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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

APRIL-JUNE 2011 QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY 2011

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Cover Photo:
Opening ceremony for a trade fair Polonnaruwa organized by a SuRG partner. It was the first time that Muslim and Sinhala traders exhibited their products together in that area.

Photo courtesy of SuRG

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
AL	Advanced Level
APS	Annual Program Statement
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
CMC	Civil Monitoring Commission
CMEV	Centre for Monitoring Election Violence
COP	Chief of Party
COTR	Contractor's Technical Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DS	Divisional Secretary
EP	Eastern Province
ER	Emergency Regulations
FR	Fundamental Rights
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GN	*Grama Niladhari*
HDCC	Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce
HLRP	Housing Land Restitution and Property
HR	Human Rights
JI	Judges' Institute
JSC	Judicial Services Commission
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Legal Aid Commission
LG	Local Government
LHRP	Land Housing Restitution and Property
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupee
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
LLM	Master of Laws
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
MDTU	Management Development Training Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSI	Management Systems International
NEHRP	North East Housing and Reconstruction Programme
NELSIP	North East Local Services Improvement Project
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization

NIC	National Identity Card
OD	Open Dialogue
OLD	Official Language Department
PC	Provincial Council
PGF	Participatory Governance Forum
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRU	Public Relations Unit
PS	*Pradeshiya Sabha*
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
Q	Quarter
RLF	Revolving Loan Fund
Rs.	Rupees
Rtd.	Retired
SC	Supreme Court
SE	Social Equity
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
TDMS	Trincomalee District Media Society
ToT	Training of Trainers
TT ARD	Tetra Tech
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WIN	Women In Need
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 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 Tetra Tech ARD's base period from February 2011 to June 2012. In February, USAID requested Tetra Tech ARD to submit a budget modification to exercise option year funding and extend the contract to February 2013. At the end of this quarter, negotiations for the expected modification were still pending.

During the quarter, SuRG continued its targeted assessments of ongoing work to ensure that planning for the expected extension of programming through FY 2013 builds on best practices, incorporates lessons learned and addresses critical needs on the ground in the north and east. Last quarter, technical staff conducted in-depth reviews of small grants to regional organizations in the east and Polonnaruwa and, with the end of the Local Authority (LA) technical training program, conducted and rated LA progress in applying practices, skills and tools learned in the training in each LA.

This quarter, SuRG commissioned a gender impact assessment to review a Social Equity (SE) grantee's support to widowed mothers. The assessment, conducted by an international consultant, reviewed the circumstances, challenges and needs of this vulnerable population and the partner's response as well as provided recommendations to the partner and the donor community for further support (see Section 1.1.1 below).

The SE team followed up its training for lawyers from the north held in August 2010 by conducting in-depth interviews with all the lawyers who participated in the program. The results (as detailed in Section 1.1.2 below) informed training conducted for newly appointed Tamil-speaking magistrates and judges held this quarter and will be incorporated into the design of a second training session to be conducted next quarter.

EML's hands-on technical assistance program to SuRG's 11 partner LAs came to an end this quarter. The SuRG local government (LG) team, in preparation for ongoing support and upcoming training for LAs in the north, reviewed the program by comparing the progress of the 11 partner LAs which received EML and SuRG hands-on technical assistance with the progress of 11 other Eastern Province LAs which participated in technical training workshops but did not receive additional EML/SuRG technical support. Details of this assessment can be found in Section 1.3.2 and Attachment I.

This report covers the period from April 1–June 30, 2011, and details these activities as well as progress on ongoing contract implementation activities and management and administration. Highlights for the quarter include:

- A SuRG partner pursued 128 human rights violation cases in courts.
- Forty-five lawyers were trained by a partner at a workshop which increased the capacity and expertise of the participants in examining modalities, applying relevant standards and sharing comparative experience in handling human rights cases.
- A SuRG partner obtained an agreement from the Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Colombo to incorporate the topic of habeas corpus into its LLM and LLB course curricula.

- SuRG examined and documented the needs of widowed mothers; how to improve transition and recovery programming; gender equity issues; and local perceptions and opinions of beneficiaries in a review of a partner's assistance to widowed mothers in Trincomalee District. The research conducted by an international anthropologist with significant experience in the north and east was based on 40 in-depth interviews and 3 focus group discussions with partner beneficiaries, and 6 interviews with partner staff.

- A SuRG partner trained 88 *Grama Niladharis* from Trincomalee, Jaffna and Vavunia on legal concepts pertaining to land and property, as well as improving their understanding of practical issues related to Housing, Land and Property (HLP) restitution.

- A partner developed and distributed 500 copies each of its policy briefs entitled "*Ending Displacement: Definitions and Reality"* and "*Post Conflict Development and the Right to Restitution – Implications for National Policy"* among officials, NGOs and agencies involved in HLP issues.

- SuRG conducted in-depth interviews with all 20 trainees who participated in lawyers training in August 2010. The follow-up assessment of the application and utility of the training provides information on legal trends and issues and will inform the design of next quarter's follow-up training for northern lawyers.

- Thirteen female A Level graduates from Trincomalee District completed a Diploma in Journalism course; the first course of its kind in the district.

- Muslim and Sinhala traders held a trade exhibition in Polonnaruwa. It was the first time members of the two communities exhibited their products together.

- A partner successfully advocated to secure space for Muslim traders in the Sinhala-dominated weekly market in Polonnaruwa District.

- Twenty-six Tamil-speaking newly appointed magistrates and district judges from all eight districts in the north and east were trained in a workshop, entitled "*The Judicial Colloquia and Training Workshop for Magistrates and District Court Judges for Northern and Eastern Provinces,*" organized by SuRG in conjunction with the JSC and JI.

- A SuRG partner conducted six monthly counseling sessions for 53 women and 3 divisional quarterly review meetings to discuss priority needs of women and children.

- Twenty-eight students received a certificate after completing a partner's four-month Certificate Course in Human Rights.

- Level II language classes began for 289 officials from 28 LAs in the Eastern Province.

- SuRG and OLD conducted a training of trainers workshop for 26 Level II language instructors from the Eastern Province.

- SuRG conducted a review of its LG technical assistance component by comparing progress of 11 partner LAs with 11 non-partner LAs in target areas of SuRG technical assistance and training.

- EML completed its subcontract for provision of technical assistance to 11 partner LAs and training of LAs in the Eastern Province.

- Forty-three representatives of 20 SuRG partner organizations participated in a gender training to increase their understanding of gender equality and provide tools for mainstreaming gender throughout programs and in organizations.

1.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

1.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

The Social Equity (SE) team continued to support and monitor ongoing partner activities with national partners. Field staff also has begun working with regional partners that recently completed grants, along with those ending this quarter to monitor their activities and provide ongoing technical assistance in program management and implementation. In addition, the staff has been working with previous grantees to develop proposals for follow-up funding if funds are available.

SuRG Partner

Young students work together during a session on alcoholism and child's rights.

SuRG also completed its negotiations with Women in Need (WIN) headquarters in Colombo for funding on their Department of State Women's Global Issues grant. The grant will support WIN Centers in Jaffna and Puttalam, provide training for Tamil-speaking staff (from Jaffna, Puttalam and Batticaloa), and raise awareness with government officials, community members and other stakeholders. Under the project, WIN will work with the Ministry of Justice to develop a curriculum for court family counselors on training and gender-based violence issues as the basis for training for court family counselors throughout the country. The grant was approved by USAID and as directed by the SuRG COTR will be signed on July 1.

In addition, the SE team conducted individual interviews with all 20 lawyers who participated in the August 2010 training program for lawyers from the Northern Province. The interviews focused on the application and utility of the training and will serve as basis for the design of a follow-up training program to be held in September.

