ampara District" project. During this quarter, the partner conducted 48 human rights awareness-raising sessions in 16 villages of 8 DS divisions in Ampara District. The partner's project period was originally scheduled to end on February 15, 2011 but was extended until April 30 due to the floods to allow more time to complete the remaining mobile legal clinics. The partner completed these activities in March.

The partner conducted seven mobile legal clinics in seven villages this quarter. At the clinics, 114 people, including 66 Tamils and 48 Muslims of which 16 were male and 98 were female, received legal assistance.

ARD021

The partner continued its “Raising Awareness of Human Rights Amongst Vulnerable Women and Adolescents” program in three divisions of Ampara. The program builds on the partner’s previous work and community savings and credit groups to identify those in need of psycho-social and legal assistance.

During the reporting period, the partner held only six of its planned 18 psycho-social group sessions for 53 women due to the floods. In addition to the group support sessions, the partner’s counselor also visited each woman at her home to spend time with each recipient of support and her family members and to observe family interaction. Of the beneficiaries, 34 were identified by a psychiatrist from the local Base Hospital, who regularly participates in the group sessions, as needing further psycho-social support. The women check in with the doctor routinely for follow-up consultations.

During this quarter, the partner realigned its budget to use leftover funds for livelihoods support to 30 of their psycho-social support beneficiaries and to 30 beneficiaries receiving legal assistance. Assistance ranges from 8,250 Rs to 10,000 Rs and is offered to the partner’s most vulnerable beneficiaries. Livelihoods activities supported include poultry farming, rice production and processing, small business, sewing/tailoring, brick production, metal works, pottery, food, carpentry, and masonry.

The partner continued to follow up on the 21 remaining legal cases identified during mobile legal clinics held in previous quarters. During the reporting period, one case concluded.

In February, the partner conducted its final set of three mobile legal clinics in the three project Divisional Secretariat (DS) Divisions. This service was requested by the *Grama Niladari* in a quarterly meeting discussing the needs of communities. The partner had previously provided such support in May 2010, and community leaders requested further assistance. The total number of people who attended the clinics was 163 including 35 men and 128 women from Tamil and Muslim communities (14 Muslim and 149 Tamils). Two lawyers were hired to conduct these clinics, one from the Legal Aid Commission and the other from the Human Rights Commission. The partner agreed only to provide on-the-spot legal advice as they are not able to take on additional cases given the lack of available funding for a full-time lawyer to manage the cases.

The partner also launched a series of psycho-social awareness-raising workshops for adolescents in their partner communities at the request of a school principal from one of the communities during the divisional-level quarterly meeting. There appeared to be a problem with a few adolescents attempting suicide on school premises. The partner had also found behavioral problems among some of the adolescents; for example, alcohol abuse, a lack of respect for parents and increased incidents of violent behavior. The partner implemented six one-day workshops which addressed family pressures, depression, personal responsibility, and future planning. The partner engaged a probation officer and psychiatrist to lead the workshops. Fifteen boys and 15 girls participated from each of the six participating villages totaling 180.

ARD017

During the reporting period, the partner continued their community peacebuilding meetings, bi-monthly meetings, early warning networking, legal advice services, Sinhala classes and the publication of leaflets with human rights-related themes.

Ten Community Meetings (CMs) in five sets of bordering Tamil and Muslim villages affected by the conflict are paired together for meetings. Each pair held two meetings this quarter attended in total by 377 participants in which 147 were men and 230 were women. Issues raised included the lack of transportation services available for community members, the need for public building space, and the need for title documents for 188 families.

The problem of acquiring title documents is significant, as requests to the DS office for such documentation have gone unanswered. Families have been displaced often multiple times due to the conflict and the tsunami, and despite returning to land that they believe is legally theirs, DS representatives are arguing that there is no

proof that the families owned the properties prior to the displacement. During the meetings, community members agreed to prepare a formal letter to the DS and Provincial Land Commissioner to help resolve these issues.

The CMs also led to the coordination of *Sbramadana* activities in two communities. A school was cleaned by 47 participants including 12 Tamil and 35 Muslims and a health clinic center was cleaned by 65 participants including 55 Tamil and 10 Muslims.

The partner's bi-monthly meetings for representatives from all 10 project villages continued this quarter with one meeting conducted including the participation of 78 people. The four issues that were identified at the CM meetings for further discussion constituted the agenda at the bi-monthly meeting.

During the reporting period, 29 SMS text messages were sent to 260 network members through the partner's early warning system (EWS). Messages included important meetings and functions of interest to the public, major vehicle accidents, persons or groups affected by the floods and seeking assistance, and flood-related warnings or notices. Several government announcements regarding extreme weather conditions were sent across EWN contacts which resulted in flood victims from three villages receiving relief items from the Lions Club. Partner staff and volunteers assisted in distributing these items to those villages.

The partner's Sinhala language course concluded during this reporting period. Sixty-six classroom hours of Sinhala language training were held during the quarter in three locations. The certificate award ceremony took place in February with 76 students receiving certificates. At the ceremony there were 206 participants including 102 Tamils and 104 Muslims. The partner's community mobilizers staged a drama at the event entitled, "Eradicating Domestic Violence and Child Labour" and two Hindu school students performed a traditional dance. The Chairman of the *Pradeshhiya Sabha* (PS) and the former Chairman a PS, were among the special invitees.

Under its legal advice services component, the partner received six cases in mobile legal clinics. Cases included abduction and missing persons, matrimonial issues and financial disputes. Four matrimonial cases were referred to a legal aid provider and the Mediation Board, one abduction/missing person case was referred to a legal aid provider, and one financial dispute was referred to the police station.

