

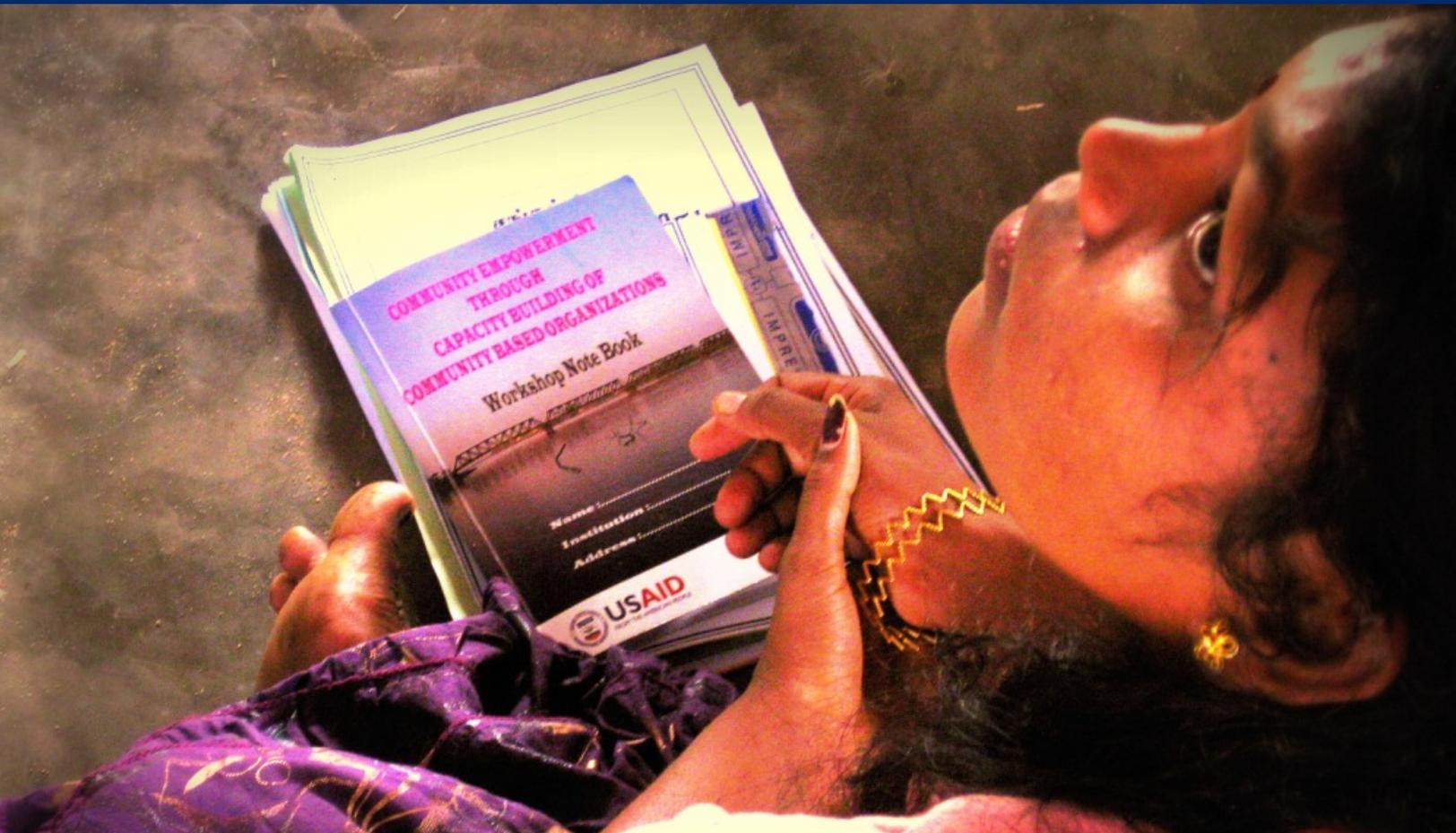


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SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

JANUARY – MARCH 2012 QUARTERLY REPORT



MAY 2012

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Cover Photo: Participant at a Finance and Credit Management Workshop held in Batticaloa for members of a WRDS organized by a SuRG partner's, as part of its SuRG-funded "Community Empowerment Through Capacity Building of Community Based Organizations" project.

Photo courtesy of Tetra Tech ARD/SuRG

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
AG	Attorney General
APS	Annual Program Statement
AU	American University
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Community Development Officer
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy and Governance
DS	Divisional Secretary
ED	Executive Director
EP	Eastern Province
ER	Emergency Regulation
FR	Fundamental Rights
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
GN	<i>Grama Niladhari</i>
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HDCC	Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce
HR	Human Rights
HYBP	Hambantota Youth Business Program
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
KCP	Karuna Center for Peacebuilding
LA	Local Authority
LG	Local Government
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDF	Management for Development Foundation South Asia
MDTI	Management Development Training Institute
MLGPC	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSI	Management Systems International

NEIFR	North East Interfaith Forum for Reconciliation
NELSIP	North East Local Services Improvement Project
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIC	National Identity Card
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NVC	Non-violent Communication
OD	Open Dialogue
ODU	Organizational Development Unit
OLD	Official Languages Department
PC	President's Council
PEC	Project Evaluation Committee
PF	People's Forum
PGF	Participatory Governance Forum
PHI	Public Health Inspector
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PS	<i>Pradeshya Sabha</i>
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
PTF	Presidential Task Force
Q	Quarter
QRM	Quarterly Review Meeting
RDS	Rural Development Society
RIG	Regional Inspector General
Rs.	Rupees
SDS	School Development Society
SE	Social Equity
SL	Sri Lanka
SLCJ	Sri Lanka College of Journalism
SLR	Sri Lankan Rupee
SSRMC	Social Science Research Methods Course
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
S/WGI	Secretary of State Office of Women's Global Issues
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
T.A.	Technical Assistance
ToT	Training of Trainers
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WG	Working Group
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, and open dialogue) with crosscutting activities that reinforce governance improvements around the betterment of human 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 targeted initiatives in the Northern Province.

In December 2010, USAID extended the contract base period from February 2011 to June 2012. A modification to Section C of the contract and the budget was signed in July 2011. The modification to Section C reflects changes in the operating environment in Sri Lanka and USAID programming priorities. It also stipulated that Tetra Tech ARD award grants to the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, the American University, Women in Need and the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce. Option year funds increased the total budget to \$13,920,762 and the contract end date was extended until February 28, 2013.

SuRG's 23 grantees and local subcontractors implemented a wide range of activities across all four program components this quarter. These activities, for the most part, built on or continued work initiated earlier in the program: follow-up grants to eight of the nine organizations in the east and Polonnaruwa which received awards under the first round of SuRG's Annual Program Statement (APS) in 2010 all got underway; the four organizations who received grants in the second round of the APS continued implementation of their activities in the east; and Social Equity (SE) grantees all began work on follow-up grants this quarter. USAID directed grants to the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding and American University, as well as State Department/Women's Global Issues grants to Women in Need and the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce continued implementation of their activities as well. A new grant was awarded that builds on SuRG local government participatory governance activities in the Polonnaruwa and Ampara districts.

Also ongoing this quarter was SuRG capacity building for partners and stakeholders. In addition to SuRG's quarterly and district workshops, two residential training programs—one on general management and one on negotiation skills—were conducted for partner organizations. SuRG also sponsored the participation of six women representing six partner organizations in a gender and development training program held in Madurai, India. The SE team conducted a training for lawyers from the east on legal issues regarding land in a post-war environment and the LG program conducted a training on sustainable processes for members of Participatory Governance Forums (PGF).

Planning was finalized for LG training and technical assistance in the north. Meetings were held with key regional and national officials and a subcontract signed with EML Consultants to implement the program. However, the program cannot get underway until the Presidential Task Force approves the program. Both SuRG and USAID have been advocating for approval with local and national officials. Throughout the quarter, SuRG local governance staff has continued to provide technical assistance and support to our 11 partner local authorities in the east through monitoring of PGFs and working group meetings. Tamil and Sinhala language training is also ongoing in 28 locations in the east.

This report covers the period from January 1– March 31, 2012, and details these activities as well as progress on ongoing contract implementation. Highlights for the quarter include:

- Follow-up grants were awarded to three partners for a total value of SLR 23,259,306.
- A new grant was awarded to strengthen institutional capacity to mitigate corruption and enhance good governance in two PSs. The value of the grant is SLR 3,969,228.
- A partner took on 46 cases on behalf of 33 individuals, securing positive results in six trials on behalf of five individuals.
- Forty-four lawyers from the east (38 male, six female) were trained on law and procedures relating to land disputes in a post-conflict environment.
- SuRG partners were trained in general management and negotiation skills. Fifteen organizations were represented in the former and 16 in the latter by 18 males and 12 females, and 21 males and 12 females, respectively.
- Six women from SuRG partner organizations participated in a study tour on gender and development in Madurai, India. The program was for women’s and human rights activists and NGO workers from Sri Lanka and India.
- Members (37 male, 16 female) of Participatory Governance Forums (PGFs) developed action plans to ensure inclusive membership of their PGFs and PGF operational guidelines at a workshop entitled “Building Sustainable Processes in Local Government Authorities.”
- Two hundred eighty-nine members of 29 local authorities in the Eastern Province completed Part I of Level II Tamil and Sinhala language training in January and continued with Part II of Level II Tamil and Sinhala classes in February.
- Twenty SuRG journalism scholarship recipients (nine male, 11 female) graduated from the Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLCJ) 2011 Journalism Diploma Programme; 15 (nine male, six female) SuRG scholarship recipients started classes in the 2012 Programme.
- One hundred twenty Muslim and 152 Sinhala students began Sinhala and Tamil language classes organized by a SuRG partner in Polonnaruwa.
- Fifteen junior researchers (10 male, five female) initiated a partner-organized Social Science Research Methods course, completing an introductory classroom skills program and starting field research for the development of a paper on priority issues for the Muslim community.
- Twenty-one representatives from Muslim civil society (18 male, three female) participated in a partner training program on advocacy skills, techniques and strategies.
- A partner conducted 19 training sessions on leadership, legal documentation and financial management for 430 members of 12 CBOs (165 male, 265 female) in Batticaloa District.



MSI/SuRG

A Muslim Mowlavi and Christian Priest attend a partner Interfaith Dialogue held at the Sri Murugan Kovil, in Batticaloa District.

- A partner provided legal assistance to 20 persons (12 male, eight female), care packages and family travel for 33 detainees and livelihood training for 35 female heads of households.
- Thirty participants (20 male, 10 female) from the government and NGOs attended a partner's Integrated Studies and Skills Course.
- HDCC disbursed loans valued at SLR 1,206,400 to 13 women entrepreneurs in Hambantota.
- Forty religious leaders (11 Buddhist, 10 Christian, 10 Hindu, and nine Muslim) from Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Padaviya travelled to Galle to meet with religious leaders from the South and learn about their inter-faith initiatives.
- Seventeen Buddhist, 17 Hindu, 18 Christian and 16 Muslim religious leaders participated in inter-faith dialogue workshops conducted by KCP and its local implementing partner.
- KCP project religious leaders initiated 23 community inter-faith projects including language training, awareness-raising and women's livelihood activities.
- A partner provided counseling on legal documentation acquisition to 135 people (41 male, 94 female) at two pre-mobile legal clinics.
- A partner assisted 63 community members (12 male, 51 female) obtain legal documents (28 birth certificates, 35 marriage certificates) in five villages.
- Fifty-six Tamils and 24 Muslims started Sinhala language training conducted by a SuRG partner in Batticaloa District.
- A SuRG partner commenced its six-month human rights diploma course for 40 students (22 male, 18 female).
- A SuRG partner conducted two interfaith dialogue forums in Ampara for 68 Tamil, 23 Muslim, and 65 Buddhist religious leaders and community members.
- A partner provided 93 persons (20 male, 73 female) with legal advice in two mobile legal clinics which were held in two villages in Ampara.
- WIN Centers in Jaffna and Puttalam provided legal aid and counseling services to 224 new clients and 393 repeat visitors.

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

During this quarter, the SuRG SE team supported a host of new grant activities initiated by four partners whose grants came into effect during the final weeks of the last quarter. In addition, two new grants were signed in January and February 2012. Ongoing activities were also periodically monitored and reviewed.

SuRG also conducted a training program for lawyers from the Eastern Province on emerging land issues in a post-conflict environment and a rapid review of human rights education programs held by SE grantees, and initiated activities to provide technical assistance to the Oddamavady GBV Desk in Batticaloa District.

I.1.1 GRANTS

ARD060

The partner was awarded a follow-on grant on 30 January, 2012. The program provides legal assistance, strengthens the partner's coalition for civil society in the Eastern Province and provides nominal non-legal support to families of detainees to visit their loved ones.