Training was held this quarter for 26 newly appointed Tamil-speaking magistrates and district judges from the north and east. The workshop, entitled "*The Judicial Colloquia and Training Workshop for Magistrates and District Court Judges for Northern and Eastern Provinces,*" was organized by SuRG in conjunction with the Judicial Services Commission (JSC) and the Judges Institute (JI).

SuRG also commissioned an assessment of a partner's support to widowed mothers. The gender impact assessment was based on field research with 40 women from Trincomalee receiving livelihood, psycho-social,

life skills and family support from the partner's SuRG-funded program. The findings will inform the partner's work as well as future SuRG, USAID and other donor projects with vulnerable women in the post-war setting.

1.1.1 GRANTS AND SUBCONTRACTS

ARD010

The partner continued its trainings for government officials to build capacity and knowledge on legal concepts and the national and international legal framework pertaining to land and property, as well as to improve their understanding of practical issues related to Housing, Land and Property (HLP) restitution, particularly in relation to resettled communities with an emphasis on land documentation. Training workshops were conducted for 88 *Grama Niladharis* from Trincomalee, Jaffna and Vavuniya, including both a pre-workshop assessment and post-evaluation questionnaire. Feedback from the participants reflected a high demand for follow-up trainings to be conducted in these districts.

> **" This workshop was very useful for me in solving many issues I receive daily on land…[My] division has a lot of problems with ownership changes in the Land Development Ordinance permit. Now I have more confidence to advise my village people on land related law especially on the State Land Ordinance and Land Development Ordinance."**
>
> PARTICIPANT IN PARTNER TRAINING ON HLP

The partner also conducted a discussion in Vavuniya on the topic of "*Defining Minimum Standards for Adequate Housing"* with the participation of 36 representatives of the government, civil society, UN and other donor agencies, in cooperation with UNDP and NEHRP. This was a follow-up to the discussion on housing standards held in December 2010, and discussion topics included: 1) outlining a relevant approach to defining adequate housing; 2) what minimum standards should mean in an post-conflict context; 3) re-assessing criteria for beneficiary selection; 4) increasing accessibility to adequate housing; and 5) the problem of land tenure in housing implementation. Participants at the meeting decided that findings should be presented to the Permanent Housing Group in Colombo which deals directly with the Presidential Task Force.

The partner conducted a fact-finding mission to Vavuniya in May 2011 to investigate issues that broadly impact on HLP rights, including the human right to adequate housing in the post-war context of development in the North and East. The data collected during this visit was used for the 3rd and 4th policy briefs with recommendations from inter-agency working groups. Once these policy briefs were developed, 500 copies of each were distributed among HLP stakeholders. The 3rd policy brief was entitled "*Post Conflict Development and the Right to Restitution – Implications for National Policy*," and the 4th was entitled "*Ending Displacement: Definitions and Reality.*"

ARD042

During this quarter, the partner took on a total of 128 cases on behalf of 106 persons, 8 new cases. They concluded 23 of those cases as follows: 8 releases, 1 retransfer, 8 indictments and 6 abandoned/closed cases at the request of the clients or their families. The partner noted an increase in releases from Jaffna this period. In addition, there was a reported increase in the release of detainees under the PTA and ER as more cases were conducted in Tamil, eliminating the need for translations and curtailing the risk of misinterpretation or other language difficulties.

> **" I never thought I could do anything about international law. Practicing lawyers in the magistrate court and high court like me, think that they can do nothing about international law and its local application into domestic law. Most important is that I learned how a lawyer can be supportive to a victim to address their issues under international law when local remedies are silent or inadequate."**
>
> PARTICIPANT IN PARTNER TRAINING FOR LAWYERS

The partner is also closely reviewing the progress of 45 habeas corpus cases, which have progressed very slowly despite the partner's relentless work on the

cases. In an effort to better understand the reason for the delays, the partner's Legal Coordinator, along with panel lawyers, visited the prison on three occasions during the reporting period and also visited the Detention Camp in May and another prison in June to meet with clients to discuss their grievances and update them on the progress of their cases.

The partner also organized a three-day training workshop in Trincomalee for 45 lawyers from throughout Sri Lanka in order to increase the capacity of its existing lawyers, and encourage more lawyers to join their panel and play an active role in strengthening and expanding their Legal Aid Programme. The purpose of the workshop was to increase the knowledge of lawyers working in the area of human rights, share international expertise, improve usage of international standards and case law in local litigation, and disseminate information on international legal standards and practices. The workshop was also useful in evaluating the progress of work carried out by participants of the partner's previous workshop. The partner used this assessment to develop a strategy to improve their Legal Assistance Programme to address issues not only concerning the PTA and ER cases, but also cases related to land and migrant rights.

ARD040

After completing a draft of the Habeas Corpus Act, the partner conducted a series of consultations on the draft with small groups including the heads of bar associations, senior lawyers and judges in Kandy and Badulla during April 2011. Efforts were made through these consultations to fine-tune the draft's provisions in a manner that would not lead to antagonism from the government. General concerns were raised during the discussions with key provisions and specific language debated and revised. At the conclusion of the meetings, it was decided that the draft would be revised and sent back to the stakeholders for further discussion.

A formal memo was also presented to the Council of Legal Education requesting that the Sri Lanka Law College incorporate the topic of habeas corpus into its course curricula, which resulted in the creation of a committee by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to consider this recommendation further. It is also expected that this Committee would undertake the additional task of examining the formulation of relevant Supreme Court Rules to ensure a better facilitation of the remedy with positive results in the courts of the north and east.

The partner also obtained an agreement from the Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Colombo to incorporate the topic of habeas corpus into its LLM and LLB course curricula.

The partner published its book on habeas corpus this quarter and disseminated it as well as its publication of the SC - (FR) remedy on the right against unlawful arrest and detention. Both are being translated into Sinhala and Tamil. The book on habeas corpus was cited in the report of the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Panel on Sri Lanka and, as a result, requests have been received from partners throughout the South Asia and South East Asia regions to use the habeas corpus study to discuss common problems of impunity and accountability.

ARD041

During this quarter, the partner completed its certificate course on Human Rights. In May 2011, 28 participants graduated including 20 females and 8 males. In addition to human rights, the course included a three-day training in Non-Violent Communication. The certificate award ceremony was also held during the reporting period.

> **" I am very happy to have followed this course with my Tamil neighbors after a prolonged war that divided us and our interaction. During the war, both our communities were suspicious of one another and many of us were not on talking terms. This course gave us an opportunity to come together. I understood that human rights are the same for all and we have suffered a lot by its denial. I feel that I am a better person because now I can relate and share my experiences with my Tamil friends."**
>
> PARTICIPANT IN PARTNER'S HUMAN RIGHTS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Through their alumni network of graduates over the last two years, the partner conducted three awareness sessions on women's rights covering topics such as laws affecting domestic life, policing, bribery and corruption in public places, and child rights. In total, 132 participants including 84 males and 48 females from three villages participated in the sessions.

The partner's legal services program provides legal counseling and representation for human rights violations, including representation at the Trincomalee and Muttur courts, as well as before the Supreme Court. During this quarter, the partner filed eight Fundamental Rights cases at the Supreme Court in Colombo using SuRG-funded Colombo-based lawyers. The partner's caseload was already at 22 cases during the previous quarter, which now increases its caseload to 30. Three additional cases are ready to be sent to Colombo for filing in the next quarter. Two prison visits were conducted for nine Fundamental Rights cases in Trincomalee and Vavuniya in an effort to acquire various pieces of information for the courts.

The partner completed its second of four human rights awareness pamphlets focusing on laws as they relate to maintenance applications. The pamphlet was published this quarter in Tamil. The Sinhala translation started during this reporting period is scheduled to be completed, printed and distributed by the end of July 2011. The partner will distribute the pamphlets to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), lawyers, community-based organizations (CBOs), the local library, the police (women and children's desk in particular), probation officers, women development officers and to lawyers from the north attending upcoming SuRG training.