The partner also published and distributed leaflets: one on bribery and its consequences; a second on empowering women to stop domestic violence; and a third on reducing environmental pollution. The leaflets provide information in a straightforward and simple manner with illustrations and language easily understood by community members regardless of their education level. Three hundred leaflets were strategically placed in each Divisional Secretariat, as well as in schools, hospitals, *Grama Niladhari* offices, Ministry of Health offices, police stations, and post offices.

1.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

"USAID has laid the proverbial foundation stone to create peace [here]. This is the first such stone in this area."

*Zonal Director of Education
at Sinhala Language Certificate Awarding Ceremony*

The CEaT team continued to work with APS grantees as they wind down their projects. In addition to ongoing monitoring and support, the team organized three advocacy workshops, a Quarterly Review meeting for regional partners, and District Review Meetings in Ampara for Batticaloa and Ampara-based grantees and in Trincomalee for Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa-based grantees.

At the Quarterly Review Meeting, the team focused on identifying and articulating achievements and impact. In addition, grantees discussed future plans and ideas on how to maintain momentum and continue ongoing

work with communities beyond the project period. The District Review Meetings focused on effective and timely completion of project activities.

Also during this quarter, the CEaT team initiated discussions with prospective new grantees as directed by USAID. Proposals submitted in response to USAID/Washington-based solicitations. SuRG reviewed both proposals as originally submitted to USAID and provided detailed comments so that both grantees could adjust their programs to current needs and priorities, to the SuRG time frame and to more closely align their programs to SuRG goals and objectives. They are both currently working with SuRG on revisions and new proposals are expected next quarter.

1.2.1 GRANTS

ARD015

“I have attended a five days training on good governance previously. However, what I see here is good governance in implementation. I’m very pleased to know that the SuRG project has educated our communities and Local Authority on the importance of citizen participation in decision making processes which is critical for development in Sri Lanka...”

Acting Divisional Secretary, Polonnaruwa District

The partner completed the implementation of its “Engaging People’s Fora and Local Authorities to Empower Communities” project in the Polonnaruwa District during this quarter.

A ceremony marking the closure of the project was organized by the partner to highlight project accomplishments and to appreciate the participation and support of stakeholders, especially the local authority. The Divisional Secretary attended the closing ceremony along with community representatives, local authority officers, the representatives of international NGOs working in the Division, Divisional Secretariat office staff and a Muslim religious leader.

The partner was able to accomplish all three of its grant objectives: (i) increasing community participation in local governance and decision making, (ii) capacity building of elected and government officials of the local authority, and (iii) creation of a mechanism for citizens and local authority to engage with each other for collective decision making.

The partner identified community members and educated them about the roles and responsibilities of communities as well as local authority members in local government. Community members then identified priority issues to raise with their local authority and negotiated to address those issues. The partner created awareness in the community on citizen engagement in local government to promote transparency and accountability and good governance through the development and enactment of a street drama. The street drama was performed 28 times throughout the Division for approximately 3,700 people over the course of the project.

The partner also developed the skills of both political stakeholders and the staff of the local authority to help them provide efficient and effective services to the public. Training and workshops for political and government staff at the LA included office management, financial accounting and proposal development.



Among the partner's most important achievement was the implementation of the provision in the Local Authority Act which requires local authorities to establish Standing Committees (Finance and Policy; Housing, and Community Development; Technical Services; and Environmental Services) with citizen participation. The partner successfully negotiated with the local authority to set up the committees and include citizen representation providing a mechanism for collective decision making among the LA and the community. This is the first time this has been accomplished in the Polonnaruwa District. It is important to note that this was a time-consuming process requiring much effort and patience so that trust could be built among the community, political stakeholders and government officers.

In this final quarter of the project, the partner supported communities affected by the floods. Through previously planned *Sbramadanas*, they renovated six gravel roads in six villages damaged by the floods with the support of the PS and both Sinhala and Muslim community. In another *Sbramadana*, community members cleaned and renovated their cemetery.

The partner also conducted awareness-raising sessions on the citizen charter in 10 villages, providing information on the duties of the local authority, persons responsible, time required to deliver services and documents needed for services. Citizen charter display boards were erected in 11 strategic locations of the 10 villages and the premises of the LA.

ARD014

The partner continued its "Community Empowerment and Mobilization for Muslim and Sinhalese Coexistence Project." The partner was able to mobilize its project community groups in the seven target villages to support those affected by the floods. The partner was able to draw on funds from its revolving fund for SuRG-supported community groups to provide loans for cultivation and self-employment totaling Rs. 1,145,842 to 53 Muslim and 19 Sinhala households. Other relief activities they were able to initiate included distribution of dry food items to 102 families.

Highlights of activities this quarter include the following activities:

- A second exposure visit to Ampara. The visit was arranged through another SuRG grantee. Forty-one members of the partner's seven Village Committees made the trip and learned about the host partner's community mobilization activities and their savings and loan scheme.
- A cricket tournament among the youth of the project's seven villages with participation of 222 community members. The event, organized to bring Muslim and Sinhala youth together, included traditional songs and dance, and a prize-giving ceremony.

"I am from a very remote area where no elected member is representing our village. However, we have always been voting for the people who are contesting during election campaigns and we never see them after the elections. I was selected for the steering committee of the Lankapura local authority and that was the first time I came to the local authority for a meeting. As a result of SuRG project, some damaged roads got renovated. What I learned from the project was that we could get a lot of work done when we influence the local authority and develop better relations with them."

*Partner Steering Committee member,
Polonnaruwa District*

"Today is a happy day for us. We received prizes and played together with our Sinhala neighbors...I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sinhala youth who came to play with us. We hope this relationship and understanding will remain forever."