During this quarter, a total of 46 cases were taken up by the partner on behalf of 33 individuals, including six women. The total number of cases comprises 30 High Court cases, eight Magistrate's Court cases, six Fundamental Rights applications and two Appeals Court cases. Partner lawyers secured positive results in six trials on behalf of five individuals (five releases and one order for rehabilitation).

Five individuals were indicted including in three Fundamental Rights (FR) cases. Three other cases were closed at the request of the clients. These clients felt they had a good chance of being transferred for rehabilitation and preferred that the partner did not take up sessions at court.

The partner legal coordinator and panel lawyers conducted 10 prison visits this quarter. In addition to providing legal aid, the partner continues to advocate on behalf of the detainees and conducts regular meetings with the Attorney General's (AG) Department and Prison Authorities to address issues raised by prisoners. These visits also allow partner lawyers to interact with detainees and provide them with updates on their situation, explain to them the judicial process and help raise awareness on their rights.

“There are a lot of land issues in this area, so the USAID lawyer’s workshop focusing on land issues was a great asset...Soon after your training there were three cases filed before me. The counsels here used to not have the confidence to file those cases and in the past we had to bring counsel in from Kalmunai or Colombo to handle some of our cases. These [local] lawyers were educated and gained the confidence they needed to handle these cases at the SuRG training. One of the lawyers who attended the training is now taking on one of the 66 cases on my docket.”
MAGISTRATE/ADDITIONAL DISTRICT JUDGE, AMPARA DISTRICT

The partner continues to note that when an FR application is filed for a case that has been filed under the PTA or ER, very rarely does it obtain leave to proceed. The Court often does not consider such a case as arguable, and instead, directly requests the AG's Department to either release or indict the detainee. FR applications can then be filed to either release the detainee or expedite his/her case. In the event a detainee is indicted, the trial usually gets dragged on over a long period of time.

When the legal coordinator met with detainees, a number of the detainees did not want to proceed with legal intervention as they had been led to believe that they would be released soon, or sent for rehabilitation. Most of the time, however, this did not in fact happen. Detainees also continue to be cautious when speaking to lawyers as they are watched closely.

Under its non-legal support component this quarter, the partner provided four families of detainees with small cash grants to visit family members currently being held in detention centers outside their home district. All four families were from the Northern Province and had little or no other financial resources to visit their family members. The four families were reimbursed for actual expenses incurred on travel and food.

ARD061

The partner was awarded its second follow-on grant in December 2011. Following preparatory work conducted last quarter, actual implementation of project activities began in January 2012.

The project encompasses three major components:

1. Human rights education, including a certificate course on human rights and an integrated skills course;
2. Legal assistance; and
3. Non-legal support to families of detainees and psychosocial and socio-economic assistance to female heads of households.

The integrated skills course is comprised of non-violent communication and counseling skills. Out of a total 43 applicants, 30 (including 20 men and 10 women) were selected. Twenty-three of these participants are Tamil while seven of them are Muslim. Participants include NGO staff, government officials such as *Grama Niladharis* and Probation Officers as well as teachers. Resource persons for this program are experts in the fields of psychosocial counseling and non-violent communication, and are drawn from the Professional Psychological and Counseling Center in Batticaloa, as well as Colombo.

The partner also began advertising its Human Rights Certificate Course through mosques, temples, churches and schools and through the distribution of leaflets. The primary targets for this course are youth. The course is scheduled to begin in April 2012 and will follow a similar format as the one conducted by the partner under its previous grant last year.

The partner completed the draft of its awareness pamphlet on workers' rights during this quarter. The pamphlet is ready for printing and will be disseminated early next quarter. The document will shortly afterwards be translated into Sinhala. A booklet bearing the Tamil translation of the Evidence Ordinance was being proofed at the time of writing this report and will also be ready for printing during the next quarter. A booklet entitled "Custody of the Child," printed in Tamil as part of a previous grant, was translated into Sinhala during this quarter and is also currently awaiting printing.

Under the project's legal assistance component, the partner filed 21 cases on behalf of 20 individuals. Eight of these cases were FR cases filed in Colombo by SuRG-funded, Colombo-based lawyers retained by the partner. Other cases were filed in the Trincomalee High Court, District Court as well as the Trincomalee and Muthur Magistrates' Courts. These cases ranged from arrest and detention and land disputes to, maintenance,

divorce and accident compensation. In addition to providing legal counsel and representation, the partner also conducted six prison visits.

The partner also provided 50 families of detainees with care packs comprising essential items such as food and clothing for detainees currently being held in remand prisons and detention centers. Families were also entitled to claim travel and other incidental costs incurred when visiting their loved ones. Each family made three trips during the course of this quarter amounting to a total of 150 visits supported by the partner.

The partner also initiated its support program for female heads of households during this quarter. The partner staff made 20 field visits to a number of remote villages in the district to identify potential beneficiaries for the program. Thirty-eight potential beneficiaries were identified during the course of these visits. All of these women were either war widows or women whose husbands had involuntarily disappeared during the war.

Following these visits, three women's empowerment programs were held for the 38 women identified. The first program was aimed at identifying and addressing the women's psychological needs and building their confidence. The program was carried out by an expert in the area of psychosocial counseling and women's empowerment. The second program was called "self-employment selection and income generation." This program was carried out by a widow herself who was able to share her personal experiences of struggles and identify with the women immediately. During the course of this program the women participants were asked to come up with livelihood and income generation ideas. These ideas were further discussed during the third program on "analyzing business ideas and checking for feasibility." This program was conducted by a freelance livelihood and vocations consultant.



SuRG partner holds a workshop in the Trincomalee district to help female heads of households receiving livelihood support analyze their business ideas.

While all 38 women have benefitted from attending these programs, livelihood support is available only for 30 of these women. Selection is currently underway and will be finalized early next quarter. Additional criteria that will be used to select the final 30 include the unavailability of any other support or assistance from parents or siblings, the number of children/dependents they have, as well as the quality of their business idea.

ARD033

After initial capacity building workshops conducted during the last quarter, the partner selected 48 WRDS members from 24 villages and grouped them into four clusters. Each cluster was to function as a working committee and support the partner's work in assisting resettled people to acquire basic legal documentation. Each of these working committees met twice a month during the last three months (24 meetings in total) with partner staff and supported them in the process of collecting information required to prepare case files. At the end of the three-month period, supporting documents had been collected, and 322 case files had been created.

The partner also worked closely with an INGO this quarter to conduct awareness programs for community leaders and members on the importance of securing vital documents and the processes involved. Two workshops were held targeting community and CBO leaders. Also present at these workshop were GNs and

Samurdhi Officers, together with the working committee members. A total of 45 individuals from 10 villages participated in these two workshops. Representatives of the INGO explained to the participants the importance of personal documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates, as well as the processes that need to be followed to secure them. The Death Registration Temporary Provisions Act of 2011 was also discussed together with its importance in conflict-affected areas.

Fourteen half-day workshops with community members in 14 villages were also carried out during this quarter. A total of 753 individuals participated in these workshops. Partner staff were able to identify 356 cases with regard to the provision of important documents, including birth certificates, marriage and death certificates, and have since been following up with individuals in order to prepare case files.

All 14 workshops focused on explaining the importance of documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates and the processes to obtain them. Other important concepts such as how to transfer title of state land following the death of the title holder, the importance of carefully filling out names in the forms to avoid problems and the potential consequences of lacking important legal documents were also covered during the workshops.

The partner had planned four meetings with government officers in order to plan the mobile clinics; however, only one such meeting was carried out during this quarter as most of the GNs were busy with the 2012 census.

In order to reduce the chances of rejection of applications and ensure a smooth application process, two community preparation programs or “pre-clinics” were also conducted towards the latter part of this quarter. A total of 172 people participated. Several government officials were also present including the Registrar of the District Registrar’s Office, GNs, Justices of Peace as well as officers from the cooperating INGO. One hundred thirty-five (41 men and 94 women) prospective applicants received guidance on the forms that needed to be prepared and the types of supporting documents that would need to be furnished.

ARD055

During the last quarter, the partner began work on its legal assistance component by carrying out a detailed review of case records from Phase I of its program. Seventy-seven cases were identified from records for follow-up during this grant period. Of these, 13 maintenance cases were identified for immediate follow-up; four of these cases are being heard at the Magistrate’s Court and of the nine other cases, four clients received verdicts at the Magistrate’s Court and have begun receiving maintenance, while five cases are currently being heard at the same court. A legal aid provider has provided a lawyer for these cases.

The partner received six new cases for legal assistance during this quarter. The cases include two matrimonial cases; one fraud case; one domestic violence case; and two on asset partitioning. The fraud case was referred to the mediation board, where both parties arrived at a settlement.

During the quarter, the partner also renewed its documentation assistance to those with missing or lost legal documents. Sixty-three community members (12 male, 51 female) received assistance in obtaining 28 birth certificates (18 acquired and 10 in process) and 35 marriage certificates.

Throughout the project the partner will also work with three task forces, each comprised of five community members, to secure a sustainable mechanism for advocating community issues. Task Force 1 will liaise with the Divisional Secretariats; Task Force 2 with the *Pradbeshiya Sabhas* (PSSs); Task Force 3 with Civil Protection Committee members including the Police and *Grama Niladharis* (GNs). The partner conducted a preliminary meeting this quarter to introduce these activities to the local communities and other stakeholders. Members of PSSs, Divisional Secretariats, GNs, RDSs, WRDSs and youth clubs, together with religious leaders were present at the meeting.

Task Force 1 has since had three meetings, during which issues such as the lack of street lights, dumping of garbage and the secondary occupation of the police in a GN's office were discussed. Present at the meeting were officials including the Divisional Secretaries, Rural Development Officers, Social Service Officers, Land Officers and Probation Officers, along with community members. Authorities immediately noted issues raised and took preliminary steps to address them.

Task Force 2 conducted three meetings with relevant *Pradeshhiya Sabhas*. Present at the meeting were the chairmen and members of the respective PSs, members of the Advisory Committee, the Community Development Officer and planning officers, among others. Issues raised included irregular solid waste collection, dumping of garbage and the lack of internal roads. Immediate action was taken against the illegal dumping of garbage and the chairmen and members also pledged that other issues would be added to their priority lists.

Task Force 3 conducted three meetings during this quarter. Issues raised included school dropouts, strangers and miscreants consuming liquor at the local bus stand and damage to crops caused by stray farm animals. In response, the Civil Protection Committee members volunteered to collect details of school dropouts, appointed a police officer to guard the bus stand at night and took steps to fine owners of animals that destroyed crops.

Under its capacity building component, the partner completed two training programs for members of the above task forces as well as other community members on advocacy, gender and the Domestic Violence Act. Members of the task forces also participated in the development of the curriculum for these training programs. A total of 39 individuals participated in these trainings, including 12 men and 27 women (13 Tamils; 26 Muslims).

ARD052

The partner's program is comprised of three components: the human rights diploma course; human rights awareness-raising sessions; and capacity building of WRDSs. Significant progress was made under all three components during this quarter.

The Human Rights Diploma Course was inaugurated on 17 February, 2012. Forty participants (22 men and 18 women, of whom 22 are Muslim and 18 are Tamil) were chosen out of a total of 153 applicants, after a rigorous selection process. Criteria for selection included the nature of the applicant's job, his/her

"I am an *Aalim* (Muslim preacher), so when I deliver my speeches [after the training program] I can give a better idea of Islamic human rights as well as international human rights. Especially in mosques on Fridays, there are chances to give speeches on inter [ethnic or religious] harmony, peace, respect, etc."

MOWLAVI PARTICIPANT, HUMAN RIGHTS DIPLOMA COURSE 2012, AMPARA

involvement in community activities and prior experience liaising with service providers who support victims of rights violations. The 40 students chosen include teachers, government officials (including senior officials such as the Additional Director of Education, and the Divisional Secretary of Kalmunai), NGO staff, a Muslim religious leader, university graduates and a news reporter.

The course consists of 132 hours, to be completed in six months and will include subjects such as the Sri Lankan Legal System, Fundamental Rights, rights of women and rights of children, among other such

topics. This is the second such course conducted by the partner. The partner modified the content of its previous diploma course slightly to reflect mainstream human rights courses offered by institutions such as the University of Colombo with the support of a senior lecturer from the University of Colombo.

Under the awareness-raising component of the project, the partner will conduct 32 sessions on human rights and Fundamental Rights in 16 villages. The overall aim of these sessions is to increase participants' knowledge on human rights and how to protect them as well as understand the remedies available. Partner project staff identified participants for these sessions during this quarter after consultations with *Grama Niladharis*, community leaders and religious leaders. The criteria for selection included a demonstrable interest in social/community activities, a yearning to assist those whose rights had been violated, and work with organizations that provide assistance. A majority of those identified belong to WRDSs, youth clubs, RDSs, fisheries societies and other CBOs or alternatively are religious or community leaders.

During this quarter, the partner was able to conclude 19 sessions in the 11 villages. The sessions focused on Fundamental Rights, women's rights, child rights, remedies available for victims and information on service providers such as the Legal Aid Commission, the Human Rights Commission, NRC, and UNHCR, among others. Open discussions were also part of these sessions and centered on themes as diverse as discriminatory practices of the police, domestic violence, maintenance, school dropouts and obtaining vital documents.