The partner also continued its assistance to families with members held in welfare, detention and rehabilitation centers. Seventy beneficiaries were supported with care packs and travel expenses during this quarter. The partner continued its livelihoods and psychosocial support program for 30 female heads of households. Eleven beneficiaries received livelihoods support packages during this reporting period. Livelihoods support included the purchase of livestock, sewing machines, agricultural activities and in one case a refrigerator to be used in a cold storage business.

SuRG

A partner beneficiary received support to setup a poultry farm at her home in the Ampara District.

The partner held 10 workshops for all of the 30 female heads of households receiving assistance. Workshop topics included life skills development, women's empowerment, personality development, knowing yourself, stages of growth in children, business promotion, managing a small business, health and nutrition, and home gardening techniques. Workshops were held in Trincomalee and Muttur during this quarter. Fourteen beneficiaries received 1500 Rs. each to pay for their children's daily needs such as food and education.

POST WAR- SUPPORT FOR WIDOWED MOTHERS: A GENDER IMPACT ASSESMENT

SuRG has supported the partner since 2009 to provide 48 female heads of household with livelihood assistance, psychosocial support, educational support for their children and confidence building and life skills training. This quarter, SuRG completed an assessment to review this program and provide insight and strategies for the partner's ongoing programming and general donor support to the more than 80,000 widowed mothers in the north and east.

SuRG commissioned an anthropologist with extensive experience in the north and east, to examine and document the needs of widowed mothers; how to improve transition and recovery programming; gender

equity issues; and local perceptions and opinions of beneficiaries. Her research was based on interviews and focus group discussions with 40 partner beneficiaries as well as partner staff.

The report detailed issues that occur as a result of the women's social stigmatization and unresolved trauma and grief, as well as their economic and physical insecurities.

Overall the stories of those interviewed for the report confirmed the importance of providing assistance for widowed mothers' needs from a broad, holistic perspective, rather than traditional and more narrowly focused livelihood approaches. The report found the partner's pioneering assistance to be effective because it approaches the women's problems with an integrated multi-level strategy that responds to their need for emotional support, parenting guidance, protection, and livelihood development. The report indicated that the rights-based approach taken by the partner has, over time, effectively strengthened beneficiaries' self-confidence and awareness of their right to enjoy physical, economic and emotional security and be free from all forms of violence.

Findings from the report were shared with USAID in a presentation to the Mission Director and staff from technical offices. The partner has begun adapting its program to incorporate recommendations from the report.

ARD021

The partner completed its 12-month "Raising Awareness of Human Rights amongst Vulnerable Women and Adolescents in Ampara District" program during this quarter. The program builds on the partner's previous work and community savings and credit groups and supports those in need of psycho-social, legal and livelihood assistance.

Legal Support and Livelihood Assistance

A woman and her husband from the Ampara District had been struggling to access much-needed local services and earn enough money to make ends meet to ensure the well-being of their two children. With support from a SuRG partner's legal aid clinic and livelihood assistance, they are obtaining basic documents they need to access government services and have rebuilt a small business enabling them to provide for their children.

Bhavani attended a legal aid clinic in her village conducted by a SuRG partner. She came to the clinic to secure a copy of her birth certificate so she could obtain a National Identity Card (NIC) issued by the Sri Lankan government. Without her NIC, Bhavani would not be able to access government funds and services intended for low-income families. "Within a few months, I got a copy of my birth certificate and now I have successfully applied for the Identity Card."

Bhavani also learned at the legal clinic that she was eligible for partner livelihood assistance. Taking into consideration her financial difficulties and her past experience running a small cement-based pottery making business , the partner granted Bhavani raw materials to restart her potter enterprise on a more manageable scale. "One of the reasons we stopped the business was because we simply could not afford to make new molds. Because the designs of flower pots and the sizes continually change, we needed new molds but had no money to spare. The partner stepped in and helped with the purchase of raw material such as cement, sand and paint and eased our financial burden." explained Bhavani.

Today, Bhavani and her husband coordinate carefully to make sure their time schedules allow adequate time to complete their orders for flower pots. They share tasks based on how much time and effort is required to complete each task. "He helps out with the heavier tasks, like creating the right mixture from cement and sand to fit the mould and carrying the pots and stacking them. I help out with the painting and the cleaning." They sell the pots at the weekly market place or to nearby shops.

The additional income has brought many benefits to the family. "The money we earn from the business goes towards buying food for the family and to pay for the children's education. But we have also increased the amount of money we save in each child's savings account. Previously, we deposited about 200 rupees a month. But now, we save around 500 rupees a month" noted Bhavani.

The partner wrapped up grant activities early in the quarter, with six monthly counseling sessions held for 53 women and three divisional quarterly review meetings to discuss priority needs of women and children. These divisional meetings were attended by women and government officials (48 women and 10 men).
The partner's project covered six communities Ampara. Under the project's Strengthening Women's Rights component, 12 awareness-raising sessions were held on gender relations, gender equality, gender-based violence, and human rights (specifically freedom of movement and arbitrary arrest and detention). Ninety women participated in the sessions including women from the six project villages, members of WRDSs, *Samurthi* Societies, and NGOs. Participants were encouraged to raise concerns and issues of importance. Concerns related to alcoholism among men and domestic violence were raised most often.

Under the Rights Awareness Raising and Support for Vulnerable Adolescents component of the project, the partner conducted six sessions on leadership and non-violent communication for 112 youth. Fifty-five of the participants were girls. The partner worked with these youth and their communities to raise awareness on the negative effects of smoking and drinking.

The partner also led celebrations on International Human Rights Day and on International Women's Day. The International Human Rights Day celebration was held in a Tamil community. This was the first time Muslim women representatives went to the Tamil community. Legal aid organizations were all in attendance at the event and shared information on their services through speeches and presentations. International Women's Day was celebrated as a Muslim community and represented the first time that Tamil and Muslim communities participated together in the event.

The program also provided 53 women with access to psychosocial counseling services. Over 60 percent of the women counseled were survivors of domestic abuse. In addition to individual counseling sessions for each of the 53 women, support groups were set up amongst women in the villages. The support groups provide women with a safe space to share their experiences, discuss their problems, and seek support from each other. The support groups will continue beyond the project. Follow-up with identified recipients of psychosocial counseling indicated that their personal lives have improved significantly since the counseling activities began, and the partner's counselor's successful interventions resulted in the women meeting regularly without the counselor being present.

In the latter part of the grant, the partner conducted six half-day sessions with a psychiatrist to assist women who were suffering from trauma and mental illness. One hundred twenty women participated in these discussions of which 81 were participating in this type of activity for the first time. The psychiatrist led discussions through case stories, allowing the women to discuss their own issues and problems. The psychiatrist also provided information to the women on how to access the medical clinic at the local Base Hospital.

Based on requests by a school principal, the partner conducted awareness sessions for adolescents on child suicide after several suicide attempts in some of the communities. The partner conducted six one-day workshops with a psychiatrist and a Probation Officer. One hundred and eighty participants attended including 94 boys and 86 girls. Topics included family responsibilities; future planning; family and society; setting goals and achieving them; and life skills. The youth in attendance were encouraged to share their feelings and opinions through discussions, group work, self-expression, drama and art work.

Under the project's legal aid component, the partner conducted six legal aid clinics providing 291 persons with legal advice or support for a range of cases. In general, cases included maintenance and divorce; suspicious arrest; documentation support for land, birth, housing and death certification; financial and business disputes; property-related maintenance; land disputes; acquisition of National Identity Cards; child abuse; environmental pollution; and marriage certificates. The partner's assistance often came in the form of referrals, whereby lawyers and service staff advised clients to take their cases to relevant support organizations

such as the LAC, the Mediation Board, the police, legal aid providers and other NGOs, Divisional Secretariats, religious leaders, or the High Court.