*Muslim youth from Polonnaruwa District,
Participant in partner Youth Cricket Match*

- A celebration of the Prophet Mohamad's birthday was held with participation of 156 Sinhalese and Muslims. The event included a discussion on the importance of Mohobad Nabi and his doctrine for the 21st century, the importance of community coexistence and the promotion of peace building among youth.
- Three discussions on promotion of gender equity were conducted with communities. The objective of these sessions was to improve understanding of gender equity, the issue of domestic violence and violence against women.
- Sinhala and Tamil language classes were completed. A total of 78 people (36 Sinhalese and 42 Muslims) attended the class, 66 sat for the examination and 50 passed.



The partner was granted a no-cost extension. The grant will end next quarter.

ARD016

The partner's Sri Lanka's "Relationship Building between Diverse Social Groups in Tamil and Muslim Communities" provides opportunities for Tamil and Muslims to work together on common issues through youth, farmer, fishermen and women's groups. Towards this end, partner staff coordinated with the Rural Development Office in the Divisional Secretariat to obtain registration numbers for three women's groups. After a nine-month delay, two women's groups obtained their registration numbers this quarter.

Soon after the registration, one Women Rural Development Society (WRDS) obtained a government contract for Rs 250,000 to renovate the local mosque. The contract agreement was signed by both parties in early March. Members of the WRDS are also attending regular monthly meetings and have volunteered to clean their area after the recent flooding.

WRDS members and Youth Group members are jointly working to reduce illicit alcohol in their village. They raised the issue with the village Civil Defense Committee (CDC) and reported it to the Police. The Officer in Charge of Police participated in the group's monthly sectoral meeting for youth. After this meeting, the CDC and the members of the youth and women's groups began to closely monitor illicit liquor production and identified four people engaged in such and have been able to negotiate with these producers to stop production.

The partner's work over the past six months with a Fisheries Society paid off this quarter when the former president of the Society who, for the past five years had been using a boat and fishing equipment donated by Seva Lanka Foundation to the Society for personal needs, returned the boat to the Society. The Fisheries Society raised the issue in project monthly and quarterly fisheries sectoral meetings. As a result, the issue was reported to the head of the Fisheries Department in Batticaloa and resolved in January.

The partner also completed its four six-month Sinhala language training classes for 43 Tamil and 38 Muslim youth this quarter.

A no-cost extension was granted to the partner to complete final activities. The grant will close early next quarter.

ARD011

The partner completed its “Promoting Peaceful Community Co-existence through Social Mobilization of Women’s and Youth Groups” project this quarter.

The partner established 14 women’s group and 14 youth groups and brought them together at monthly meetings where they were able to raise issues and eventually plan and take action. For example, when the groups determined that the elimination of the production and sale of illicit liquor was a priority, the partner mobilized the women’s groups to tackle the problem. The groups identified approximately 28 illicit liquor producers and 899 consumers and they furnished the information to the Excise Department. The Excise Department together with Police then raided these illicit liquor producers and production was discontinued.

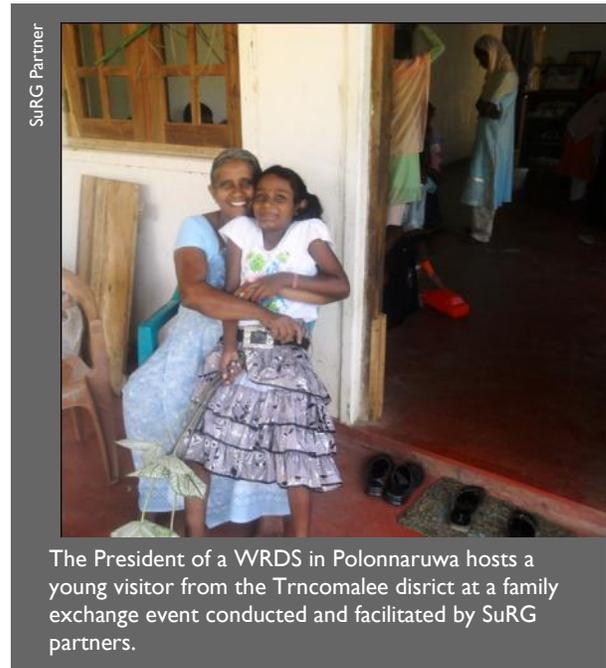
The women’s groups also prioritized cases relating to domestic violence, child abuse and sexual harassment. Over the course of the project, they identified 53 such cases (21 domestic violence cases, 18 maintenance cases, 12 school dropouts and 2 sexual harassment cases) in 6 villages. Thirty-four cases were referred to the psycho-social officer located at the Divisional Secretariat for resolution and five maintenance cases were referred to a legal aid provider for intervention. The groups also convinced the parents of six of the school dropouts to send their children back to school.

In addition, 13 women’s groups comprising 217 members initiated a savings program. The group collected Rs. 20.00 to Rs. 50.00 from each person per month. By March, they had collected Rs. 110,370. They also set up a revolving loan fund (RLF) to provide loans to vulnerable, war-affected women to start or develop livelihood activities. Since the individual groups’ savings were not adequate to maintain the RLF system, all groups decided to collect all savings from 13 village groups and set up a Divisional Women’s Network.

The Network includes three members from each women’s group. Documents were submitted to register the Network with the DS. The Network now functions as the key decision maker to select beneficiaries and approve loans. During this quarter, two woman-headed households received loans of Rs 10,000 each to engage in income-generating activities for a mobile textile business and poultry keeping. The Network provides a tangible vehicle for sustainability of the work started by the partner through its SuRG project.