A total of 235 individuals (79 men; 156 women) participated in these awareness sessions (109 Tamils; 126 Muslims.) A substantial number of them, however, participated in up to two sessions, as eight of the 11 villages had two awareness sessions each.

The partner noted a positive development in participation with the presence of higher numbers of men in several of the awareness sessions. This was in sharp contrast to awareness sessions conducted under their previous SuRG grant. Also noteworthy was the participation of the Vice Chairman of a *Pradhesiya Sabha* and a council member of another.

Under its third component, the partner aims to increase the ability of the WRDSs of selected villages to function professionally and advocate on behalf of their communities. To this effect, 10 members from 16 WRDSs in 16 villages were to be selected and paired into groups of two. Each of the eight groups thus formed will have 20 members from two WRDSs of two villages. Each group will be required to participate in four training sessions each.

Project staff visited six villages and discussed the program with the leaders and committee members of WRDSs. Following these visits, three training sessions were conducted on 'leadership skills' and one training session on "management, bookkeeping and finances" in the above pairs of villages. Sixty-one WRDS leaders and committee members participated in these training workshops; 31 were Tamils and 30 Muslims. Twenty members from two villages participated in two workshops.

Although the partner had planned to complete 12 of 32 training sessions this quarter, it was only able to complete the above four. This was because some of the committees of the selected WRDSs had come to the



Tetra Tech ARD/SuRG

A student from a National School gives a speech at the Human Rights Diploma Inauguration Ceremony held in Batticaloa District.

end of their tenure and new committees were being elected, thus delaying the process of securing participation of active members. Identifying good resource persons to provide training has also proven to be difficult particularly due to budget restrictions. Despite these initial challenges, the activity picked up pace towards the end of this quarter, and it is expected that the next quarter will record greater progress in this regard.

Among the implementation challenges faced during this quarter, the chief one was the difficulty smaller NGOs such as the partner face in convincing people to participate in community empowerment activities without financial or other incentives. In order to impress upon the need for more voluntary involvement on the part of community members, staff are required to spend a lot of time building the trust and confidence of the people. Another challenge faced in recent times has been the overall rise in the cost of living in Sri Lanka. Material and transportation costs as well as fees for resource persons have all gone up, making it difficult to undertake all the activities as planned and secure quality resource persons.

ARD053

The partner held two mobile clinics in February and March in two villages. Ninety-three individuals were able to access lawyers and obtain legal advice at these clinics. Sixty-three out of the total 93 issues brought before the lawyers at the clinic involved the lack of birth certificates; 19 involved maintenance. All of these maintenance cases, together with one case involving a dispute over money, were selected for follow-up legal aid. Partner staff also coordinated with relevant Divisional Secretariats with regard to the provision of birth certificates.

Eight out of a total of 19 cases (including land issues and maintenance cases) that were receiving legal aid during Phase I of this project were also successfully completed during this quarter. The partner retains a lawyer who works part-time on cases selected for legal aid. This lawyer also provides legal counsel to clients who come to the partner's office.

The partner organized a workshop on land on March 30, 2012. The workshop was facilitated by a Retired Assistant Land Commissioner for the Eastern Province. Topics included types of land ownership, obtaining state land and verifying the authenticity of land documents, among other areas. Seventeen Muslim women participated in this workshop. Also present were a GN and Samurdhi Officer of the division. During the course of the workshop, some of the participants learned land documents they possessed were fraudulent and were advised to take up the issue with the Land Department in Ampara.

As part of the partner's efforts to ensure the psychological wellbeing of women, they continued their special counseling programs with the support of psychiatrists. Six programs were conducted in six villages of three divisions where mental health and the wellbeing of women who have faced adverse circumstances in their lives were discussed. In total, 40 women (22 Muslim and 18 Tamil) participated; 22 of them have also been attending regular mental health clinics over the last three months at the local Base Hospital.

Eighteen peer support sessions were also held in the above six villages. These sessions were initiated under Phase I of the program, and are now sustained by the community women themselves. A majority of the women who participate in these meetings are beneficiaries of the partner's livelihood and/or psychosocial support programs. The women organize the meetings and share experiences and problems. They also try their best to provide support to each other in times of need. In one such instance, a woman shared her difficulties with regard to childcare when she went in search of work. Her elder daughter was forced to miss school and stay at home to take care of her younger sibling. The other women present at the meeting have since attempted to get her a job at a brick-making workshop within her village so that she no longer has to leave her family and travel so far in search of work.

On International Women's Day, the partner invited women who had previously received or were currently receiving some form of psychosocial support to a gathering to share their experiences and progress. Forty women from all six villages attended this meeting.

Under the partner's previous SuRG grant, 56 women and four men received livelihood support, these individuals, particularly the women, began their income generation activities with little or no technical skills to plan and manage their businesses over a longer term. During this quarter, the partner provided skills training programs for these and other recipients of livelihood support. Four one-day trainings were held and 55 women participated. The trainings were on basic accounting and business management.

“When I was inside my house, I thought I was the only one who had problems. When I came here, it was a big relief to know that I am not alone and that there are others like me.”

WIN CLIENT, JAFFNA

One, two-day training workshop on gender equality and leadership for adolescents was conducted during this quarter. Of a total of 23 young people who participated, 11 were girls and 12 were boys. Another two-day workshop on gender-sensitive leadership and non-violent communication was also conducted during this quarter for youth aged between 18 and 30. Of a total of 20 participants, nine were female and 11 were male.

I.1.2 SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE OF WOMEN'S GLOBAL ISSUES (S/WGI) GRANT

ARD046



Women's group leaders and community members from Chilaw, Puttalam attend an awareness program organized by WIN to discuss women's rights and access to services.

During this quarter, WIN continued to provide legal aid and counseling services to women and children victims of violence in the Jaffna and Puttalam districts. A total of 224 new clients (41 in Jaffna, 183 in Puttalam) and 393 repeat visitors (214 in Jaffna, 179 in Puttalam) received WIN's support. A total of 3,122 clients also accessed WIN's hotline during this quarter.

A total of 147 of the new clients and 213 of the repeat clients accessed WIN's Jaffna and Puttalam crisis centers for psychological counseling and psychosocial support. In Jaffna, the main causes behind the need for counseling of new clients who accessed WIN's services included domestic violence and other marital and family problems as well as

financial problems. In Puttalam, the main reason behind visits from new clients was emotional and psychological abuse (177 clients). This was followed by economic abuse, verbal abuse and social abuse. Approximately 50 percent of the clients had experienced more than one of the above-mentioned forms of abuse.

One hundred eighteen of the new clients and 245 repeat clients accessed WIN's Jaffna and Puttalam Crisis Centers for legal services and court representation. Of those who received legal counseling, 12 maintenance cases (Jaffna four; Puttalam eight) were filed this year and 304 older cases (Jaffna 84; Puttalam 220) filed on behalf of clients during previous quarters were ongoing. One divorce case was also filed in Puttalam whilst two were filed in Jaffna. No new protection orders were filed in either district during this period.

Following a mid-term grant review meeting with USAID and SuRG staff in February 2012, WIN proposed to spend underutilized funds on additional capacity building and awareness-raising activities. As such, seven additional community awareness programs in Puttalam, two staff capacity building programs (one in Jaffna and one in Puttalam) and a residential training program for youth in Puttalam were proposed and approved.

Of these, seven community awareness programs in Puttalam and one capacity building workshop in Jaffna were completed during this reporting period.

Under its capacity building component, a workshop on proposal writing was held for nine WIN Jaffna Centre staff on the 27th and 28th of March. The topic was requested by the staff themselves as they felt it to be an important skill to possess when working within the non-governmental sector. The staff wanted a greater understanding of how to articulate issues that exist within the local communities and formulate ideas for activities to address them. They noted that they are also asked from time to time by the Government Agent to submit concept notes for potential projects in the areas of women's empowerment and prevention of gender-based violence. Furthermore, since WIN works at the grassroots level, staff are often approached by community members, particularly those belonging to community-based organizations such as the Women Rural Development Society (WRDS), for help with small project development in order to secure funding.

A counselor from the WIN Jaffna Center was selected to attend a gender training conducted by EKTA and Sangat in Madurai, India. SuRG sponsored all expenses of her overseas travel as well as the course fee. Two WIN Jaffna Center staff members also participated in the SuRG General Management training workshop conducted in February 2012, and stated it was an extremely useful experience for them (see Section 1.2.3 below for more details on both training programs).

WIN conducted two paralegal training workshops for individuals in selected villages in both Jaffna and Puttalam. A total of 54 individuals (27 men and 27 women) were trained to assist in identifying and addressing cases of gender-based violence. Community leaders often act as first points of contact for a majority of the victims of such cases. While community involvement is a good way to find solutions to many of these issues, these community leaders are not aware of the existing legal framework or processes available for redress. As such, the programs aimed to address the gaps in knowledge of the law in order for community leaders to provide better informed support.

As part of its awareness-raising and outreach programs, a total of 511 individuals (46 men and 465 women) participated in 11 outreach and awareness programs. It is believed that through these awareness programs participants will have a greater understanding of issues, including gender-based violence and domestic violence, as well as some of the steps that can be taken to prevent or address these issues.

Of these programs, in Jaffna, two workshops targeted 27 midwives and 15 GNs, respectively, while 86 women participated in two community programs conducted in Chankanai and Chavakatcheri divisions. The programs in these two areas inspired a section of the women to mobilize into a "mothers group" against violence.

In Puttalam, a total of seven community awareness programs were conducted in villages within the Anamaduwa, Kalpitiya and Chilaw divisions. A majority of the targeted villages were remote and had very little exposure to awareness programs of this nature in the past. A total of 350 women and 33 men participated in these community programs.

Development of the curriculum for family court counselors was delayed as a result of difficulties faced in obtaining approval from the Chief Justice. However, after numerous consultations and negotiations with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), approval was granted in a letter from the MOJ in March 2012. Work is scheduled to begin next quarter.

1.1.3 TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

LAWYERS TRAINING

Between the 2–5 March, 2012, the SE team conducted its second workshop on emerging legal issues on land within a post-conflict environment. Forty-four lawyers from the Eastern Province participated in the workshop held in Kandy. The workshop followed the same lines as the workshop held for northern lawyers

in August 2011, aimed at equipping lawyers with the knowledge and skills to handle land issues considered vital within a post-conflict environment. Participants included lawyers with up to 12 years of experience practicing in the Eastern Province, particularly in the area of Civil Law, and lawyers engaged in the provision of legal aid or pro bono services to non-governmental or community-based organizations within the districts of Ampara, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee.

Nomination and the selection of participants were conducted in close coordination with the district Bar Associations. Although the SE team had sought a list of 35 nominees, enthusiastic calls from individual lawyers led to an increase of the number to 44. This list included 38 male participants and 6 female (Muslim 32; Tamil 12).

Every session was designed to be as interactive as possible and conducted entirely in Tamil; a feature that continues to define SuRG SE trainings and is highly appreciated by participants.

Topics covered were as follows.

- *66 Application under the Primary Court Procedure Act*: breach of peace over land disputes; possessory remedies including steps and procedures within substantial law.
- *Civil Litigation relating to Immovable Property (Private lands)*: Rei Vindicatio action; declaratory action; action for prescriptive title; Paulian action; and appellate jurisdiction in respect to land.
- *State Land Issues*: types of land and property issues in the north; State Land Ordinance; property rights and land for landless; The Bimsaviya Scheme; The Land Acquisition Act and state land recovery.



A lawyer from the Eastern Province makes her case at SuRG's Workshop for Eastern Province Lawyers on land issues held in Kandy.

A number of participants confirmed that the workshop was extremely timely and important to their legal practices. They added that the workshop resource materials, put together by the SE team in collaboration with the resource persons, were well structured and indexed and provided them with valuable case reference material. The resource material included updated lists of case law, numerous state land circulars, policy papers and draft bills.

“First of all, I would like to thank USAID/SuRG because I have seen a lot of changes and improvements in the junior lawyers’ ability to file civil cases and make submissions in the District Court....I also received a copy of the workshop material for our Trinco Bar Association Library; I find it very useful for a lawyer’s daily court work and references. These are going to be long-lived useful materials indeed.

**PRESIDENT, LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
TRINCOMALEE**

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION REVIEW

The SE team carried out a rapid review of the human rights courses conducted by partners in Trincomalee and Ampara during previous years. The objective of the review was to evaluate the practical utility of the courses for participants and whether courses of this nature serve to promote increased understanding, discussion and protection of human rights at a broader level.

Findings show a high degree of satisfaction amongst the students of the courses, both in Trincomalee and Ampara. A number of participants have utilized the education they received to directly assist in addressing rights violations within their villages and/or promote greater awareness on specific issues such as gender-based violence and women's and children's rights.