The partner also provided livelihood support to 30 vulnerable women—all of whom were also recipients of psycho-social counseling support. All beneficiaries are single victims of domestic violence, in need of financial assistance, and lacking community support. Each woman received 8,250 Rs. of in-kind support to start a small business. They also received training from partner staff on how to maintain accounts and track their expenses and income. The women were encouraged to support each other in their businesses and become customers and/or help each other out. For example, one woman with a poultry-rearing business exchanged eggs for rice with another beneficiary. The types of businesses supported included poultry, rice pounding, rice selling, firewood, coconut, small shops, sewing, brick production, metalwork, pottery, clothing production and sales, sweets/deserts, and string hoppers.

> **" I enjoyed the group work exercise where relevant case studies were given to participant judges. I appreciated that participants were divided into groups and mixed with very senior judges. The role play exercise where groups were required to deliver written court judgments in partnership with Supreme Court Judges [the resource persons] was a golden opportunity for us to practice thinking as a senior judge might. We shared our thoughts and experiences on various cases, and the materials provided to participants were valuable. I am using them on a daily basis in my court cases."**
>
> DISTRICT COURT JUDGE, AMPARA

The partner provided livelihood support to an additional 30 people (26 women and 4 men) identified during legal aid clinics. In these cases, each beneficiary received 10,000 Rs. of in-kind support in late February 2011 to start a business. By the end of the program, beneficiaries were earning approximately 2,000 to 3,000 Rs. per month from their business.

The grant has helped to improve the lives of war-affected women. Beneficiaries have gained awareness and better understanding of human rights-related issues and violence prevention. Women who were actively involved in the program as representatives of the communities were able to communicate critical issues to government officials and to assist those in need with information about available legal services in their communities. Those receiving psychosocial counseling assistance and who participated in the counseling support groups improved their self-confidence during the program and established connections and friendships with others in similar situations. The livelihoods support provided to program beneficiaries was complementary to the counseling support received and went a long way in helping struggling women cover their daily needs.

1.1.2 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

JUDICIAL COLLOQUIA AND TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR MAGISTRATES AND DISTRICT COURT

> **" This was a different type of workshop since it was a training workshop. Colloquia and training workshops of this nature make judges more action oriented and act as a motivating factor in their endeavors to interpret and apply laws using a clear perspective. I appreciate and thank USAID / SuRG for its untiring efforts in organizing this workshop.**
>
> JUSTICE P.H.K.K. KULATILAKE
> CO-DIRECTOR, SRI LANKA JUDGES' INSTITUTE

JUDGES OF THE NORTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES

In collaboration with the Sri Lanka Judges Institute (JI) and the Judicial Services Commission (JSC), the SuRG SE team conducted an interactive workshop for district court judges and magistrates from the north and east on emerging legal issues. The workshop provided judges with information and skills training on post-war legal issues including succession and testamentary actions; partition (particularly in the case of conflict-related deaths and disappearances); and judicial ethics (including, for example, responsibility to minimize case delay, adherence to evidentiary rules, prohibition of ex parte communication, and due process protections). The 26 Tamil-speaking participants included a mix of newly appointed magistrates and district judges from the districts of Jaffna, Killinochchi, Mullaitivu Mannar,Vavuniya, Ampara, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee. The workshop, entitled "*The Judicial Colloquia and Training Workshop for Magistrates and District Court Judges of the Northern and Eastern Provinces*," was held from April 8-11, 2011 in Dambulla.

The sessions were facilitated by Rtd. SC Judge, Justice Weerasuriya (partition law and property), Judge of Court of Appeal, Justice Eric Basnayake (testamentary action and succession), and SC Judge, Justice Sripavan (judicial ethics). Each developed and led sessions using case studies and discussions to ensure that the workshop was participatory, relevant and useful. Recent court decisions, role playing and course handouts were cited by participants as key to the success of the workshop.

FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENT: APPLICATION AND UTILITY OF NORTHERN LAWYERS TRAINING

The Social Equity team followed up on the SuRG August 2010 training program for northern lawyers with an assessment of the application and utility of the program. The team met with all 20 trainees in May conducting a series of interviews in order to identify the usefulness of the training and the relevance of the topics, and to inform content and methodologies for future training. Overall, the training was considered to be useful and relevant and the training materials in particular were found to be very practical. Most trainees indicated that the materials were being used as reference materials in their practice. Interviews also indicated an improved practice in the area of civil law. For example, four lawyers started to take on civil cases they previously would not have felt qualified to take on, particularly those related to partition and succession and testamentary. Trainees across the board indicated that they were more confident in their understanding of laws and procedures related to the topics discussed and as such are now willing to take on such case types. Seventeen of the 20 trainees stated that the training had a positive impact on their respective practices. The other three respondents who listed 'no' in terms of impact on their practice, had yet to take on any of the case types discussed during the trainings.

When asked about the most useful aspects of the training, most respondents referred to one or two of the topic areas rather than anything more specific. There were 18 trainees who stated that partition was the most useful, while 12 highlighted succession and testamentary and 3 stated the section on death certificates. Trainees ranked the various training topics based on level of relevance to their practice. The following chart breaks down this information in summary form.

SuRG LAWYERS TRAINING EVALUATION: RELEVANCE OF TRAINING TOPICS

Topic	Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Neutral	Not relevant
Death Certificates	10	9	1	0
Adoption and Custody	9	10	1	0
Partition	18	1	1	0
Succession and Testamentary	13	6	1	0

In short, the section on Partition was found to be most relevant, Succession and Testamentary the second most relevant, Death Certificates the third most relevant, and Adoption and Custody the least relevant. While considering future training topics four areas were deemed priorities: 18 persons listed "66 matters" (under the Primary Court Procedures Act); 18 listed state land; 17 listed private land; and 7 listed criminal matters.

Planning is currently underway for a second northern lawyers workshop to be held in September, 2011. The workshop will be the third in this series of training workshops on emerging legal issues in the north and east for Tamil-speaking lawyers. Based on the findings of the assessment, the focus of the upcoming workshop will be on land. Participants are being identified with the assistance of each district Bar Association; 35 lawyers from Jaffna, Vavuniya, and Mannar districts are expected to attend.

1.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The CEaT team continued to work this quarter with partners as they closed down their projects. In addition, the team worked with them and partners that had completed their grants last quarter to develop proposals for follow-on funding should it become available.

The CEaT team also worked with prospective new grantees as directed by USAID. Proposals and budgets were revised for all three prospective grantees. Two proposals will all be submitted to USAID in the first weeks of the next quarter, once final details are hammered out and agreed upon.

SuRG submitted and received approval from USAID for a Department of State Women's Global Issues grant to HDCC. The project will provide 50 disadvantaged women and female youth from the Hambantota District with support to develop a business plan, obtain a small loan and launch a microenterprise. In addition, the Chamber will reach out to women already engaged in business to build their skills and form the basis for a new Chamber Women's Desk. The grant, as directed by the SuRG COTR, will be signed on July 1.

Forty-three representatives of 20 partner organizations along with SuRG technical staff participated in one of two gender workshops conducted this quarter. The workshop was intended to increase participants' understanding of gender equality and provide tools for mainstreaming gender throughout programs and in their organizations.

1.2.1 GRANTS

ARD014

The partner completed implementation of its "Community Empowerment and Mobilization for Muslim and Sinhalese Coexistence Project" in the latter part of June. They wound down the project with a trade fair for Muslim and Sinhala traders, awareness-raising sessions on gender sensitivity in four communities, five *shramadan*a activities and an

exposure visit to the Women's Development Federation in Kandy for committee members.