Promotion of co-existence among different communities, primarily among Muslim and Sinhalese, was a primary objective of the project. Towards this end, the partner organized both cultural and sports events in which there were opportunities for Tamil and Muslim communities to interact with each other and thereby increase mutual understanding and respect for each other. In addition, 3 Sinhala, 12 Tamil and 29 Muslims who work with the partner hosted 44 community members working with a SuRG Polonnaruwa-based grantee. The groups learned about each other’s grant programs and shared their experiences and strategies for rebuilding their lives and communities after the end of the war.

The success of the partner’s efforts towards co-existence was evidenced by the youth group’s nomination of a Muslim youth to a national Youth Parliament. All Muslim and Tamil project youth groups collectively selected the nominee and worked together to campaign for him. This is a significant achievement in this context and locale.



ARD012

The partner completed its “Promoting Peaceful Co-Existence through Multi-Ethnic Community Participation” project this quarter. The project, working with all three communities in the Muttur and Seruvilla divisions of Trincomalee, organized youth and community members in project Peace Committees and Youth Groups to work together to address issues relating to community stability and reconciliation.

Peace Committees set up in 15 villages include village leaders, religious leaders, government officers (Samurdi officer or a teacher), farmer organization leaders, and Rural Development and Women Rural Development Society members. Over the course of the project, these Peace Committees resolved a number of community-level conflicts on their own and also linked up with village Mediation Boards. For example, in Azath Nagar, a land issue arose from the allocation of land donated to two married sisters as part of their dowries. When one of the sisters claimed the partition of the land was done unfairly, the issue was raised with the Peace Committee. The Committee approached the Mediation Board and together they convinced the sisters and their families to abide by the instructions in the land deed.

Throughout the project, the partner brought project Youth Groups together to identify and address issues of importance in their communities. For example, a Tamil Youth Group in response to villagers concerns about illicit liquor production raised the issue with a Sinhala Youth Group in the adjoining villages, who were also concerned about their villagers buying illicit liquor. The Tamil community members were reluctant to take up the issue with the police, so the Sinhala group members agreed to talk to the police to persuade them to take action. Sinhala youth initially spoke to Seruwila police. However, since the Tamil village came under Muttur police jurisdiction, both Sinhala and Tamil youth joined forces to make appeals to both police stations. Their joint efforts led to a police raid of illicit liquor production, with the support of community members from both Sinhala and Tamil villages.

This quarter, a youth group, on its own, in an effort to support flood victims in their community approached the government “Re Awakening Project” to obtain financial support for people affected by recent floods. As a result of their persistent efforts, 100 families received Rs. 15, 000 each for income-generating activities, mainly poultry keeping. In addition, 50 families will be given Rs. 30,000 worth of input each for home gardening.

1.2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

SuRG focused its ongoing training with grantees this quarter on advocacy. Through a series of three workshops building on learning and work completed at each, partners learned about advocacy concepts and frameworks and were provided guidelines and tools for planning, implementing and managing their own interventions. The workshops were developed and facilitated by a local consultant in-conjunction with CEaT staff. The consultant has more than 20 years of experience working and training grassroots groups from the east and other areas of Sri Lanka in advocacy, gender and community mobilization.

At the first workshop participants were introduced to advocacy concepts and its relevance to their projects. By the end of the workshop, grantees were able to identify specific advocacy interventions appropriate to their ongoing projects. At the second workshop, grantees analyzed their own and each other’s advocacy interventions. They learned and practiced key skills such as leadership, communication and negotiation necessary to manage advocacy interventions. Participants were asked to collect data necessary to design an appropriate advocacy strategy when they returned to their communities.

The data they collected was analyzed in the third workshop and used to help participants hone their advocacy plans with support and technical assistance from the consultant, CEaT staff and other participants. By the end of the workshop, each grantee organization had developed a detailed three-month advocacy action plan.

I.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

“I think this has been a turning point in our local authorities. The Eastern Province has battled and we faced many challenges but now with the SuRG training we have confidence and knowledge. This will very much help the people of the Eastern Province.”

Community Development Officer, Trincomalee

After completing the technical training series for local authorities (LA) in the Eastern Province last quarter, SuRG, together with our local technical implementing partner EML Consultants, initiated a review with participating LAs and officials who took part in SuRG training to assess the effect and impact of SuRG’s intervention. In addition, SuRG continued to provide technical assistance to our 11 partner LAs through their

Citizen Participation in Verugal PS, Trincomalee

For the first time in its history, the Verugal Pradeshiya Sabha (PS) in Trincomalee District developed and presented its budget to citizen committees. The presentation of the 2011 budget was the culmination of a process based on concepts, techniques and skills learned in SuRG training and implemented with SuRG technical assistance.

The process started with participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) conducted in each of the 10 villages of Verugal PS in which community members prioritized needs and projects. Then, according to the Secretary of the PS, they, “... finalized the budget based on the priorities identified by the people at the PRAs and made plans to present the budget to the citizen committees. We issued a public notice of the scheduled date of the meeting and made sure people knew about the date and time, ahead of time.”

At the meeting between the LA staff, elected officials and the community representatives of 10 Grama Niladhari divisions people raised questions on the prioritization of needs and the allocation of funding. Village representatives raised the most serious questions. The Secretary explains, “When we conducted the PRA in [one participating village], people’s participation was very low and we found it very difficult to work with those who turned up for the meeting. Although some needs were identified, these were not clearly articulated” thereby, leading the PS staff to exclude a development project in that village from the budget.

The sharing of the budget plan led to an open discussion on why the community was excluded and provided an opportunity to find ways to include the village project in the budget plan. After much discussion, a road project identified by the community as important was added to the budget plan. Thereafter, the budget was finalized and approved by the citizen representatives.