Findings also highlight the importance of raising awareness on human rights, as a majority remain unaware of their rights. Nonetheless, it was pointed out that there is now also a need to understand human rights from a broader view point and move beyond targeting only the more gross or war-related human rights violations. Many of those interviewed felt that this broader understanding of rights is vital to be able to secure equitable development within a post-war environment. The SE team is finalizing the findings of the review for appropriate dissemination early next quarter.



SuRG Partner

Buddhist Nuns and Monks participate in a Beginners Forum on “Reading the Contemporary State and its Organization Through the Lens of Contemporary Social Science Theories” held in Polonnaruwa District.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE – ODDAMAVADY GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) DESK

During the quarter, SuRG staff held extensive talks with officials of the GBV desk in Oddamavady, Batticaloa to explore the need and viability of SuRG-supported technical support for the Desk. After several meetings, it was decided that SuRG would assist in the design of a long-term strategy for the sustenance of the Oddamavady GBV Desk. TORs were developed for the intervention and two consultants identified. Technical support and collaborative design of the plan is scheduled to begin early next quarter.

1.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The CEaT team continued to support and monitor ongoing grantees. In addition, they organized and delivered training programs for partners on topics—negotiation skills and general management—chosen based on the results of an informal SuRG survey of partners to determine priority training needs. These residential programs were open to two to three representatives of each SuRG active grantee. SuRG also sponsored the participation of representatives from six grantees in a gender and development training program for Sri Lankan and Indian women held in Madurai, India.

During the quarter, the CEaT team also held three Quarterly Review Meetings (QRM). The first was held in January in Trincomalee for 18 representatives of five Trincomalee-based partners. The session provided opportunities for partners to present their work and share best practices and lessons learned and extend their network. The session also included time for partners to review M&E and financial recordkeeping practices.

SuRG local governance (LG) staff presented the project's LG model to engage partners and CBOs in Participatory Governance Forums (PGFs).

A second QRM for partners from Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa was held in the latter part of the quarter in Trincomalee. The third was held in Ampara for partners from Ampara and Batticaloa. Twenty-five participants from eight partners attended the second Trincomalee meeting and 16 participants from six partners attended the Ampara session. The sessions provided the same opportunities as described in the first session with special topic presentations focusing on communications, branding and snapshots from SuRG's Communications Officer and on lessons learned from participants in the India study tour on development and gender.

I.2.1 GRANTS

ARD057

The partner initiated several activities this quarter with Peace Committees and Youth Groups in 15 selected multi-ethnic villages in Trincomalee District under its "Strengthening Peaceful Co-Existence through Multi-Ethnic Community Participation" project.

First, an orientation meeting was held in January to explain and discuss project objectives and planned interventions. The meeting was attended by *Pradeshiya Sabha* members, religious leaders, Peace Committee Presidents and Youth Group Presidents from the 15 project villages. A total of 72 people (58 male, 14 female) attended the meeting including 34 Sinhalese, 30 Tamils, and 8 Muslims.

The partner also facilitated 40 monthly meetings where youth continued to discuss priority issues and how to take action to address them. Issues raised included the removal of large amounts of garbage in the communities, school dropouts and domestic violence. A total of 225 youth (164 male, 61 female) participated in these meetings including 75 Muslims, 81 Sinhalese and 69 Tamils. Some of the youth group activity highlights from the quarter include:

- During the National Dengue Prevention Week (January 16-22), youth groups conducted *shramadanas* in several areas to minimize the spread of dengue, including one village where 63 people cleaned up a playground; one village where 45 people cleaned a public drain next to school premises; and one village where a public garbage heap was cleaned by approximately 40 people. With the support of villagers and youth group members, the one youth group also conducted awareness-raising sessions related to dengue prevention at the Mosque.
- The *Pradesha Sabha* had planned to shift the weekly public market from one area to another. The youth group took action to prevent the change from happening due to its importance to the people from the area where the market is currently held. The matter was discussed during the monthly meetings and signatures from villagers were collected and later submitted to the *Pradeshiya Sabha* in the form of a petition. The PS later confirmed that the market will continue to function at its usual location.
- During these meetings most of the youth groups requested a sports festival and sporting equipment. The partner plans to conduct a sports festival next quarter and will pursue alternative sources of funding for the requested sporting equipment.

This quarter the partner also conducted 39 Peace Committee monthly meetings. A total of 134 people (109 male, 25 female) attended these meetings including 47 Muslims, 51 Sinhalese and 36 Tamils. The following issues were identified during the meetings which require follow-up from Peace Committee members:

- Identification of child labor practices. Children were found working in masonry, agriculture, stone mining and other forms of day labor.

- Major problems related to garbage build-up. Sweepers from the area had been absent resulting in an unbearable stench and a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The Peace Committee responded by organizing a *shramadana* to clean up the garbage with the support of the youth group.
- The library needed to be moved from a small room in a private house. A letter was sent to the *Pradeshiya Sabha* Chairman requesting it be moved to a new building.
- Conflict dating back to the 1980s between Sinhala and Muslim community members over disputed land was addressed by Peace Committee members. The issues remain outstanding, but plans to engage with various Peace Committees from the area were discussed.

In February, the partner conducted two street drama workshops for 27 youth (14 male, 13 female) including 12 Tamils, 11 Sinhalese and four Muslims. During the workshop the participants learned the basics of street dramas including improvisation script work and acting techniques through a range of genres and performance styles.

The partner also held a two-day workshop on women and child rights for selected members of youth groups and Peace Committees. The purpose of the workshop was to orient participants on women and child rights and to build the capacity of young people to spread awareness to other villages on these issues. The workshop focused on individual responsibility for protecting and promoting human rights as well as youth engagement in the prevention and resolution of community conflicts using peaceful and non-violent means. A total of 42 people (26 male, 16 female) participated in the workshop including 19 Tamils, 11 Sinhalese and 12 Muslims.



SuRG Partner

Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim youth join together in a group improvisation activity held at a Street Drama Workshop organized by a SuRG partner in Trincomalee District.

Peace Committee Takes Action Against Child Labor

The children of a village located in the Trincomalee District are increasingly found working in industries such as masonry, agriculture and stone mining instead of going to school. It is a problem of great concern to the local community. So the Peace Committee, formed by a SuRG partner to address social concerns, made it a priority issue. And it paid off for one 14 year old boy who, with his parent's encouragement, had dropped out of school to work as a daily wage laborer in the paddy fields.

The Peace Committee spoke with the boy's parents, explaining about the child's rights and the benefits of keeping him in school. They also made it clear that, as child labor is illegal in Sri Lanka, the police could get involved. The Peace Committee also approached the school principal to get him to encourage the boy to return to school. The boy returned to school and the Peace Committee continues to monitor the situation to see that he does not drop out again.

ARD047

American University (AU)-Peace and Development Institute (PDI) continued to implement its technical assistance and capacity building project.

AU's local implementing partner drafted a concept note for a proposed project entitled, "Contribute towards Ensuring the Right to Vote for IDPs who have been Living in Puttalam for Over Two Decades" and submitted it to the British Commission for a Commonwealth Grant. Unfortunately, the proposal was not selected for funding. A full proposal and fundraising strategy for the partner, which was expected to be completed last quarter, is still being developed. It will be completed next quarter.

The Social Science Research Methods Course (SSRMC) is training aspiring young researchers to produce papers that the local partner can use to raise awareness on vital issues affecting the Muslim community. AU-PDI, the partner and two senior sociologists together developed the course plan and syllabus, identified desired qualifications for participants and facilitators, and designed the implementation and monitoring plan for the course.

The SSRMC is a six-month course that includes six days of classroom introductory and compulsory training in research methodology followed by the development of a research paper based on valid and reliable data and analysis. Each researcher in the course will conduct field research and write a paper. Guidance in conducting research and writing up findings will be provided throughout the six months of the program.

Fifteen junior researchers (10 male; 5 female) were selected to participate in the SSRMC. Each has a minimum academic qualification of a Bachelor's Degree. They hail from the Ampara, Batticaloa, Colombo, Hambantota, Mannar, Puttalam, Ratnapura and Trincomalee districts.

Classroom training for the junior researchers was held January 19-22 in Colombo. The training sessions were conducted by senior lecturers and professors from the University of Colombo. Topics covered included theory and research process, an introduction to social science research, literature review and secondary data collection methods, quantitative research methodology (sampling, surveying, questionnaires, etc.), qualitative research methodology (case studies, focus groups, participation observation, recording, etc.) and how to develop a research proposal (guidelines, techniques, references, and citations). Participants divided into research teams and selected their research topics under four major themes—education, tsunami recovery, urban poverty, and gender. Each team was assigned a Research Supervisor (an instructor or resource person from the course). Each supervisor has two groups (three to four members) under her/his supervision. The supervisor may also co-author a research paper s/he supervises.

Social Science Research Methods Course: Research Papers Underway

Research Theme	Topic
Education	The impact of mothers' migration on girl children's education in Siraj Nagar GN division in Trincomalee
	Consequences of social trend in transforming to English medium education in last five years
Tsunami Recovery	The impact of post-tsunami livelihood recovery activities on tsunami victims - Sainthamaruthu DS
Urban Poverty	Impact of slum settlement on primary education – slum children and primary education
	Present socioeconomic conditions of Muslims evicted from Slaves Island, Colombo
Gender	Impact of the mosque massacre on woman-headed families in Kattankudy .01
	Marriage and divorce practices in Mawanella
	Impact of dowry on lower middle class families' socioeconomic condition (Kattankudy 03 GN Division)

After the training, the researchers were given two weeks to conduct an in-depth review of literature related to their research topic, meet with their research supervisors and submit their final research proposals. Researchers are currently in the field conducting research. Research supervisors maintain close communication with their research teams to ensure quality control and to provide feedback and support during the research process. A Board Member and Senior Research Associate at the implementing partner is overseeing the supervisors and the entire course.

In February, AU-PDI and the partner organized a five-day training in Colombo entitled, “Capacity Building on Rights and Advocacy.” The lead facilitator’s background includes work on numerous advocacy campaigns; she is the author of various publications on rights and advocacy as well. AU-PDI and the partner staff worked with her to develop the training curriculum. The objectives of the workshop were to enhance skills to advocate at the community and national levels, to critically analyze existing strategies and their strengths and weaknesses, and to develop key competencies for strategic advocacy skills. The workshop was also intended to bring together Muslim civil society organizations and nurture and build partnerships.

By the end of the workshop, a designated group of knowledge and skills experts (a resource pool) was identified at the national and regional levels to further develop partner stakeholder advocacy capacity. Action plans were also developed by the participants in the workshop for national and regional-level activities on coalition building and developing strategic alliances with various partners and civil society groups.

Twenty-one participants (18 male; three female) attended the workshop. They included activists, journalists, researchers, government officers and teachers as well as representatives of NGOs, and members of Mosque Federations and Jamiyyathul Ulama.

Participants initially identified over 25 pressing issues facing the Muslim community. Advocacy campaign plans were developed for each of these issues to be implemented by participants in collaboration with the partner.

Partner staff will monitor the progress and implementation of these advocacy campaign plans. In addition, the partner will reconvene with participants in June to work on developing a simple and accessible advocacy handbook for the partner to distribute.

The partner is currently led by an Acting Executive Director (ED). Informal recruitment for a permanent ED has been ongoing since the start of the project. This quarter the position was advertised in the *Sunday Times* and on various list serves. Five candidates were interviewed and only one was deemed viable. However, he is not available until June. The Acting ED will continue until he is able to join the team.

ARD034

The partner continued implementation of its “Community Empowerment through CBO Capacity Building” project in seven GN divisions in Batticaloa District.

During this reporting period, they conducted 19 two-day workshops for CBO members in 11 villages. Forty-nine participants (19 males, 30 females) attended two leadership training programs; 133 people (47 male; 86 female) attended six legal documentation workshops and 248 people (99 male; 149 female) attended 11 financial management sessions. The legal documentation workshops were facilitated by INGO staff as part of an ongoing collaboration. Following the workshops, the partner worked with participants to collect information on those persons who need legal assistance in their communities. The partner identified 81 cases. Mobile legal clinics will be organized next quarter in those villages to take up those 81 cases.

Financial management workshops provided CBO members with tools and skills to maintain receipt books, voucher books, cash books, general registers, saving registers and loan registers in their organizations.

The partner also initiated information collection for its Service Providers' Directory that will detail contact information of social service providers (NGOs, INGOs, government institutions, etc.) throughout the DS Division. A data collection form was developed and distributed to service providers through email and in person. The Service Providers' Directory will be compiled, published and distributed next quarter.



Members of a WRDS attend a SuRG partner's Finance and Credit Management Workshop held in Batticaloa District.

ARD059

The partner launched its, "Community Empowerment and Mobilization for Muslim and Sinhalese Communities Co-Existence Project" with orientation sessions for 349 community members in each of its seven targeted GN divisions. During the meetings, the partner discussed project objectives, activities, outcomes, budget allocations for their respective activities, how to further strengthen the relationship between Sinhala and Muslim communities, and how to engage communities and obtain their support during project implementation.