Over the life of the project, the partner worked with three Sinhala and four Muslim communities in the Polonnaruwa District in an area which borders the Eastern Province and was severely affected by the war. The project was designed to promote peaceful co-existence among Sinhalese and Muslim communities. The partner set up and worked with 67 small groups in seven communities to create an environment in which villagers could raise and address issues of mutual concern and increase interaction among Sinhalese and Muslims. The groups were trained on topics including group formation, communication, leadership and gender sensitivity. Each group then nominated members to seven Village Committees and a Divisional Committee thereby creating a network to represent the needs of the people at the divisional level to the relevant government authorities.

" …we were living as a separate group. We had no connection or linkages with the Sinhala communities. It was only after the SuRG project came to our villages, that these changes came to effect. Together with the Sinhala people we took part in many activities. Today, things have changed so much that we visit the Sinhala families. We had never experienced such changes before and it was only because of SuRG that such changes have taken place."

MUSLIM PARTICIPANT

" Through this project we were given opportunities to not only work with other Sinhala communities but also Muslim communities. We had never visited a Muslim Mosque before in our lives. But through this project, we participated in a *shramadana* activity which was conducted in the Mosque. Also, through the trade exhibition we were given a great opportunity to display our products and create linkages with the Muslim traders."

SINHALA PARTICIPANT

Activities in the project included:

- Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) in each community to identify critical needs of the villagers that were then shared with relevant government and local officials;
- Exchange visits to Ampara, Trincomalee and Kandy for committee members to improve their understanding of how committees and CBOs address local issues;
- Tamil and Sinhala language classes for 78 community members (36 Sinhalese and 42 Muslims); 66 students sat for the OLD examination and 50 passed;
- Dialogue forums with Muslim and Buddhist religious leaders to learn about the religious practices of each religion and the commonalities in the teachings;
- *Shramadana* activities;
- Organizing cultural events and hosting other communities' participation including celebrations of the Sinhala/Tamil New Year, the Prophet Mohammad's birthday and Ramazan;
- A joint trade exhibition which provided space for Muslim and Sinhalese traders to exhibit their wares and products.

These activities not only helped project communities to address concerns but to do so in a way that created a space for Muslim and Sinhalese to work together on these common issues. For many participants, it was the first time they had worked together with members of the other community. The effort was not without challenges. At the start of the project, community members were skeptical about committing time to an initiative that could not directly address their basic and most urgent needs (livelihoods, food, credit, etc.). The partner addressed this issue by securing funds from other organizations to address some of these critical needs and build the trust they needed to move their SuRG program forward.

The partner was also able to include members of small groups, including those in the Muslim villages, in their loan scheme allowing the members of the project's small groups to apply for credit facilities. To date, 208 individuals from the seven communities have accessed in total 5,316,480 rupees in credit. In order to give

more authority and responsibility to the village committees, the partner authorized the village committee to review the applications and approve the applicants for consideration of credit.

Another key accomplishment of the project was securing space for Muslim traders in the weekly market. This also was not without challenges. It took several rounds of direct negotiations with the Local Authority Chairman and the Divisional Secretary to overcome policies of the Sinhala Traders' Association which were impeding the entry of Muslim traders before the partner could secure space for Muslims in the fair.

ARD016

The partner completed its "Relationship Building between Diverse Social Groups in Tamil and Muslim Communities" project early this quarter. As the project wound down, the community groups continued to hold their monthly meetings and the partner provided Sinhalese text books and writing books to students who successfully completed their project language training course.

Over the course of the 12-month project period, the partner established links with eight neighboring Tamil and Muslim communities in the Batticaloa District with a history of violence and mistrust between them.

The project helped establish women's, youth, fishermen's and farmers' groups in each of the eight project communities. The partner engaged 282 Muslim and Tamil community members in project orientation meetings, provided training on a range of topics and held 28 one-day awareness-raising sessions for 366 Tamils and Muslims on topics including conflict management and mitigation, coexistence and peace building, non-violent communication and negotiation skills, and *Do No Harm* and conflict sensitivity. They also conducted a six-month 72-hour Sinhala language training program for 81 youth (39 males, 42 females).

Groups established in project communities met with their respective counterparts from neighboring communities each month to identify and resolve common problems. The partner conducted monthly meetings and sectoral quarterly meetings for all groups to discuss and plan how to address concerns. Among the groups, the women's groups stood out. They secured registration for two WRDSs which had long been pending; they obtained a Rs. 250,000 government contract to renovate the local mosque; and they increased coordination with youth groups to identify and take action against illicit liquor producers in their communities.

PARTNER ADVOCACY INITIATIVE TO RECLAIM FISHERMEN'S SOCIETY BOAT BENEFITS MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY

A fishing community in the Batticaloa District has encountered several challenges in trying to secure government support for its fishing activities. When a local NGO provided the fishing society with a boat, it proved to be both a boon and bane to the Society.

The boat was meant for the use of all the members in the Society. But for the last 18 months, the boat had been used exclusively by the former Chairman of the Society. Since the Chairman was backed by powerful political elements, the other members of the Society were afraid to demand the return of the boat.

The issue was raised at a meeting of the Society convened under a SuRG partner project . In response, the partner facilitated meetings with several government agencies – including the Head of the Fisheries Department in Batticaloa -- seeking redress. After several rounds of discussions, presentation of the facts and relevant documentation, the Society secured the ownership of the boat.

The Society now uses the boat to help not only its individual members but the community as a whole. The fishermen use the boat according to a carefully maintained roster with the requirement that a certain percentage of the income from each catch goes back to the Society.

From this income, 12% is channeled towards improving local education. Two teachers are paid 12,000 and 7000 rupees per month to conduct after school classes for Grade 5 students in mathematics and general Tamil language in order to prepare the students for their Scholarship examination. And, the Society provides 15 students who attended the partner's SuRG-funded Sinhala language classes with support for their fees for tuition classes and stationery.

> **" During the initial stages I found it very difficult to write the Sinhalese characters but my teacher was very supportive and helped me a lot. So much so that now, I write Sinhalese at the same speed I write in my mother tongue – Tamil. When I hear and learn or get to read new words in Sinhalese, I am amazed at the depth and the fact that I am now learning a new language."**
>
> STUDENT
> SuRG PARTNER SINHALA LANGUAGE CLASS

Youth groups, apart from supporting the women's groups' efforts to reduce the production of illicit liquor, actively sought the assistance of government departments in securing sports equipment and joined flood relief efforts during the unprecedented rainfall early this year.

At the quarterly sectoral meetings the interest groups rallied support to address priority concerns. The partner invited relevant government officials—rural development officers, agrarian officials, social service and youth services officers, and officials from the Divisional Secretariats—to attend each of these meetings and facilitate resolution of problems raised at the meetings.

Project implementation and progress was not without challenges, however. The lack of physical works projects or financing for community projects amidst the extreme poverty prevalent in these communities made it very difficult to secure the participation of community members at all the monthly meetings.

In addition, many of the issues identified by the community groups could only be dealt with by government officials/agencies—a process that is both time-consuming (as experienced by the WRDSs in securing registration) and requires focused and longer-term advocacy efforts.

Nonetheless, the resolution of several of the above-mentioned issues, and the process initiated to tackle priority issues contributed towards both the building of durable relationships across ethnic and religious lines in these eight communities and towards building the confidence of community members needed to raise their voices and negotiate with government officials for the services and rights they are legally entitled to.

1.2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

A review of SuRG partner activities in previous quarters revealed that incorporating gender is not understood beyond either working with women or on women's rights issues. Partners, on the whole, do little gender analysis prior to programming to identify gendered implications of project design, planning and implementation. In response, SuRG organized gender training for partner organizations and SuRG technical staff. Forty-three representatives of 20 SuRG partner organizations attended one of two workshops conducted in Trincomalee in June.