Commenting on the process, the Secretary continued “This whole process was a first for all of us. It is not easy working with people because they expect instant and immediate results. We had to make it clear that we might not receive funding for all the projects mentioned. At the same time, there was pressure from certain elected officials to abandon the participatory approach and instead, include their priorities but since we had the backing of the Chairman we were able to see it through.”

Participatory Governance Forums (PGF), working group meetings and “echo training.” The final examination for Tamil and Sinhala language classes was held this quarter.

Extensive rains and flooding in the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District this quarter caused significant delays for SuRG and its partners. Local government activities, particularly PGF and working group meetings, were further disrupted when the GOSL dissolved local authorities on January 5 and scheduled local elections on March 17. SuRG LA partners in the Batticaloa District (Pratheevuppattu PS, Manmunai South West PS and Manmunai West PS) were elected in 2008 and therefore not dissolved.

I.3.1 TECHNICAL TRAINING REVIEW

Workshops with participants in SuRG trainings were held at the end of this quarter to review implementation of skills and knowledge acquired at SuRG training in participating LAs. The workshops, originally planned for January, were postponed until the end of March due to the flooding and local elections. The initial intent was to invite officials who had attended at least two SuRG trainings. However, due to the large number of trained officials who have been transferred, SuRG also included new LA officials who might not have attended any SuRG training so that they could participate in the development of LA action plans and commit to the implementation of these plans.

A total of 110 participants from 36 LAs (35 from the east and 1 from Polonnaruwa) attended the 2 workshops.¹

The two-day review sessions were designed to:

- Assess the application of technical strategies and processes learned in SuRG training;
- Identify constraints, issues and challenges hindering application of learning and progress; and
- Develop individual LA action plans to continue to move LAs forward.

The review provided participants with a forum for each LA team to identify achievements and progress, challenges, constraints and lessons learned, and develop an action plan for moving forward. Each participating LA rated their progress in the areas covered by SuRG training. The following chart shows the combined ratings of all LAs participating in the workshop and broken down by the 10 SuRG partner LAs participating in the workshop and the remaining 25 other LAs participating in the workshop.

LA Achievements			
Areas of achievement	Functional Achievement All LAs	Functional Achievement SuRG Partner LAs (10)²	Functional Achievement Other LAs (25)
Preparation of participatory plan	100%	100%	100%
Setup institutional operational arrangements for community participation	97%	100%	96%
Facilitate identification of project ideas by the community and obtain approval by the planning committee represented by the community	94%	100%	92%
Development of project proposals	94%	80%	100%
Development implementation revenue generation projects	94%	90%	96%
Preparation of annual budget in accordance with the legal provisions	86%	80%	88%
Conduct council meeting according to the roles and regulation setup.	86%	100%	80%
Obtain citizen inputs in the preparation of budgets	80%	100%	72%
Form advisory committees with 50% citizen participation and keep them active with responsibilities	77%	80%	76%
Design and operationalized new office design	74%	90%	68%
Introduce computerization of the office management related work	74%	80%	80%
Establishment of a Participatory Governance Forum	77%	100%	68%

¹ Participation in the second workshop was significantly reduced when the government called a swearing in ceremony for new council members to be held on April 1. Thirty-one participants who confirmed attendance the day before the workshop was to be held, did not attend in order to take part in this required ceremony.

² Two of the 10 SuRG partners participating in this survey and review (Muttur and Seruvila) had not completed activities until just following the review session bringing down the score for development of project proposals, implementation of revenue generation projects and preparation of annual budget.

LA Achievements			
Areas of achievement	Functional Achievement All LAs	Functional Achievement SuRG Partner LAs (10) ²	Functional Achievement Other LAs (25)
Hold regular community meeting (standing or advisory)	74%	80%	72%
Preparation of citizen charter with inputs from the citizen	63%	80%	56%
Appointment of the public relations officer (PRO)	63%	100%	48%
Improvement of accounting system and introduction of a software package for accounting and finance	60%	80% ³	52%
Establishment of the communication network	60%	70%	56%
Implementation of the leadership (Quality)	57%	70%	52%
Establish partnership with private sector.	46%	60%	40%
Preparation of by-laws	40%	80%	24%

“Now they are talking the language; that is the essence. This project has given them the tools and the motivation they need to take on their responsibilities. That is the result of the SuRG project.

*Former Additional Secretary,
Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils*

Issues and challenges reflected tension between political and technical needs, lack of coordination among the council (political) and staff (administration), distrust of the community by local authorities and vice versa, lack of human and financial resources available to the LAs, lack of knowledge and/or understanding of the laws, and responsibilities and authorities of elected and government local authorities by staff, council and citizens.

These challenges underscore the need for targeted and ongoing technical support to the LAs. The challenges involved in effectively engaging citizens as a result of distrust on the part of the LAs towards citizens, political pressure and citizens’ lack of understanding and distrust of the LA are considerable. PGFs developed in SuRG partner LAs have been very helpful in breaking down these barriers and supporting meaningful citizen engagement. It has also helped ensure women are consulted and participate in LA decisions and forums. On-site ‘echo training’ has also proved an effective means to implement new processes and techniques and to adjust training and implementation according to the unique needs and facilities of each LA.

In light of these conclusions, participants came up with the following general recommendations to enhance the local authorities’ ability to serve its community:

- LAs need to focus on better coordination and communication between the staff and council.
- All staff participating in training should convene a meeting for staff who did not attend to summarize the training and learning.
- CLG/ACLG should ensure that once a training program is planned that relevant staff attend.

³ Based on nine PS partners. Software was developed for use in PSs only and so UC partners are not included.