Eight Children's Clubs in the Polonnaruwa District receive sports equipment at a distribution event organized by a SuRG partner.

Monthly meetings were held in all seven villages where participants discussed project initiatives, future plans, coordination of activities, and upcoming partner activities related to support for children's clubs. In this component, the partner will be facilitating monthly meetings of divisional and village-level children's clubs, supporting children's camps, providing training activities, and fundraising events for the clubs and their sports festivals. The partner committed to the formation of seven children's clubs in targeted villages, but due to a request made by community members for an additional children's club, the partner formed eight altogether. They organized orientation meetings in seven of the eight villages with children from the respective villages. Two hundred seventy-two children participated in these meetings, including 152 Sinhala and 120 Muslim children. During the

meetings, children nominated office bearers including presidents, secretaries and treasurers. Orientation will be held in the eighth village next quarter.

Two monthly meetings were then held with each of the seven clubs. The partner and participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of office bearers and individual members; how to coordinate future activities; how to motivate volunteers to organize project activities; how to improve the relationships between clubs; and how to nominate representatives for the divisional children's club and highlight how it should function as a larger network to coordinate children's club activities.

The partner also initiated a children's savings program by depositing 100 SLRs at the partner's office under the name of each member of the children's clubs to encourage individual savings of the children. Although

not funded as part of the SuRG grant, activities funded by SuRG are complementary to this savings program as well as the partner's ongoing savings and loan programs and assist in ensuring sustainable operations.

This quarter, the partner also organized a Divisional Committee meeting in their office in which 21 representatives from their seven project village committees participated. Topics included project initiatives; completed activities from the first grant to the partner (phase 1); lessons learned; challenges faced during implementation; how to overcome those challenges; and how to further strengthen the network with enhanced interaction between committees and within the community.

The partner started five language classes for Sinhala and Muslim students during this quarter. One hundred twenty Muslims are participating in three Sinhala language classes and 152 Sinhala students are attending two Tamil language classes this quarter.

ARD048

The Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (KCP) continued implementation of the "Inter-religious Cooperation for Community Development and Social Empowerment in Trincomalee and Batticaloa Districts, and Padaviya Division." During the quarter, KCP launched 23 of its planned 47 community projects. Two inter-faith dialogue workshops were conducted as well as an exposure visit to Galle. KCP also held a knowledge sharing/midterm review with a representative group of 24 of the 80 project religious leaders.

Inter-faith Dialogue Workshops

Two, two and a half-day inter-faith dialogue workshops were held for all faith groups, jointly led by facilitators from KCP and their local implementing partner. The objectives of this first round of inter-faith



A Hindu Kurukkal and a member of a Hindu Temple Committee in discussion at an interfaith dialogue.

Building Bridges Among Religious Leaders

After completing training sessions with their own faith groups and an inter-faith dialogue workshop, the 80 religious leaders working with KCP and its implementing partner are engaging their communities and each other in development projects and awareness raising sessions. Interest and trust among project participants from different faith groups is such that religious leaders are attending the inaugurations of each other's community projects and visiting the community centers where other religious leaders' projects are taking place. During one dialogue workshop, Muslims leaders participating in the project joined Hindu leaders for a special meal from their temple.

And, the religious leaders are also taking the initiative themselves to reach out beyond the project to communities and other faith groups. For example, a Hindu priest in Trincomalee invited leaders of other faith groups to his community's Thai Pongal festival in January and Buddhist monks in Padaviya participated in two Christmas festivals.

dialogue workshops were to develop empathy and mutual understanding on the impact of the conflict for each group; raise current and future concerns; build trust and discover common ground as peace builders; and develop dialogue facilitation skills to prepare the religious leaders to run inter-faith and inter-communal dialogues in their respective communities. At the start of the workshop participants conducted a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis of their community projects. Through this exercise, participants learned to rely on each other as resources for addressing context-specific challenges. They noted that the community projects are indeed benefiting communities helping rebuild trust diminished by war, and helping the religious leaders themselves to develop relationships across ethnic and religious

“Sinhalese and Tamils were living together side by side. Our politicians manipulated us and got us attacking each other’s throats. We need to go back to the days when we enjoyed peaceful co-existence. This project is an opportunity for us to come together and understand each other.”

HINDU PRIEST, PARTICIPANT KCP PROJECT

divides. They noted busy schedules, geographic separation, and making sure every project has a strong inter-faith/inter-ethnic aspect as among their biggest implementation challenges.

The workshop proceeded to skills building on dialogue and listening and speaking to promote honest and constructive dialogue. Through a series of exercises, members of each group spoke openly and personally of the impact of the war, losing loved ones, witnessing atrocities, being falsely accused of

conspiring with one side or another, of displacement, losing land, fear for their lives, as well as current concerns about ongoing discrimination. Many reported afterwards that it was the first time that they had spoken to members of another ethnic group about the war or realized the extent to which all groups had suffered.

Participants practiced facilitating their own dialogues in inter-faith teams of two on subjects of their choosing that they deemed pertinent to current tensions. Subjects chosen included building a society that respects everyone’s human rights and what it means to create an “inclusive” Sri Lankan culture. The dialogues were followed by discussion on how and where to integrate the use of dialogue into community projects.

Knowledge Sharing / Mid-term Review

A knowledge sharing/mid-term review meeting was held with KCP, the implementing partner’s project staff and 24 religious leaders to review the project’s objectives, lessons learned from activities undertaken to date, and any amendments to planned activities which were needed to achieve the program’s objectives. Participants worked in district groups to create pictorial timelines of the project, depicting challenges and successes to date, desired outcomes, and anticipated challenges.

Community Development and Social Empowerment Projects

During the reporting period 23 of the 47 planned community projects were started (see chart below). Highlights from the projects include:

Language Classes:

Sixteen language class projects for 844 students (348 male, 496 female) which will be monitored by inter-faith committees were initiated by religious leaders in their respective communities. Two hundred ninety-three students will learn Tamil; 356 will learn Sinhala; and 195 will learn English. Participants include children (aged 10-18), university students and adults. As part of the classes, project religious leaders will speak about different faith traditions. Also planned are conversational practice between language groups as the students progress and a two-day language camp to bring students together from different language classes, to get to know students from other ethnic and religious backgrounds and to develop mutual understanding and trust.

Awareness Programs

One of the Batticaloa inter-religious committees is conducting divisional-level awareness programs on inter-faith peace building and conflict management as their inter-faith community project. They held two programs in two divisions during the reporting period. One hundred sixteen participants attended, including community leaders, religious leaders who are not members of the program, government officials, and youth. The programs were jointly facilitated by the religious leaders with support from an outside facilitator who conducted sessions on managing conflicts in daily life. Members of the broader group of religious leaders were invited to speak on each faith’s teachings on peace.

Women's Livelihoods Projects

Three women's livelihoods projects have been launched that engage mixed faith groups, including a sewing and handicraft training program and mushroom production program in Padaviya District, and a palmyra training program in Batticaloa District. The palmyra program is supported by the director of the Palmyra Board in the Eastern Province, who plans to continue the project after this program ends. The training is being held at the Rural Development Society building in a community badly affected by the war where Hindu, Islamic, and Christian families live in close proximity. One of the project religious leaders chose this community for the project because of his concern about potential violence in the community.

KCP Community Development Projects Initiated January – March 2012

Project Title	Target Groups
BATTICALOA DISTRICT	
English language classes for 120 youth from 3 divisions – 6-month course	50 Muslim, 40 Hindu, 20 Christian, 10 Buddhist youth
Awareness programs on religious teachings on peace and cultural understanding - 10-day program	100 Hindu, 100 Christian, 100 Muslim for the Awareness program, 700 participants for cultural program
Inter-faith sports festival for youth – 1-day program	100 Hindu, 100 Muslim, 130 Christian, 30 Buddhist
English and Sinhala language classes for 60 youth – 6-month course	20 Hindu, 10 Buddhist, 20 Christian, 10 Muslim
Palmyra training for women – 6-month course	10 Muslim, 5 Hindu, 5 Christian
PADAVIYA DIVISION	
English language classes for 120 youth from 3 divisions – 6-month course	50 Muslim, 40 Hindu, 20 Christian, 10 Buddhist youth
<i>Shramadana</i> in 3 mosques and 2 temples	120 Muslim, 80 Buddhist
Language classes (Tamil and English) – 6-month course	35 Buddhist, 15 Christian
Sewing and handicrafts training for women	20 Buddhist, 5 Christian
Language classes (Tamil and English) – 6-month course	25 Buddhist, 25 Christian
Computer classes	40 Buddhist, 5 Tamil, 5 Muslim
Computer classes	45 Buddhist, 5 Christian
TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT	
Sinhala language classes for religious leaders – 6-month course	10 Hindu, 20 Muslim
Tamil language classes for Sinhala youth – 6-month course	10 Christian, 20 Buddhist
Sinhala language classes – 6-month course	10 Tamil, 20 Muslim
Sinhala language classes – 6-month course	15 Tamil, 15 Muslim
Sinhala language classes – 6-month course	23 Tamil, 7 Muslim
Sinhala language classes for religious leaders and youth – 6-month course	40 Muslim, 20 Tamil

Project Title	Target Groups
Tamil language classes for youth – 6-month course	10 Christian , 20 Buddhist
Tamil language classes– 6-month course	20 Buddhist, 10 Christian
Sinhala language classes – 6-month course	20 Hindu, 10 Muslim
Sinhala language classes– 6-month course	30 Hindu, 30 Muslim
Tamil/Sinhala language classes for youth– 6-month course	20 Buddhist, 10 Christian, 15 Muslim, 15 Hindu

Exposure Visit

Forty religious leaders including 11 Buddhists, 10 Christians, 10 Hindus and 9 Muslims from the east participated in an exposure visit to Galle. Sixteen religious leaders from the Galle District Inter-faith Peace Foundation and the partner’s Galle Inter-faith Peace Council hosted the delegation and presented the history of inter-faith collaboration and action in Galle.

The religious leaders from the east learned about how the Galle leaders have worked over the years to address communal tensions. Participants in the exchange were inspired by the experiences and lessons learned of their hosts and expressed interest in working to strengthen the interfaith committees in their districts and, in Batticaloa, to document examples from their own communities of inter-faith cooperation during the war. KCP project religious leaders will host a delegation from Galle in the east next quarter to showcase their activities.

Inter-religious committee meetings

Inter-religious committees, formed on a regional basis within districts, provide an important space for religious leaders to come together to develop their ideas for community projects, plan inaugural events, and discuss progress. There are three such committees in Padaviya, three in Batticaloa, and four are being formed in Trincomalee. In Padaviya, the three committees held a district-wide meeting and plan to have more. One of the Batticaloa inter-faith committees has decided to register as a CBO to create awareness for peace, social cohesion, conflict management, and gender awareness. The group feels they are more likely to be able to influence local officials, politicians and community members as a formal group.

Inter-faith calendars

Partner staff, with input from project religious leaders, developed, printed and disseminated 4,000 inter-faith calendars. The calendar has short descriptions of each faith’s major holy days and festivals held in Sri Lanka, along with quotes from influential religious leaders from each tradition. A separate calendar was printed without pictures of people or animals to respect Islamic religious practices.

ARD056

The partner initiated activities for their grant entitled, “Strengthening Community Co-existence through Social Mobilization of Women’s and Youth Groups” in 13 villages in Trincomalee District this quarter. As is common practice, once the grant agreement was signed, the partner requested approval from the DS to implement project activities. Since they had received approval for similar activities under their previous SuRG grant, they moved forward with implementation while approval was being processed. The DS indicated verbally to the partner that he was okay with the project but they would have to get the GA to sign off before

receiving official approval.¹ In March, the partner was told by the Additional GA that they should use the funding for livelihood activities rather than planned activities. The partner has since slowed activities and is still in negotiation with the GA's office regarding final approval of the program.

Before suspending its activities, the partner held 24 Youth Group meetings in 13 villages attended by 201 people including 161 males and 40 females. The purpose of these discussions was to help participants identify critical issues in the communities, and gain the techniques and confidence needed to advocate with a unified voice on their own behalf. Issues raised in Youth Group meetings included:

- There is a general feeling among youth that they are being used as political pawns by local politicians. They worry that this ongoing political exploitation of youth groups will drive a wedge between the youth of the area and fuel conflict in the community.
- Child labor, especially in the fishing, agriculture, diving and construction industries, is a common problem in the DS Division. This not only affects children's education but their attitudes and social behavior as youth languishing out of school and without jobs has caused an increase in the use of alcohol, pornography and domestic violence.
- The rise in tourism and related construction has raised concerns about the demise of traditional culture and values.