The workshops were developed and facilitated by two local gender consultants, one a lawyer and the other a community development / advocacy expert. The general objective was to enhance participants' understanding of gender equality and provide tools for mainstreaming gender throughout programs and in organizations. Key issues covered were notions of gender, hierarchy, discrimination, the legal framework, how to access the legal system, conducting gender analysis, and strategy and planning for future program activities.

The methodology was participatory and interactive. Through the course of the workshop, participants were asked to look at the concepts being discussed through the lens of their individual, family and community experiences. They were introduced to the laws affecting women and children and how to use the legal system to respond to problems and seek redress. Finally, they were asked to look at key challenges in each of the four SuRG component areas and develop a strategy for tackling these issues. A follow-up session with grantees is scheduled for next quarter.

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

As reported last quarter, at the conclusion of the SuRG technical training program for LAs, SuRG conducted a review of the application of the training in participating LAs. This quarter, the SuRG LG team reviewed the SuRG and EML hands-on technical assistance program in SuRG's 11 partner LAs by comparing partner LA progress and application of key concepts with the progress and application of those same key concepts by 11 non-partner LAs.

The LG team and EML also conducted a training of trainers program for 15 participants in the SuRG training series. These 15 people were selected with input from SuRG, EML and the ACLGs and CLG offices based on their performance in training and in their LAs. They will form a local-based resource pool of experts who are qualified to train new government recruits and elected officials. They will also be called on to support SuRG's upcoming training for LAs in the Northern Province.

Virakesari Newspaper

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Patricia Butenis greets the Mayor of Batticaloa on a visit to the Batticaloa Municipal Council. The Batticaloa Municipal Council is 1 of 44 LAs which participated in SuRG's LG technical training program.

SuRG also started Level II language training this quarter for 289 officials from 28 LAs in the east. The training is being conducted by the 26 teachers who completed a SuRG-sponsored training of trainers conducted in April by the Official Language Department (OLD).

1.3.1 TECHNICAL TRAINING

> **" In conducting trainings for LA staff in the Eastern Province, we have had to rely on resource persons who are from other regions of the country and in such instances the language issue becomes a grave concern. One of the reasons the knowledge is not communicated properly is that technical terms are not translated appropriately and clearly and so, the meaning of words is lost in translation. Identifying talented and skilled LA staff members from our region and training them to train others in their own language is a positive step towards skills development of other staff members. The creation of the resource pool for the Eastern Province is therefore a great positive contribution to local governance in the region."**
>
> COMMISSIONER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EASTERN PROVINCE

After the completion of SuRG's technical training program, the CLG and ACLG's requested SuRG work with a select group of participants from the training to develop a locally based of pool of local government trainers. The idea was that a group of skilled local government officers, if trained as resource people, would with their technical knowledge and day-to-day experience in their local authorities make the best trainers of other and new local government staff. Until now, technical training for local authorities in the east required resource people from outside the region and very few could conduct the training with a real understanding of regional and local challenges and using Tamil language.

In response, SuRG selected 15 outstanding participants (13 males, 2 females / 5 Sinhala, 3 Tamil, 2 Muslims) from the training program from LAs, the ACLGs offices and the CLG's office to attend a three-day training of trainers program in May. The participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience in a technical subject matter, communication skills and their interest in acting as a resource person in the future. The chart below details the make-up of the resource pool.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE POOL MEMBERS

District	LA – Office	Designation	Roles and responsibilities
Trincomalee	Seruwila PS	Program Assistant	Planning and handling NELSIP

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE POOL MEMBERS

District	LA – Office	Designation	Roles and responsibilities
			activities
	ACLG Office	Community Development Officer	Oversee planning activities and public relations of LAs in Trincomalee District
	Kinniya U.C	Management Assistant	Planning and handling NELSIP activities
	Padavisiripura PS	Management Assistant	Financial management and accounting
	Verugal PS	Management Assistant	Financial Management and accounting
	CLG Office	Program Assistant	Coordinating INGOs activities within the province
Batticaloa	Eravur Town UC	Secretary	Overall office management
	Manmunai West PS	Program Assistant	Public relations, council affairs and coordination with INGOs
	Poraitheevupattu PS	Management Assistant	Vehicle management
	Manmunai SW PS	Program Assistant	Planning and handling NELSIP activities
Ampara	Mahaoya PS	Management Assistant	Financial management and accounting
	Alayadivembu PS	Program Assistant	Financial management and accounting
	Ninthavur PS	Management Assistant	Solid waste management and coordinating INGOs
	Dehiattakandiya PS	Management Assistant	Planning and coordinating with INGOs
Polonnaruwa	Lankapura PS	Secretary	Overall office management

The ToT was designed to provide participants with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to be effective trainers and facilitators. The training was highly participatory and practice-based. Participants were video recorded and the sessions played back for self, trainer and peer analysis.

The names of the participants and their preferred subject area will be sent to the Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province, the CLG and the ACLGs list of the trainers for further training. SuRG has been in discussions with the CLG and ACLGS about opportunities for members of the resource pool to conduct training at the LA level. In addition, SuRG is working with the Provincial Management Development Training Unit (MDTU) in Trincomalee to ensure each member of the resource pool is assessed and registered as a resource person to be included on the MDTU training team.

In addition, SuRG will use resource pool members to provide technical training in the Northern Province LG technical training program scheduled to get underway next quarter.

1.3.2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A key component of SuRG local government support has been technical assistance for 11 partner LAs to enhance learning and skills developed in the formal training workshops. Last quarter, EML (SuRG's technical implementing partner) completed its training series for all 43 LAs in the east. Technical support and capacity building conducted by EML also ended in May at the close of EML's subcontract with SuRG. The SuRG LG team continues to provide technical assistance, monitor and coordinate with these partner LAs. However, since formal training workshops and technical support from EML had ended, SuRG followed up with an in-house assessment of the technical assistance work carried out over the past two years to complement the assessment of the training series conducted last quarter and to inform ongoing and future programming.

SuRG's technical assistance program included support to partner LAs from SuRG and EML staff, organization of working groups comprised of elected members and staff, the organization and facilitation of Participatory Governance Forums and "echo training" to help partner LAs apply techniques and skills learned in SuRG's technical training programs as well as to train those staff members who were unable to attend the workshops. Support included working with LAs to prepare and implement the Citizen Charter, to set up the layout and structure of LAs, complete LA final accounts, establish Public Relations Desks and to build relationships between staff, elected members and citizens.

In an effort to assess the value added of this hands-on technical assistance program, SuRG LG and M&E staff conducted a review of the achievements of all of SuRG's 11 partner LAs as well as an additional 11 LAs which had not received any SuRG support beyond participation of three members or staff in each of the technical training programs. Although an attempt was made to choose LAs roughly similar in geography, resources and socioeconomic levels, SuRG partner LAs were originally chosen because they were among the most vulnerable in the province. They were resource poor, had received relatively little or no prior donor support and had few qualified staff.

> **" When we visited the Pradeshiya Sabha with our problems we had no idea to whom we should speak to regarding any particular issue. To make things worse, the PS was not able to advise us on how to proceed on such matters. But today, if we go to the Pradeshiya Sabha, there is a designated officer who will talk to us and direct us to the relevant officer. Also, the staff members are much more cooperative and friendly than they were before. For us, the people, this is a grateful and much needed change within the Pradeshiya Sabha."**
>
> PRESIDENT, RURAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

The assessment was carried out by SuRG staff visits to each of the 22 LAs. Each visit included a review of LA progress on the application of key elements covered in the SuRG training program. They discussed achievements, progress and challenges involved in the application of skills and moving forward with action points. Scores and ranking on each element were determined by the SuRG assessment team only after discussions with LA elected members, government staff and community members. The following table summarizes the action points assessed and progress made among SuRG partner LAs and non-partner LAs. Details for each of the 22 LAs assessed are available in Attachment I.