- Improve LA staff capacity to deal with the public including community mobilization, problem solving, mediation and negotiation.
- Provide new council members with training on participatory processes and leadership development.
- Develop a monitoring system for ACLGs to support and track ACLGs commitment to LA (e.g., appointment of Public Relations Officers, approval of by-laws) and LAs implementation of the action plan.
- Participatory Governance Forums should be set up in all LAs.
- Minimize staff transfers. Discussions have been held with the Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province as well as the CLG regarding the need to keep trained staff where they are needed.
- The CLG/ACLGs offices should support LA preparation of by-laws including finalizing drafts, translating documents and facilitating approval.
- Policy decisions (including staff assignments and transfers) should be made that ensure the proper and efficient use of computers, software and other equipment.

In the final session of the workshops, each LA team developed a follow-on action plan to complete pending tasks and implementation of new processes and techniques. They also committed to discuss the plan with other staff and their council members. A request was made of the CLG, present at the workshop, for follow-up and support by his office.

“For the first time in my life we were invited to make contributions to prepare the budget of the local authority. It is only now we have been offered a platform to request our immediate needs from the village level.”

*Community Member
Verugal PS, Trincomalee*

I.3.2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SuRG, with the support of EML, continued to provide ongoing technical assistance and support to the 11 LAs selected at the start of the project as partner LAs.

ECHO TRAINING

“Echo Training,” follow-up to training workshops conducted on-site so that all staff and elected members will be exposed to the concepts and tools of the training and to support LAs application of their learning, was conducted in eight partner LAs. The following chart details echo training held this quarter.

Echo Training		
Training Topic	Local Authority	Outcome
Proposal Writing	Ninthavur PS	Proposal developed for the construction of a market and submitted to NECCDEP.
By-law preparation	Eravur Town PS Alayadivembu PS Muthur PS Seruwila PS Thambalagamuwa PS Porateevupattu PS Manmunai SW PS Manmunai West PS	By-laws were prepared to manage and maintain the standard quality of facilities and collect revenue from owners (license / tax) for the following facilities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vehicle parking centers 2. Fish storage centers 3. Trishaw parking centers 4. Market 5. Playgrounds 6. A crematorium 7. Cinema halls 8. Solid waste management

Echo Training		
Training Topic	Local Authority	Outcome
Accounting Package	Eravur Town PS Alayadivembu PS Muthur PS Seruwila PS Thambalagamuwa PS Porateevupattu PS Manmunai SW PS Manmunai West PS	Final accounts for 2010 were completed. The package is being used to enter 2011 data.
Citizen Charter Development	Eravur Town PS Alayadivembu PS Muthur PS Seruwila PS Thambalagamuwa PS Porateevupattu PS Manmunai SW PS Manmunai West PS	Citizen charter for 2011 was drafted in consultation with community representatives, to be forwarded for council approval.

PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE FORUMS

In SuRG's 11 partner LAs, a Participatory Governance Forum (PGF) meeting is generally conducted monthly to discuss key topics among citizen representatives, council members and LA officials. PGF meetings this quarter were only held in the Batticaloa District where the LAs were not dissolved prior to elections and in Eravur Town PS and Ninthavur PS where special meetings were held to respond to the floods and coordinate relief and rehabilitation. Meetings were limited to only one this quarter as a result of the flooding.

1.3.3 LANGUAGE TRAINING

SuRG Tamil and Sinhala language classes for local government officials in 27 PSs of the Eastern Province ended this quarter in the last two remaining PSs (Morawewa and Addalaichenai). A final examination was held for all students in 37 PSs. Three hundred three officials, as detailed in the chart below, sat for the exam. The results are expected early next quarter.

Tamil and Sinhala Language Examination Participants					
District	Language		Gender		
	Sinhala	Tamil	Total	Male	Female
Ampara	83	52	135	68	67
Batticaloa		83	83	33	50
Trincomalee	45	40	85	45	40
Total	128	175	303	146	157

SuRG began coordination with the Official Language Department (OLD) to hold a Training of Trainers workshop next quarter for teachers for Level 2 language training, also expected to commence next quarter.

I.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

“If USAID did not come forward to give us training in media, we would still be sitting in the kitchen.”

Student, partner Diploma in Media course for women

SuRG continued its work under the Open Dialogue component, supporting the media through scholarships to aspiring journalists from the north, east and estate sector and to an APS grant to a partner in Trincomalee for support to the Trincomalee District Media Society (TDMS) and aspiring women journalists. SuRG is also providing support to civil society through grants to a national partner and an IT firm for the development of an electronic-based, performance-based management monitoring and evaluation system.

In addition, this quarter SuRG supported a workshop conducted by a partner and the Forum for Members of Provincial Councils (FMPC). The two-day lessons learned workshop held in January was designed to assess findings and conclusions of the partner’s recently concluded SuRG-supported provincial consultations on regional governance and the 13th Amendment.⁴ The workshops also provided a forum to develop a strategy for the future of the FMPC. Two Provincial Council (PC) members from each PC, one from the ruling party and one from the opposition party, were invited to attend the workshop. Key members of the FMPC, along with senior provincial official, from each province were also invited. A total of 29 PC members representing all political parties and all provinces participated.

Following presentations and discussions on constitutional and legal issues, legislative functions, fiscal devolution, politics of devolving power, provincial public administration and public service and the experience of the 13th Amendment and constitutional reform, PC members and other officials made the following recommendations for program follow-up:

1. The FMPC, with the collaboration of the partner, should organize another series of one-day sessions with all PC members including ruling and opposition members to make them aware on the practicality of regional governance and the importance of actions at the PC level to implement regional governance
2. A national congress of PC members should be organized to highlight the need for regional governance.
3. Conduct more in-depth sessions for FMPC members.
4. Assist PCs to prepare and pass statutes.