Youth Groups Unite to Ensure Proper Monitoring and Performance of School

Two Youth Groups joined together at a meeting with 38 youth (33 male, five female – all Muslim) to address issues relating to the performance of students and faculty at a School in the Trincomalee District. The principal and teachers were regularly late or absent from the school while required to be on duty. The students' education was suffering and many, who were travelling from distant and remote areas, were frustrated. Parents were generally unaware of the problem and, as such, had not looked into the issue.

The Youth Groups organized an awareness session for parents, village leaders, former students and others. Youth Group members along with Peace Committee members in the area and parents then spoke with the school principal about the sub-standard performance of the school and requested that he reinforce the responsibilities of the School Development Society (SDS) by changing members of its administrative committee responsible for monitoring the school's performance. As a result of their efforts, the Zonal Education Office, which is also responsible for monitoring the school's performance and had raised related questions to the local authorities, intervened and elected new SDS members including one member from the Zonal Education Office, four teachers, four parents, and three former students.

Twenty-six monthly meetings were held by Women's Groups in 13 villages (one group per village) to identify community issues and work together to find solutions. The issues raised at the meetings will be addressed at the Network Meeting which will be scheduled once the partner receives DS approval. Issues raised include:

- After students complete their Ordinary Level schooling, there are no opportunities for further schooling (Advanced Level, computer training or other vocational programs) so youth are taking daily wage jobs in fishing or farming when they can or acquiring bad social habits, including alcohol use or loitering at the local junction.
- Migrant domestic workers in the Middle East are being harassed while abroad, and leaving behind problems of alcohol and domestic violence among their family members.

¹ The DS also received a request from the military stationed in Trincomalee at around the same time for details on all USAID and UN activities carried out in the DS since 2009.

- A public market can no longer operate after an ancient Buddhist statue was found on the premises and the Archeological Department declared the site an ancient habitation site. In late 2010, a Buddhist monk claimed he had a deed from the 1950s proving the same site was sacred. The Muslim community was able to prove this “evidence” to be inadequate. The more recent declaration of the site as sacred has the Muslim community worried they will be forced out.
- Elsewhere in the division, the government announced that 3,000 acres of land was sacred Buddhist land in an area where most of the paddy fields belong to Muslim and Tamil families. Fears of forced eviction are on the rise.

ARD036

The partner resumed implementation of its project after Tetra Tech ARD temporarily suspended activities late last quarter due to administrative and financial management problems. As required by SuRG, the partner hired a new Program Manager and Finance Officer, tightened its financial procedures and controls, and revised their work plan to ensure that program activities would be completed within the grant’s timeframe. SuRG then lifted the suspension and the partner continued project implementation in early February.

“We didn’t know how to talk before an organization like a Pradeshiya Sabha before. We learned how to do that here [at the training] and that if we go together as a group we will be more successful. Talking with government officials is now something we’re confident enough to do. If the whole village unites, we will have a better effect than if one person goes to request something.”

PRESIDENT, WRDS

The partner conducted two one-day orientation and needs assessment sessions in early February with CBOs. Ten members from each CBO were invited to the sessions and a total of 80 persons (38 Tamil and 42 Sinhala) attended. The aim of these sessions was to assess each CBO’s status and needs, and then develop a training curriculum for project CBOs.

Orientation sessions introduced project activities and objectives, while the needs assessments focused on items such as registration status of CBOs, CBO objectives, strategic plans and organizational structures, membership status and related fees, support services provided to communities, financial management practices, regularity of meetings, ability to mobilize support from different sectors of the community including the private sector, civil society, government and the public at large, and collaboration with other organizations and groups. The sessions also covered issues related to how to address women’s needs and identify and prioritize community needs.

The partner also worked with CBO members to ensure they are active and to replace any non-active members; they provided training, held a volleyball skills camp, delivered volleyball equipment to five youth groups and implemented Tamil and Sinhala language classes.

In March, the partner reorganized nine CBOs including five youth groups and four WRDSs where they intended to identify the CBOs’ legal status with the local government, oversee their registration with the DS if needed, assist the CBOs to fill vacant key positions such as Secretary and Treasurer, and schedule dates for monthly meetings. After working with the CBOs, each had drafted regular meeting plans and developed plans to conduct one social service activity per month.

Once the CBOs were reorganized, the partner organized a *shramadana* with the support of WRDS members. The partner is planning to renovate a health clinic that was badly affected during the war using funds from private donors. The *shramadana* was organized as an initial step in renovating the clinic and utilized the voluntary support of community members to launch this process as they cleaned the property and surrounding environment in preparation for further work. The partner and the relevant CBO are still in discussions with local stakeholders to obtain donations for the project.

In mid-March, the partner also conducted a training program on roles and responsibilities for CBOs and how they engage in community development. Thirty-one CBO committee members participated, including eight Tamils and 23 Sinhalese. The training curriculum was developed based on the findings from the CBO needs assessment session conducted in February.

Also in March, the partner organized a two-day volleyball skills camp for selected youth from the five project youth groups. With the support of a Youth Service Officer and Sport Officer, the youth were selected based on their abilities as volleyball players. The camp had a total of 76 participants (42 Tamil and 34 Sinhala). This was the first time in decades that Sinhala and Tamil community youth came together in this type of sporting event in the area. Following the skills camp, the partner distributed volleyball equipment (balls, nets and net posts) to each of the five youth groups allowing them to practice regularly and encouraging the villages to interact with each other.

The partner began its six-month Sinhala and Tamil language classes in February for young people between the ages of 11 and 30 years. Thirty-four people are currently attending three Tamil courses and 50 people are attending three Sinhala courses. This quarter, 21 of a total 96 class hours have been conducted.



WRDS members participate in a *shramadana* organized to renovate a Health Clinical Center, in Trincomalee District that was badly damaged during the war.

ARD058

During the previous quarter, the partner initiated its project entitled, “Engaging People’s Forums (PFs) and Local Authorities to Empower Communities” in the Polonnaruwa District. The project aims to enhance participatory local governance in 28 *Grama Niladaris* (GNs) in the DS Division.

During this reporting period, the partner started work with 15 of the planned 18 new PFs as well as with the 10 PFs from its previous Phase 1 grant. Key activities during this quarter included project orientation meetings in the new GN divisions and the selection of 10 members, including leaders of CBOs, religious leaders and retired government officers, from each community to participate in the new PFs; project awareness sessions and the restructuring (including the addition of new members to replace those that are no longer participating) of the Phase 1 grant PFs; and leadership training for selected PF members from nine of the new GN divisions.



Community leaders from nine People’s Forums engage in a group activity on team spirit and leadership at the “Leadership Training for People’s Forums” workshop in Polonnaruwa District.

Fifteen project orientation meetings were held in the 15 new GN divisions in which 791 people participated, including 722 Sinhala and 69 Muslim community members. Fifteen PFs were then formed in those GNs to assist with community mobilization, working with village leaders to engage key stakeholders, engaging local authorities, and promoting community interests in a non-political manner to local authorities. Office bearers were nominated by community members for the positions of presidents, secretaries and treasurers of the PFs. The partner provided orientation to community members on the roles and responsibilities of communities as

well as local authority members in local government. The partner will form the remaining three PFs and the Central People's Forum next quarter.

The partner also conducted meetings with the 10 PFs formed during the first phase of project. New office bearers were nominated by the PF members to replace inactive members. One-hundred PF members from the 10 GN divisions participated in the meetings including 42 Sinhala and 58 Muslim representatives. Similar topics discussed with the 15 new PFs were also discussed during these meetings. The partner raised awareness on citizen engagement with local government to promote transparency, accountability and good governance.

After the selection of members for the new PFs, the partner organized a two-day leadership training in late February for nine PFs and invited 10 members from each PF to participate. Eighty-three members participated in the training, including 76 Sinhala and seven Muslim members. The training for these community leaders focused on enhancing participatory local governance. The partner was only able to help form 15 of the targeted new 18 PFs planned for this quarter. The remaining three PFs will be formed in the next quarter. Delays were due in large part to the harvest season which required many stakeholders to prioritize livelihood activities.

ARD054

During the quarter, the partner commenced its "Relationship Building between Diverse Social Groups in Tamil and Muslim Communities" project. They held three launch meetings for farmers from paired Tamil and Muslim communities to discuss project plans and to do a needs assessment of the respective communities. A total of 47 men participated in the three meetings (25 Tamil and 22 Muslims). Three sub-action groups were formed at the launch meetings which will become responsible for identifying farming-related issues requiring further advocacy. The 21 men (10 Tamil and 11 Muslim) who volunteered to participate will meet with relevant government departments to address the issues.

The first action group meetings were held in three paired villages and issues highlighted included:

- Ponds requiring rehabilitation and servicing. The ponds provide water for paddy cultivation and for drinking water.
- Drinking water shortages affecting 511 families in one village and 75 in another.
- Farmers have not yet received fertilizer paid for during the last harvest season. Participants decided to form a farmer's society for Tamil and Muslim communities.
- Poor road conditions in several locations require immediate attention.
- Poor drainage systems in three villages are affecting area irrigation.
- Students have no opportunities to study beyond grade nine. Distance to the nearest school and the lack of transportation is increasing the number of school dropouts.
- Lack of electricity and street lights in the region.
- Two hundred forty-two people do not have legal documentation for their land.
- Poor education in the agricultural sector is affecting home gardening, animal husbandry, and fishing practices.
- Poor irrigation drainage during the rainy season is resulting in the loss of crops and livestock.

The partner conducted three two-day Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) trainings to build the capacity of Tamil and Muslim WRDS members in its eight project villages. A total of 59 women (29 Tamil and 30 Muslim) participated in the three sessions. Through this exercise, participants identified their village resources and needs. The Tamil and Muslim women made joint visits to identify issues and areas of improvement. Many of the women participants were engaged for the first time in village mapping exercises, a central feature of PRA. The WRDSs then planned village development activities including support for children's education, and work with relevant government offices to determine road construction projects and prepare requests for new roads.

Four awareness workshops on gender and gender-based violence were conducted for members of four WRDSs. A total of 103 women (49 Tamil and 54 Muslim) participated in the workshops. Some of the topics covered were sex and gender, gender roles, gender division of labor and gender-based violence. These workshops were organized separately for Tamil and Muslim WRDSs.

Three beginning Sinhala language classes and one advanced Sinhala class were conducted this quarter for youth in the targeted areas. A total of 80 youth (27 male, 53 female and 56 Tamil, 24 Muslim) registered for the course. The four teachers appointed to teach these classes have all been trained by SuRG—three in SuRG's Local Governance OLD ToT for language trainers and one in SuRG's CEaT ToT series for language teachers.

ARD038

The partner continued implementation of its grant entitled, "Supporting Women's Political Candidacy in Trincomalee" in three DS Divisions of Trincomalee District. The project aims to increase the political influence and participation of women in the district.

Two, two-day residential trainings were conducted to develop the skills needed to participate in local politics. In the first session, 35 women (31 Tamil, four Muslim) participated in a gender equality training program in Trincomalee. Session topics included gender issues in political workplaces, the women's movement, gender equality at the village level and schools, and perceptions of men on issues of gender equality. Forty-nine (42 Tamil, seven Muslim) women attended a second training session on Women, Politics and Sri Lanka's Experience. The program focused on government structure, governance practice, policy development, constitutions and amendments, rights, sovereignty, political parties and women's representation, and women in politics. Sessions were intended to motivate participants to become more active in politics by providing their input on issues and becoming advocates where possible. Trainings were facilitated by a freelance journalist and visiting lecturer of political science from University of Colombo, and a sociology lecturer from University of Colombo.

The partner also worked with its women beneficiaries to lead six monthly discussions to identify women's issues at the village level and to develop strategies for interventions in their DS Divisions. Issues discussed included developing women's networks, problems facing migrant workers, RDSs' partiality on community development projects and the need to provide support for disabled persons. Monthly meetings were organized to generate ideas to improve project implementation and to ensure objectives are being achieved in as participatory a manner as possible. A total of 118 women participated in the discussions including 104 Tamils and 14 Muslims.

"Before [the partner] started here, there were many NGOs that did a lot of projects in the area, but they were all related to infrastructure development, water and sanitation and construction of toilets. [The partner's] focus is different though. They give us training for knowledge-based development. Only after the training did I learn about the roles of Pradeshiya Sabhas, Urban Councils, Provincial Councils and the Parliament, the laws of Sri Lanka, human rights, etc. [The partner] showed the path those of us who aspire to be politicians should take."

MEMBER OF A TRINCOMALEE RDS

The partner also led a film discussion for 410 participants (342 female and 68 male including 359 Tamils, two Sinhalese and 49 Muslims). A Tamil film called “Sivakasi” was shown in which a woman who stands for a local election faces several challenges by opposition parties and finally wins the election to become Minister of Local Government. The movie depicts how a man persuades the protagonist to run for office and supports her in her quest. Another documentary film was shown which depicts the importance of voting at an election.