LOCAL AUTHORITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ASSESSMENT RESULTS SUMMARY

Action Points	Partner LAs (11)		Non-Partner LAs (11)	
	Score	%	Score	%
Preparation of Participatory plan / NELSIP	11	100	11	100
Operational arrangements for community participation /PGF	11	100	0	0
Formation of LA Advisory Committees	11	100	7	63.6
Preparation of project proposals	11	100	11	100
Revenue generation projects identified with citizens	8	72.7	10	90.9
Established partnership with private sector	8	72.7	8	72.7
Citizen Charter prepared and displayed	10	90.9	8	72.7
2010 final accounts submitted	10	90.9	7	63.6
2011 budget prepared with citizen participation	11	100	11	100
Using automated financial package supplied by SuRG	5	45.5	4	36.4
Public Relations Unit established	11	100	9	81.8
Office layout plan developed and implemented	11	100	3	27.3
LA structure developed, implemented and displayed	11	100	8	72.7
Number of computers available in LA	43	n/a	69	n/a
Regular Council meetings held	11	100	11	100
By-laws prepared and approved by Council	9	81.8	5	45.5
Communication system to communicate with stakeholders / citizens established	11	100	10	90.9

Among the most notable finding is that of citizen engagement. None of the non-partner LAs visited engage with citizens in any sustainable or ongoing manner. They engage with citizens only through projects and when the project ends, so does LA engagement with citizens. SuRG LAs engage with communities through the PGF which they have indicated will continue regardless of SuRG involvement.

And although 68 percent of non-partner LAs have advisory committees which include community representation, upon further review it was found that these committees are often biased towards the ruling party of the LA. Citizen representatives on advisory committees in SuRG partner LAs are selected from the PGF which requires representation from across the local political spectrum. In addition, 10 partner LAs have prepared a Citizen Charter and all have public relations units and public displays of their layout and LA structure.

Nine partner LAs compared to only five non-partner LAs have their by-laws prepared and approved. By-law development was noted in SuRG's training program review last quarter as one of the most difficult areas for completion so this level of progress made by partner LAs is notable. Timely submission of final accounts is an issue raised repeatedly by the provincial Chief Secretary and the CLG when asked about key hurdles to better LA management and administration. Ten partner LAs submitted 2010 final accounts as compared to seven non-partner LAs. Ampara UC (a partner LA) did not submit 2010 final accounts due to an issue involving missing bills which is expected to be resolved very soon.

To support training in financial management, SuRG developed and disseminated a software package for PSs to improve their ability to prepare their final accounts. Forty-five percent of SuRG partner LAs and 36 percent of non-partner LAs are currently using this SuRG computer software. There is a significant disparity in computer equipment between partner and non-partner LAs: there are a total of 43 computers available in partner LAs as compared to 69 in non-partner LAs. The package was developed for PSs and so is only viable in nine partner LAs. It is currently being used in five of those nine partner PSs; in one PS, the staff trained to use the software was transferred and the remaining 3 PSs do not have proper or sufficient computer facilities.

A key objective of the SuRG training and technical assistance program was to support LAs' efforts to qualify for World Bank NELSIP funding, especially with regard to participatory development and project planning criteria. All 22 LAs surveyed submitted proposals and have projects approved from NELSIP. The following table details projects being funded by NELSIP and funds dispersed to date for partner LAs.

NELSIP PROJECTS AND FUND DISBURSEMENT FOR PARTNER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

SuRG Participatory Governance Forums (PGF)

PGF is an informal forum set up under the SuRG project in all 11 SuRG partner LAs in the east. The PGFs are a mechanism through which citizens provide input into local authority planning, decision making and service provision .

Each PGF includes up to 15 citizen representatives selected from CBOs and community leaders and up to 15 senior LA staff and elected members (from both the ruling and opposition parties).

Meetings are held each month to discuss issues and problems in the LA area. In addition, the group works on the Citizen Charter, reviews and provides community input into the annual budget and project planning and implementation.

In each of SuRG's 11 partner LAs, community members sitting on the PGF are also representing the community on the official LA Advisory Committees. The Pradeshiya Sabha Act mandates that the membership of each Advisory Committee include 50% community representatives.

Local Authority	Allocation	Project Title	1st

	for 2011 in Million SLRS		Disbursment Million SLRS
Muthur PS	37	Construction of Muthur main road	16.8
Verugal PS	34	Improvement of Illangathurai Main Road	15.57
Thambalagamuwa PS	32	Concrete block paving of Mullipothana central road	14.73
Seruwila PS	34	Construction of market stalls near Seruwila temple	15.62
Poratheevupattu PS	34	1. Construction of Kambar Road at Kovil Poratheevu 2. Construction of Manikka Pillayarady road at Thambalawaththai 3. Construction of School Road at Aanaikattiyaveli	16.5
Manmunai South West PS	32	1. Improving public market at Kokkaddicholai 2. Construction of Kuluhunamadu/Thanthamalai road 3. Construction of Nagathambiran road at Kokkaddicholai	15.13
Manmunai West PS	33	1. Community Water Supply Scheme at Ghanthi Nagar 2. Construction of Unnichchai Vaikkal road 3. Construction of Mullamunai road at Nelluchchenai	15.48
Eravur Town UC	28	1. Construction of Pillayarady road 2. Construction of Rural Court road 3. Construction of girls school road 4. Construction of Athisayavinayagar road	13.36
Alayadivembu PS	28	1. Construction of Vellapathukappu Road at Akkaraippattu – 08 2. Construction of Kanagar road 3. Construction of Akkaraippattu 7/8 Boundary Road	13.92
Ninthavur PS	28	1. Construction of Beach Internal Road 2. Construction of Musthakeem Mosque Road	13.41
Ampara UC	27	No funds disbursed due to not submitting 2010 final accounts	-
Total	**347**		**150.52**

The SuRG post training and technical assistance assessments made clear that partner LAs (both council members and staff) understand the importance of public participation as an integral part of LA activities.

Overall, they:

- Showed keen interest in organizing the monthly Participatory Governance Forums;
- Demonstrated enthusiasm in developing and adopting the Citizens' Charter. (The PGF was considered an effective mechanism to obtain the public views for the development of the Charter); and
- Recognized the advantage to them as council members or staff of regular public consultation and involvement.

In the words of a PS Chairman from the Trincomalee District, "…we listen to what people have to say about development and work together with the people. This has become a great strength for the local authority because now people understand the true situation of the LA especially with regard to our financial capacity. And so, they do not now demand for things which they know we cannot afford to provide. Because of this, people are now showing an interest in paying taxes and contributing labor to LA activities. This type of trust is a great support to all of us who work in the local authority."

1.3.3 LANGUAGE TRAINING

Results of the Tamil and Sinhala language examinations held last quarter for 303 officials from 27 PSs were released by the Official Language Department (OLD) this quarter. The chart below details the results.

SuRG LANGUAGE TRAINING: EXAMINATION RESULTS

Language Class	Total candidates	Passed	Male	Female
Sinhala	239	213	101	112
Tamil	64	56	31	25
Total	**303**	**269**	**132**	**137**

Those officials who passed the Level III examination along with 30 additional local authority staff who had previously qualified for Level II classes began SuRG-sponsored Level II classes in June. One hundred one officials from 10 LAs are enrolled in Tamil language training and 188 officials from 19 LAs are enrolled in Sinhala classes. The 289 officials from 28 LAs taking part in the course include 139 males and 150 females and 101 Sinhalese, 123 Tamils and 65 Muslims.

Prior to the start of the course, SuRG organized a Training of Trainers workshop in collaboration with the OLD for 26 trainers (14 male and 12 female / 8 Tamil teachers and 18 Sinhala teachers).