SuRG is currently in discussion with the partner regarding possible future support to the partner for technical assistance to the FMPC. A final decision will be made once local elections are concluded and Tetra Tech ARD and USAID finalize the budget realignment.

I.4.1 MEDIA

ARD045

SuRG awarded a second grant to the partner for scholarships to 20 aspiring journalists from the north, east and estate sector. These students are among 64 students entering the 2011 Diploma in Journalism Programme. This year’s class was selected from 454 applications. SuRG and SLCJ held a ceremony to officially award the scholarships to the 2011 recipients and acknowledged that as students who, for the most

⁴ The partner’s “Regional Development and Local Government: Role of Provincial Councils” project supported by grant ARD025 ended October 1, 2010. The lessons learned workshop was originally scheduled to be held in October but had to be postponed in order to not lose the deposit at the venue when ARD’s obligated funds went below 75 percent.

part, come from extremely rural parts of Sri Lanka and often experience difficult living conditions, being accepted to the College and being selected to receive the SuRG scholarships is an important achievement. It

“The course is a very good initiative because it not only gives us an understanding of the field of journalism but also teaches us media, ethics and law, and language training. I’m grateful for having received the scholarship because many of us cannot afford the high expenses incurred by living and studying in Colombo. The scholarship eases these burdens so that we can focus on our work.”

2011 SuRG Journalism Diploma Programme Scholarship recipient

also provided an opportunity to introduce the students to 2010 SuRG scholarship recipients and to explain the work SuRG and USAID are doing in Sri Lanka.

During this quarter, all scholarship recipients completed their first semester of the program, including an intensive English program. Lecturers reported that while English proficiency among most of the Sinhala and Tamil-medium students can be characterized as low, there was a notable interest in learning the language among several of

the scholarship recipients. They also indicated a keen interest among scholarship recipients to learn computer and new media skills. Close to half of the students receiving the scholarship have initiated their own blogs.

Lecturers also expressed concern about the low level of general knowledge among several of the students. The primary reason for this is likely due to the fact that many of the students come from very rural backgrounds with little exposure to happenings around the world, or even around the rest of the country. The College will encourage students to be more aware of current events through library use and assignments promoting Internet for reading magazines and online news, and setting up television monitors with cable access to watch news shows.

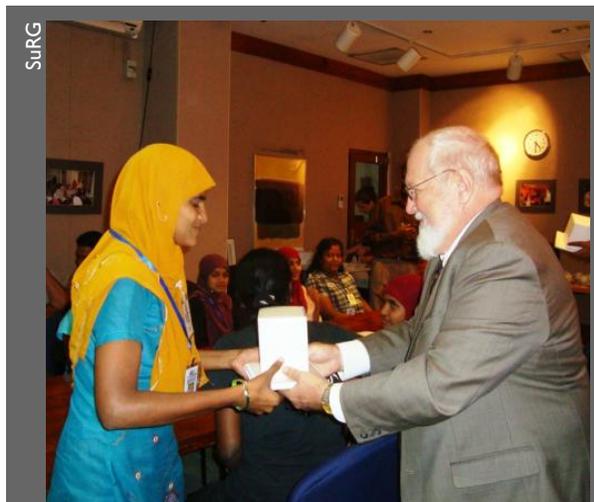
Another challenge reported by lecturers is the level of computer literacy and the professional use of new and social media among this year’s students.

ARD013

During this quarter, the partner completed its Sinhala and Tamil language and information technology classes for Trincomalee District Media Society (TDMS) members and concluded its Diploma in Media course for 15 aspiring female journalists, after organizing an exposure visit to media organizations, publishing its newsletter in Tamil and Sinhala and conducting consultative “listening and learning” sessions with community stakeholders.

“I cannot put into words to describe what it felt like to visit the media organizations. It is good to know that we are at the stage where we can talk about our villages and the issues people face to the rest of the country.”

Student Diploma in Media Course



A journalism student from Trincomalee receives a commemorative gift from the USAID Mission Director Jim Bednar during the students’ visit to the USAID Sri Lanka Mission in Colombo.

The partner’s Sinhala and Tamil Language classes for TDMS members which started in August came to an end in March. Twenty-three of the 33 TDMS members registered for Sinhala Language classes completed the course and 9 out of 13 TDMS members completed Tamil Language classes. The dropout rate was due primarily to the difficulty students faced traveling the long distance from their homes to the classes in Trincomalee Town.

Upon completion of the course, five journalists took up issues of communities who speak languages other than their own.



A practical session at the photo and video workshop conducted by for journalists and journalism students in Trincomalee.

For example, a Sinhala-speaking journalist interviewed a Tamil-speaking fisherman and wrote an article which was published in a national newspaper (*Lankadeepa*) about the local fishing industry.

In February, the partner organized an exposure visit for the 15 women trainees following the Diploma in Media course to visit media organizations in Colombo. The objective of the visit was to provide the trainees an opportunity to see how the national media functions, observe innovative media practices and the use of modern technology in media. The trainees visited Lake House, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, Young Asia Television and the Sri Lanka Press Institute. They also toured the American Center and met with the USAID Mission Director and U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy staff.

The partner also organized two workshops facilitated by SuRG staff on prioritizing topics for writing stories and on analytical writing as part of the Diploma Course.

The partner included in this quarter's issues of its newsletter, "Trinco Voice," community news gathered by the women trainee journalists during their "listening and learning" program in remote villages. The articles were edited by a team of trainee journalists and selected members of TDMS. One article discussed the lack of drinking water in the Muthu Nagar village. As a result, a Muslim aid organization agreed to set up three tube wells in the village.