Fourteen, one–day open conferences were also conducted during the quarter in 14 villages in the two project DS divisions to sensitize communities on the benefits women can bring to politics. Six hundred twenty-two people participated (552 female and 70 male, including 507 Tamils, 114 Muslims, one Sinhalese). Topics focused on *Pradeshija Sabhas* and their roles and responsibilities as well as the importance of political participation. Resource people included the Community Development Officer attached to the ACLG office, a member of the Urban Council, Town and Gravets, Trincomalee, the opposition leader of a district *Pradeshija Sabha* and a *Grama Niladhari*. The conferences were open to all members of RDSs, WRDSs, religious leaders, government officials and ex-political candidates.

ARD049

The partner continued its project “Deepening Buddhist Practice of Social Engagement and Interfaith Dialogue” in the districts of Monaragala, Ampara and Polonnaruwa during the quarter. They conducted two Beginners Forums, three Gender Forums for nuns, and two Interfaith Dialogue Forums. Additionally, mid-term examinations for the Tamil language classes started last quarter were held.

Two Beginners Forums, one in February and one in March for 36 participants, including 27 Buddhist monks and nine nuns, were conducted in Polonnaruwa. The first Forum, entitled “Religion as a Facilitator for Peace” included ideas and definitions of peace from the theoretician Spinoza and definitions of peace in Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, including the ideas of Gandhi, Nehru and of Buddha’s path to peace. The second was entitled, “Reading the Contemporary State and its Organization Through the Lens of Contemporary Social Science Theories.” It covered contemporary society, modernity, enlightenment, critical thinking, free trade, the rule of law, constitutional government, the multi-party system, and universal franchise.

“We have been in the darkness for a while. This [partner’s] initiative is like someone giving us a light to illuminate the way...If we only help the people of our own faith, we will never see the end of the unrest in this country...I ask that [the partner] please continue to use this light [the interfaith dialogues] to light up the other dark roads and talk to all people including the educated people and our politicians.”

**BUDDHIST PRIEST,
PARTNER AMPARA DISTRICT COORDINATOR**

Three gender fora were held during February and March for 77 participants, including 32 Buddhist monks and 45 nuns, in Monaragala District. The fora are part of the partner’s efforts to empower the nuns to resolve issues relating to the discriminatory practices they face and to organize themselves to become advocates for their own issues at the district level. The fora covered a number of highly sensitive topics that the nuns had not

previously been exposed to, including the definition of gender, differences between gender and sexuality, roles of men and women in society, the equal importance of men and women and structures in society in which women are treated unequally (e.g., family; educational, religious, and media institutions; state and government).

In the second forum, monks were invited to join the nuns to create a space for open discussion among nuns and monks on gender issues which prevail within the temples and the society as a whole, and the status of women in Buddhist philosophy. Forty-five nuns and 32 monks attended the session entitled, “What is Gender and Women in Buddhist Philosophy?” The forum also included sessions on human rights and gender where issues of equality and categories of rights were discussed.

An interfaith forum for the Ampara District was held in February for 46 participants, including 20 Buddhists, 19 Hindus, two Christians, and five Muslims. The discussion revolved around why an interfaith forum is needed in Ampara. Most of the chief religious leaders from all four religions in Ampara were present. Also present were community representatives from each religious group. A second interfaith forum was held in late March for 110 participants including 45 Buddhists, 45 Hindus, two Christians and 18 Muslims in Batticaloa District, at the Kovil. The event included members of the North East Interfaith Forum for Reconciliation (NEIFR) which represents Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims in Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Mannar, Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Ampara and Anuradhapura, and comprises all

religious leaders of those areas. This was the first time a number of the project Buddhist clergy had experienced the rituals and culture of a Hindu Kovil and the Tamil culture in general.

Project Tamil language classes, which started last quarter for 86 Buddhists, including 74 monks and 12 nuns, continued in all three districts during this quarter.

The partner originally planned to hold four two-day residential Advanced Dialogue Forums to increase religious leaders' engagement in and contribution to inter-community and inter-religious reconciliation and coexistence. The partner found, however, that allocating a suitable time for all participants was not possible. Given the religious leaders' lack of education and exposure to some of the pre-determined issues which were to be discussed, the partner believed it would be too ambitious to attempt these activities. Advanced modules, such as "Comparing Religious Psychology and Western Psychology with special attention on Buddhist Psychology" had already proven difficult for participants to absorb. This was especially true for the nuns who have virtually no previous education. Language also proved to be a much greater barrier than originally envisioned. The forum was meant to be conducted in Sinhala, but experience showed that many of the Hindu Kurukkals found it hard to understand Sinhala. The partner will replace the advanced fora with more interfaith dialogue fora.



MSI/SuRG

Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious leaders participate in a SSA Interfaith Dialogue held at the Sri Murugan Kovil, in Thiraimadu, in Batticaloa District.

1.2.2 SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE OF WOMEN'S GLOBAL ISSUES (S/WGI) GRANT

ARD050

As part of HDCC's strategy to reach out to prospective women beneficiaries within the district, eight meetings were held with women-focused government offices and organizations. The purpose of the meetings was to identify beneficiaries, coordinate activities with relevant organizations, and find mentors for future loan recipients. Since these visits did not result in many new applicants approaching HDCC, HDCC reached out to civil society organizations to raise awareness about the project.



HDCC

N. Samantha received a loan from HDCC to expand her shoe production business.

Eight awareness-raising programs on the loan program were held throughout the district. Sessions focused on the various components of the project, HDCC’s activities in general, loan criteria, business ideas, budgets and marketing. HDCC staff facilitated the meetings in partnership with the heads of the respective organizations. The chart below provides details on the awareness-raising sessions.

HDCC Awareness-Raising Sessions

Target Participants and Host Organizations	No. of Participants
Members of Rural Community Development Foundation - Ambalantota	65
Members of Community-Based Organization - Barawakubuka	28
Members of ‘Ruhunu Nadee’ Community-Based Organization - Lunama	28
Members of Social Service, organized by Women Development Officers – Weeraketiya	16
Members of Kudawella Ekamuthugama, Women’s Society	33
Small Businesswomen of Hambantota	30
Members of Southern Development Authority	47
Members of Smile Lanka Institute - Hambantota	39

Based on information collected during the awareness-raising sessions, 45 women who were interested and had the capacity to start their own businesses were identified as prospective beneficiaries. Among them, 25 beneficiaries who fulfilled the Hambantota Youth Business Program (HYBP) criteria were selected to move forward in the program after being visited in their respective locations. Criteria for selection included the feasibility of their proposed business ideas, potential profit margin, business sustainability, skills and knowledge of the individual, attitude, age (17 to 45), residence in the district, ability to access credit from banks and marketing potential. Two hundred fifty-seven people were initially directed to the HDCC program team through various organizations who were consulted during the awareness-raising activities. The 45 who eventually participated were drawn from this group. Final decisions on loan awards depend on the strengths of the business plan and Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) approval.

HDCC conducted a training program entitled, “Improve Your Business” for the 25 women deemed eligible to obtain loans, including those who had already obtained loans under the project. The training provided guidance on business start-up, identifying legal issues, maintaining records, the value of positive attitudes and customer relations.

Based on the “Improve Your Business” workshop, 25 business plans were prepared by participants with the support of HYBP officers. The challenges of preparing business plans included low levels of literacy and numeracy of some of the women and a lack of support from family members. Technical support in the development of the plans was provided by HDCC staff.

Fifteen of the business plans were converted into loan applications and were submitted to HYBP for review. HYBP reviews the loan applications and ensures that they meet the loan criteria. They then forward the applications to the PEC which has approval authority. Fifteen business proposals were prepared and forwarded to the PEC to review through the HYBP. Twelve applications were approved for loan disbursement. One project beneficiary whose proposal was approved by the PEC in the last quarter was issued her loan this quarter. Three PEC meetings were held this quarter to discuss the loan applications being considered. The chart below lists the loans issued this reporting period.

HDCC Loans Issued to Women Entrepreneurs January – March 2012

No.	Residential area	Type of Business	Loan Amount
1.	Tissamaharama	Manufacturing coir mats and coir strings	65,000
2.	Lunugamwehera	Manufacturing and selling mosquito nets and bags	60,000
3.	Sooriyawewa	Manufactures and sells ladies clothing and fabric	50,000
4.	Ambalantota	Manufactures and sells spices at the weekly fair	50,000
5.	Ambalantota	Beauty parlor	50,000
6.	Tissamaharamaya	School transportation service	100,000
7.	Hambantota	Poultry farm	100,000
8.	Beliatta	Manufacture and sells white coconut oil	75,000
9.	Angunukolapelessa	Manufactures and sells ladies shoes	100,000
10.	Ambalantota	Manufactures and sells coconut chips	150,000
11.	Nihiluwa	Produces and sells curd	150,000
12.	Angunukolapelessa	Manufactures and sells ladies hand bags	106,400
13.9	Angunukolapelessa	Produces and sells gamboges or local pickle, cream	200,000

Mentoring and Field Visits

HDCC appointed 11 mentors to provide instructions and guidance to the loan beneficiaries (11 female) this quarter. All mentors must be accomplished business persons in the community with priority given to females; have managed similar businesses; be willing to dedicate time to act as a mentor; have a satisfactory education level; and be above 30 years of age.

During the quarter, two mobile counseling sessions were organized to review the business places of the respective beneficiaries and to provide on-the-spot guidance and instruction to improve business performance. The sessions also ensure that the appropriate mentors are assigned to loan recipients. All 12 selected for loans this quarter were visited.

Field observation visits were conducted by HDCC field staff to compare business activities against business plans and also to ensure the loan conditions were being met. Thirty-two out of 33 loan recipients since the beginning of the project were visited during the quarter. The recovery rate of the loans is currently 95 percent.

HDCC also conducted a workshop entitled, “Motivation and Positive Thinking Workshop” for 60 women business people. Participants were keen to discuss how to retain, manage and motivate staff to improve their efficiency and how to retain customers. HDCC’s follow-up to the workshop included counseling on these issues and referrals to relevant persons or organizations for further assistance.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants suggested they form a “women entrepreneurs forum.” They concluded a forum:

- Could be of great value to all women entrepreneurs in the region as it would create opportunities to share ideas, stories, and plans relating to business development;
- Should include all sectors and not be divided into groups based on business type or location;
- Should create opportunities to organize entertainment events among peers, to undertake social service activities, and to identify business markets through other members; and
- Be coordinated by HDCC.

Fourteen leaders were nominated to become office bearers. HDCC organized a special meeting with nominated leaders on March 21, 2012 at HDCC’s office to discuss why such a forum was required; what the objectives of the forum would be; membership criteria; and a constitution for the forum. A past president of HDCC and an expert in forming associations, facilitated the session with the participants.

1.2.3 TRAINING

Negotiation Skills Training

In January, SuRG organized a two-day residential workshop on negotiation skills for representatives from SuRG partner organizations. The 33 participants (21 male, 12 female) from 16 organizations are all involved in identifying and helping to resolve community-level issues and problems, many of which may ultimately result in the inability or prevention of co-existence between different communities. The workshop was designed to provide participants with an introduction to negotiation concepts, models and definitions and the basic skills and techniques needed to manage negotiations and conflict that arise in their workplace, with communities and in their own daily lives.



Participants draw a ‘Conflict Tree’ at the Negotiation Skills Workshop for SuRG partners held in Trincomalee.

The workshop, conducted a lawyer and trainer in the field, was interactive with presentations, individual and small group work and discussions, and role-plays. Topics covered included conflict analysis, conflict intervention strategy, negotiation skills, negotiating with difficult people, and measuring success in negotiation. Using tools such as the “conflict tree,” the “onion model” and the “iceberg model,” which formed the basis of the conflict analysis discussion, participants learned to analyze conflicts and to devise strategies on how to intervene in conflicts. They examined the spectrum of conflict management styles and explored negotiation as one of the tools for conflict intervention and peacebuilding.

General Management Training

In February, SuRG conducted a training program for partners on General Management. MDF South Asia facilitated the program for 30 participants (12 female and 18 male) from 15 SuRG partner organizations. The

purpose of the training was to improve participants' general understanding of key issues in organizational management and their basic management skills.

The training helped participants understand the characteristics of both leaders and managers using a range of participatory methods. Activities such as role plays to build situational leadership skills (coaching, convincing, and instructing) and analysis of what motivates staff were incorporated throughout the training. By the end of the workshop, participants were better able to clarify roles and responsibilities in the workplace and improve delegation skills; motivate staff; address and manage dynamics of change; and understand best management practices.



Tetra Tech ARD/SuRG

The Development Officer of one SuRG partner and the Program Director of another participate in SuRG's General Management Workshop held in Trincomalee.

Gender Study Tour

“Earlier when we spoke about gender it was usually about an equal number of women and men participating in a program. During the workshop we learned gender is a much bigger issue. We also learned how to bring men into this conversation without antagonizing them. Now we're able to identify issues of both men and women to bring to the table.”