1.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

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 a grant in Trincomalee under the APS for support to the Trincomalee District Media Society (TDMS) and aspiring women journalists.

In addition, a national partner and IT firm continued to work on the development of an electronic data-based performance management monitoring and evaluation system.

1.4.1 MEDIA

ARD045

SuRG Diploma in Journalism scholarship recipients continued their studies this quarter. All 20 passed their first semester exams. During the second semester, they engaged in practical work and sat for exams at the end of June. Next quarter they will start internships with the following media houses:

- Print - Virakesari,Thinakaran, Thinakural;
- Television - Sirasa, Rupavahini, Shakthi; and
- Radio - Vasantham, Vettri, Sooriyan, Shakthi FM.

The partner noted that while all 20 scholarship recipients received passing grades in English, only six students received a grade higher than 60 for English, with only one student scoring in the 70s.

In order to encourage students to become more engaged, the College took two initiatives: (1) organized events at the College that enabled students to interact with experienced professionals; (2) organized groups of students to attend public lectures around Colombo, allowing them to gain exposure to places and organizations many of the students from the north and east have not been exposed to before.

ARD014

The partner was granted a no-cost extension in April in order to complete remaining project activities with the Trincomalee District Media Society (TDMS) and students of its Diploma in Journalism program.

SuRG staff conducted a training workshop on writing a research report for students of the partner's Diploma in Journalism program this quarter. The workshop was intended to prepare students for their final research project, a requirement of the Diploma program. The training covered identifying an

appropriate research topic; conducting research; and analyzing and writing up findings.

The partner held a graduation ceremony for the Diploma program this quarter at Trincomalee's YMCA Hall. A follow-up training for the graduates will be conducted by Young Asia Television and held early next quarter. Two of the 15 students who did not graduate this quarter are working with PSC to complete their coursework and obtain their Diploma.

During this quarter, the partner also handed over office equipment secured for the TDMS (computer, scanner, fax machine, digital camera and, furniture). The partner had been holding on to the equipment until the TDMS was able to set up its office space. TDMS continues to conduct its monthly meetings for members where they discuss problems encountered in carrying out their responsibilities as journalists. They invite elected and government officials to these meetings in order to highlight and seek solutions to these problems

SuRG

Graduates of a partner's Diploma in Journalism perform at their graduation ceremony in Trincomalee in April 2011.

1.4.2 CIVIL SOCIETY

ARD043 / ARD044

By the start of the quarter, the IT firm had completed its specification document for the national partner's M&E database. The partner had requested significant changes in the specifications based on changes in their grant portfolio as well as organizational changes they are instituting in response to MSI technical assistance. After careful review of the partner's feedback to the final specification document, the IT firm concluded that the system the partner was requesting in light of its project and organizational changes was well beyond what they could produce within the parameters of their current grant. In an effort to not forfeit the investment of money and effort already made, the SuRG COTR agreed to explore options for USAID to directly fund the IT firm to take the project to completion and respond to the wider system requirements of the partner at this time.

The national partner in the meantime completed its results framework for all current projects and began formulating new frameworks for two recently funded programs based on the technical support received under this grant.

2.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The status of the budget realignment request remained the same as reported last quarter. Project activities continued throughout the quarter; however, ARD decided to renew partner and employee contracts on a monthly basis and held off on implementing new activities until a decision was made and a formal response received on the option year funding. The option year funding decision was communicated to ARD at the beginning of the next quarter, at the time this report was being written, so all activities are back on track.

ATTACHMENT I: LOCAL AUTHORITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ASSESSMENT RESULTS BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

LOCAL AUTHORITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ASSESSMENT RESULTS BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

Action Points	Partner LAs											Non-Partner LAs										
	Ampara UC	Ninthavur PS	Alayadiembu PS	Poratheeupattu PS	Manmunai South West PS	Manmunai West PS	Eravur Town PS/ UC	Thambalagamuwa PS	Muthur PS	Seruvila PS	Verugal PS	Dehiyattakandiya PS	Sammanthurai PS	Thirukkovil PS	Manmunai Sourth Eruvilpattu PS	Manmunaipattu PS	Eravur Pattu PS	Koralaippattu West PS	Kanthale PS	Kinniya PS	Town & Gravets PS	Kuchchaveli PS
Preparation of Participatory plan / NELSIP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Operational arrangements for community participation /PGF	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Formation of LA Advisory Committees	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Preparation of project proposals	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Revenue generation projects identified with citizens	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Established partnership with private sector	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Citizen Charter prepared and displayed	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
2010 final accounts submitted	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
2011 budget prepared with citizen participation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Using automated financial package supplied by SuRG	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
PRU Unit established	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
Office layout plan developed and implemented	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
LA structure developed, implemented and displayed	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Number of computers available in LA	5	3	5	5	3	3	5	4	4	4	2	2	4	3	4	18	5	2	6	7	12	6
Regular Council mtgs held	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bi-laws prepared and approved by Council	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Communication system to communicate with stakeholders / citizens established	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1

ATTACHMENT II: SNAPSHOT

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SNAPSHOT

Sharing New Skills and Knowledge: Local Government Official Publishes Book Based on Learning from USAID Training

Book highlights techniques to enhance participatory processes in local authorities

Vasanthi Jeyaraj works as a Community Development Officer in the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Local Government in Trincomalee

"When I was writing the book, I reflected on what I had learned at the trainings and drew upon my own experiences in the field to show others how we could put the ideas into practice. By putting it down on paper and making a book available, I wanted to spread the message to other local authority staff members, the councilors and also the general public so that they know how the local authorities function."

Vasanthi Jeyaraj, Community Development Officer, Trincomalee

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
http://stories.usaid.gov

Vasanthi Jeyaraj joined the Assistant Commissioner for Local Government's (ACLG's) office in the Northern district of Jaffna as a young graduate in 1990. When she and her family were displaced, due to confrontations in the North between government forces and the LTTE, they resettled in Trincomalee – a coastal district in the Eastern Province. Once settled, Vasanthi joined the Trincomalee ACLG office as a Community Development Officer (CDO).

As CDO, Vasanthi is responsible for organizing community meetings and monitoring the activities of registered pre-schools and community libraries, and the maintenance of community centers throughout the district. So when USAID began its training program on participatory governance for local government staff and elected officials from the Eastern Province, Vasanthi was the ideal representative to participate from the District ACLG's office.

The workshops were a real boon to Vasanthi's work. As she explains, "I had received training from other organizations as well. But these trainings in participatory planning, participatory budgeting and participatory governance were more specific to my job and so, were quite useful. Whatever I learned, I could apply in carrying out my responsibilities and making the processes more effective especially when it comes to making sure participatory planning does take place within the local authority systems."

As an active participant in the workshops and always eager to discuss and share her thoughts and experiences, Vasanthi was asked to become a resource person to train others in the Province. She then participated in additional USAID supported training to build a local resource pool of practitioners qualified to train new members of the ACLG office and local authority staff.

Vasanthi was so keen on sharing her experience and new skills she self-published a book, "Guidelines for Capacity Building of Local Authorities" highlighting processes adopted in a local authority, how complaints should be and are handled and how to make the processes more people friendly. The book is now available in community libraries throughout the Trincomalee district and in the ACLG office. Vasanthi explained, "I always liked to write. Previously, I had published an anthology of poems and this time, I thought I would share the knowledge gained and my experiences with others who work in the local government sector." The book is one of very few resources that provide practical information for local authority staff written in Tamil.

Despite the challenges encountered both financially and time-wise in writing and publishing the book, Vasanthi has more in mind. "My next project will focus on the participation of women in the local authorities. Women have immense capabilities but they rarely showcase these. I want women to become more active in LAs and create a stronger voice in their local authorities because what I have learned through my work and the trainings is that once you make up your mind to achieve something, you really can reach that goal."

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