All 15 participants completed the media course this quarter.

The partner has been given a no-cost extension to conduct follow-on training with the graduates of the Diploma in Media course.

1.4.2 CIVIL SOCIETY

ARD043 / ARD044

Work continued throughout the period on all aspects of the grant. In January, the two staff members the national partner hired for the new M&E Unit, the full-time M&E Officer and part-time Project Coordinator, being funded by the grant began work. The M&E Officer immediately began working remotely with the MSI Consultant on reviewing the status of Results Frameworks and Indicator Data Collection Plans for all partner donor projects in the north and east. One key challenge the M&E Officer overcame during this period was obtaining a full list of all current donor projects to ensure that the inventory would be complete.

The M&E Officer and the MSI Consultant continued their work on the Results Frameworks and Indicator Data Collection Plans during the consultant's second visit Sri Lanka, February 28–March 11. During this time they met jointly with Project Managers for each relevant project, which included six projects that were new since the consultant's last visit in November and four ongoing projects which were the subject of updates. Results frameworks were developed for all of the new projects, including identification of appropriate performance indicators. Indicator Data Collection plans for these projects are being drafted by the M&E Officer under the guidance of the MSI Consultant as a way of providing additional training and mentoring for him.

There are some partner projects that do not have finalized frameworks and indicator data collection plans due to issues with the donors or with implementation that are requiring redesigns. The partner also continues to

receive new projects. This makes the need to build the partner's own internal skills to be able to create and update frameworks and indicator data collection plans all the more critical. The MSI Consultant continues to work with the M&E Officer in these areas.

In addition, the MSI Consultant provided a full two-day training session on "Designing and Monitoring Donor Funded Programmes" for 18 partner staff during her visit, including the M&E Officer, Project Managers, and the Director of Projects. The partner retained the training materials from this session and will be able to use them in the future with new staff and as references.

Beyond direct work on specific projects, the partner also worked with the MSI consultant during the quarter to further strengthen the internal management systems it uses to oversee and manage donor-funded programs. Working together both remotely and during the consultant's site visit, progress was made on strengthening the standard metrics to be reviewed at each monthly portfolio review meeting, developing mechanisms and schedules to allow the Director of Programs to provide adequate support and supervision for all Project Managers (the number of whom has increased sharply in the past few months with the new projects), and developing a management checklist to help manage partner relationships when the partner is involved in subcontracting (something which had created some major issues in the previous few months).

The final area of work during the quarter was a major push to finalize specifications for the planned M&E database for the national partner. After meetings during the MSI Consultant's first visit in November, and review of M&E documents and indicator lists provided by the partner at that time, the IT firm presented draft specifications for the database in mid-February. Several meetings were held during the MSI consultant's visit in early March to build out the specifications further so that there would be enough detail, presented in a lay-person friendly enough way for partner staff to be able to comment effectively on them and iterate with the IT firm so that the plans for the database could be finalized.

There have been some challenges in the process of finalizing the specifications for the database. The IT firm was asked to provide considerable additional detail on how the database would function and how various types of partner staff would be expected to interact with it. An ambitious schedule was developed in early March for the IT firm to turn around a draft of these more detailed specifications, complete with screen shots. The schedule also had tight turnaround times for the national partner to provide comments back so the IT firm could prepare a final draft of the specifications which the partner would then approve prior to programming of the database beginning. The IT firm provided the full draft of all specifications according to the planned timeframe but because of the considerable additional information and changes it included, the partner was not able to sign off on it by the deadline and instead provided additional detailed feedback and requests for changes to the IT firm. At this point, there is concern on the part of the IT firm that they will not be able to address the concerns raised by the partner with the current budget and before the end of the grant period. They are currently negotiating steps to move forward.

2.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

As reported last quarter, 2011 programming is still being implemented without an approved work plan. Submission and finalization of the work plan, per instructions of the SuRG CO^{TR}, is pending a modification to Section C of our contract and budget realignment. On February 15, 2011 USAID sent Tetra Tech ARD a modified Section C and requested Tetra Tech ARD to submit a modified budget through the end of the base period (extended to June 2012 in December 2010) and including the grants indicated in the December modification and local government training in the Northern Province. Tetra Tech ARD submitted its response on March 5, 2011. A response from USAID is still pending.

The current pipeline for the base year budget is such that new directed grants requested by USAID in the modifications without the option year funding would require Tetra Tech ARD to cancel any additional new programming, including capacity building and technical assistance to grantees, and close down both field offices significantly reducing staff early next quarter. As such, Tetra Tech ARD proposed in its response to USAID two scenarios: one in which no new funding is added and the project end date remains June 2012 as described above; and a second in which optional year funding is added to the project and the end date is extended until February 2013 so that planned programming could continue and new activities are integrated into a broader program. Tetra Tech ARD has had to put on hold all new programming and slow its implementation until the budget is finalized. Specifically, four new APS grants are on hold; program planning for follow-up grants to current APS grantees has been suspended; a follow-up grant to a national partner has been put on hold; technical assistance to a regional NGO and the Hospital Gender Based Violence desk has been put on hold; and STTA by MSI's evaluation specialist for SuRG has been postponed. This quarter's drop in the burn rate is a result of postponement of these activities and other new initiatives.

At the end of this quarter, Tetra Tech ARD had spent 91 percent of our current obligation of \$6,950,000. USAID was informed on January 19, 2011 in accordance with FAR 52.232.22 that we will require an additional funding obligation. This obligation is still pending. If additional funds are not obligated by the end of April, Tetra Tech ARD will have to suspend any programmed training or events.

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