SuRG PARTNER PARTICIPANT IN GENDER STUDY TOUR

SuRG sponsored the participation of six women representatives of partner organizations participation in a training program on gender and development in Madurai, India organized by Indian NGOs, EKTA and Sangat. A SuRG CEaT Program Officer accompanied the group. The workshop was designed to build the capacity of women's rights defenders and strengthen conceptual clarity around issues of gender and development. Participants examined how the development and application of gender

analysis methodologies and the formulation of policies and programs can contribute to gender justice and equality. The workshop, which was conducted in Tamil for participants from Sri Lanka and India, focused on experience sharing; increasing awareness on gender and feminist perspectives in relationship to issues of peace, development, justice and human rights; and strengthening networks for advocacy.

Participants learned about patriarchy and masculinity and how these concepts are part of gender awareness, and how to develop programming while considering the two concepts without making people angry. Including men in conversations on gender equity without antagonizing them was also a significant aspect of the program. The program addressed numerous topics, including the history of feminism and the global women's movement; gender sensitivity; militarization and how war impacts women; the effects of cultural-related praise for women; taboos related to the discussion of gender issues; gender-based violence; and awareness of what being transgendered means. Workshop methodology included a combination of lectures, discussions, group work, videos, art, and local field trips.



EKTA

Participants on the India Study Tour in Madurai learn to use traditional folk dance to promote women's rights.

Participants pointed to the inclusion of men in gender analysis, discussion and programming and how war impacts women as key learning and the most relevant topics. Upon return, the group committed to sharing its

learning with colleagues from their organizations and to apply new concepts and skills to their work with communities. In addition, participants, as described above, gave presentations to SuRG partners at the Trincomalee and Ampara Quarterly Review Meetings. They have also committed to take the lead in organizing the Sri Lankan chapter of the Sangat network.

I.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The SuRG LG team finalized plans for its technical and language training and technical assistance in the Northern Province while also continuing to seek approval from the Presidential Task Force (PTF). In addition, the team continued to support SuRG's 11 LA partners in the east with hands-on technical assistance and training. Tamil and Sinhala language training in 29 locations throughout the east also continued this quarter, as phase I of the OLD Level II training was completed and phase II initiated.

SuRG also awarded a grant to implement its "Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Mitigate Corruption and Enhance Good Governance Program" this quarter.

I.3.1 NORTHERN PROVINCE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SuRG continued to finalize its plans for the LG technical and language training and technical assistance in the Northern Province. In early January, the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils (MLGPC) sent SuRG a letter of concurrence for the project as outlined in a concept note SuRG submitted last quarter. However, the Governor of the Northern Province had indicated to USAID and SuRG in an August meeting to introduce the project proposal that Presidential Task Force approval was required before implementation could begin. So, in accordance with USAID directions, SuRG continued to put implementation on hold until the PTF indicated its approval to either USAID or to the MLGPC. USAID had informed the PTF of program plans in a meeting followed up by a letter dated 29 November 2011. The MLGPC indicated to SuRG that they would be initiating the approval process with the PTF soon after sending us their above-referenced concurrence letter in January.

When no news was forthcoming, USAID sent a follow-up letter to the PTF on 8 February 2012, saying they would take no response as an indication that the PTF had no objections to the program. The MLGPC, however, felt that movement should be put on hold. By the end of the quarter, no response had come from the PTF and the program is still on hold.

Nonetheless, once SuRG received written concurrence from the MLGPC, the LG team moved forward to finalize program design and put all the plans in place so that implementation could begin as soon as approval from the PTF is obtained. The team made two trips to the North in February to meet with the Chief Secretary, Commissioner of Local Government (CLG), Assistant CLGs (ACLGs) from Jaffna and Kilinochchi, Mannar and Mullativu, and the Director of the Management Development Training Institute (MDTI). During these meetings, both the technical and language programs were explained in detail. Language for an amendment to SuRG's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MLGPC was agreed upon with the Chief Secretary. At these meetings, the CLG highlighted the need to cover revenue generation, council procedures and valuation of assets in the training.

The team also met with potential language teachers identified by the MDTI in all of the proposed project districts (Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullativu and Mannar) to introduce the program and explain SuRG's partnership with the Official Language Department (OLD). Final selection of teachers will need to take into account transport difficulties facing both teachers and students as most participating PSs are located in remote rural areas. Final selection of the teachers will be done in cooperation with OLD once PTF approval is obtained.

In preparation for the program, SuRG also finalized and signed a subcontract with EML Consultants to implement the technical training and assistance elements of the program in 17 PSs. EML will be responsible for the design and delivery of three residential training programs covering: participatory planning and proposal writing; office management and administration; and participatory governance. EML will then follow these sessions up with district-based “echo” workshops to help participants and colleagues who could not attend the residential training apply learning in their PSs. Finally, EML will prepare a comprehensive practical resource manual for ongoing technical training and assistance. The resource manual will be printed in all three languages and disseminated widely throughout the island.

I.3.2 EASTERN PROVINCE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Participatory Governance Forums

SuRG continues to support its original 11 partner local authorities in the Eastern Province. Participatory Governance Forum (PGF) meetings were held in each of these LAs in January. Issues discussed included:

- A briefing session was held in each LA highlighting details of completed, current and proposed LA projects, income and expenses for 2011, current issues and challenges and the way forward.
- A Social Audit Committee has been formed in each LA at the direction of the CLG and ACLGs to oversee North East Local Services Improvement (NELSIP) projects. The committees are comprised of five active members of the PGF. Each committee has been trained on monitoring project progress, quality control, reporting and increasing community participation in project activities.
- Preparation of a detailed action plan for the revision of long-term plans and the assignment of staff and PGF members for each cluster.
- Follow-up action on ongoing projects and activities including construction of internal roads, controlling stray animals, dengue eradication and solid waste collection.

Building Sustainable Processes in Local Government Authorities Workshop, February 10 – 12, 2012

SuRG designed and facilitated a two-day workshop for the members of the 11 SuRG formed PGFs to ensure that community participation and involvement in LA activities is sustainable. The workshop was designed so that participants could understand the legal framework related to community participation and involvement in local government; understand the importance of participation in the decision making process of local government; and develop operating guidelines for PGFs.

“...through PGFs we can have participation from citizens in the PS that will lead to development. Additionally, if there is a gap or distance between the PS and its citizens, PGFs can help to reduce it.”

PARTICIPANT SuRG “BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PROCESSES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES WORKSHOP,” HABARANA

Five members from each of the 11 PGFs were invited for the workshop. Fifty-three people (16 women and 37 men; 30 Tamils, 14 Muslims, and nine Sinhala), of which 31 were community members, 15 were government officers and seven were elected officials, attended the workshop. The workshop was facilitated by the SuRG LG team, a former Additional Secretary for the MLGPC and EML.

The outcome of the workshop included an outline of operating guidelines for the PGFs and a commitment by all 11 LAs to reform their PGFs based on the guidelines. LAs agreed to implement the reforms by April when they would then re-convene their regular monthly PGF meetings.

Participants agreed on the following key elements for their operating guidelines:

Vision

Democratic governance with citizen participation aimed at sustainable development.

Mission (Statement still to be finalized but will include the following elements)

- Listen to people’s voices and identify their needs.
- Provide solutions to community problems according to the needs and priorities of the people.
- Act democratically.
- Strengthen the relationship between the citizens and the Council.
- Form village-based development committee.

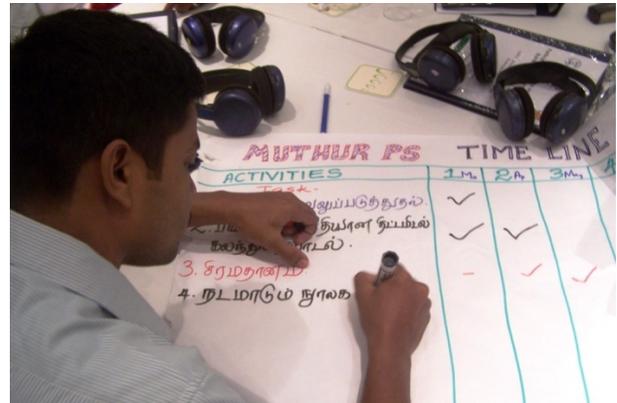
Objectives

- Conduct PGF meetings once or twice a month, and raise awareness among the community.
- Make linkages with civil society organizations.
- When making decisions and implementing activities, follow tenants of good governance such as transparency, accountability and good management.

PGF Operating Guidelines will be organized as follows: Introduction; Vision; Mission; Objective; Composition; Gender equity/diversity; Office Bearers (Convener/Chairman/Secretary); Sub-Committees; Finance and Policy Planning; Technical Services Committee; Environment and Amenities; Housing and Community Development Committee; Advisory Committee; Social Audit Committee; Citizens’ Complaints Handling Committee; Meetings; Meeting Procedures; Meeting Agenda: Activities; Communication/Public Relations/Media; Monitoring and Evaluation; and Fund Raising.

PGF members also agreed to the following process for setting up their PGF and other working committees in their LAs:

- When forming a PGF, the members should be elected and include Council members, citizens, and Council staff.
- LA Working Committees should include Chairman, Council Members (ruling party), Opposition Members, Secretary, CDO, Finance Assistance and Management Assistant.
- Citizen Working Committees should include Medical doctor/officer, PHI, teachers, principals, RDS President, WRDS President, community center president, farmers, fishermen and other community members.
- Four Standing Committees—Finance and Policy Planning; Housing and Community Development; Technical Services, and Environment and Amenities—will be formed.



Tetra Tech ARD/SuRG
A member of a SuRG partner LA PGF develops an action plan at SuRG’s “Participatory Governance Forum (PGF): Building Sustainable Processes in Local Government Authorities of the Eastern Province” workshop held in Trincomalee.

The workshop also included a session on inclusivity in the PGF. The session underscored the importance of meaningful women's participation, stressing the need for gender-sensitive planning and implementation.

After the workshop, the PGFs began the process of reforming their membership and processes in accordance with the guidelines agreed upon at the workshop. Membership reforms are meant to ensure active and inclusive citizen participation. So, government staff originally named to the PGF who have been transferred were replaced. New PGF and standing committees were selected in March and monthly meetings were scheduled to resume after the local holidays in April. PGF membership in the 11 LAs now includes an additional 28 women community members, raising the percentage of female participation from 31 percent to 38 percent of membership.

Working Group Meetings

This quarter, 33 Working Group (WG) meetings were held in SuRG's 11 partner LAs. They addressed the following key items:

- Analysis of complaints received for the year of 2011, collection of information regarding unresolved complaints and taking necessary measures to resolve them, sending the annual summary to the ACLG and introducing a receipt of acknowledgement for each complaint received in 2012;
- Preparation of the necessary documents (ledgers, bills, final account of 2011 and budget for 2012) to start feeding data into the final accounts software for 2012;
- Renovation of libraries and providing computers along with book keeping software; and
- Bid openings, preparation of contract documents, awarding contracts for NELSIP program activities and ongoing monitoring of progress.

I.3.3 LANGUAGE TRAINING

During the quarter, SuRG-sponsored Phase I (108 hours) of OLD's Level II Tamil and Sinhala language training program was completed. Thirteen of the 29 programs ended this quarter; 16 ended last quarter. Phase II, comprised of an additional 108 hours, of the Level II curriculum has begun and is ongoing in all 29 locations.

I.3.4 GRANTS – ARD05I

A grant was awarded in February for implementation of the “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Mitigate Corruption and Enhance Good Governance” project. The program was to be implemented in a PS in Polonnaruwa District and another PS in Ampara District. However, neither the Chairman nor the Secretary of the Ampara *Pradeshiya Sabha* showed much interest in the project as it did not include equipment or infrastructure. The Chairman, Secretary and PGF members of an alternative *Pradeshiya Sabbha* in contrast were keen to work with the partner so the project site in Ampara was switched.

Prior to signing the grant agreement with SuRG, the partner made a study visit to Trincomalee to learn about grievance redress mechanisms introduced through a GIZ project. They held meetings with the project implementing team and visited two PSs involved in the project. The partner will incorporate the lessons learned from this visit, including the importance of community involvement, need for awareness-raising among the public about their rights to access services and roles in local governance and the role of project implementation, such as is going on with NELSIP projects, in the design of redress mechanisms and processes, in their program design.

Official project activities began with field visits and assessments of proposed PSs. The partner employed participatory research methods to collect data and inform the assessments which are intended to:

1. Understand and analyze the strength, composition, level of participation and functions of the existing Participatory Governance Forums;
2. Identify the key areas needed to strengthen public participation and promote good governance and the PGF and to plan project activities with the PGF; and
3. Plan and organize project activities in collaboration with PS members and CBOs already working with the PS.

During the partner's visit to Polonnaruwa, they met with 13 PGF members, and the Chairman, opposition leader and members of the PS. Key findings include:

- The PGF is being supported by a SuRG APS partner that has worked in 10 GN divisions and has recently begun working in another 18 GN divisions. They have conducted training in order to enhance citizen's participation and good governance.
- PS staff has participated in the SuRG technical training series. However, further training particularly related to accountability, responsiveness and corruption mitigation is needed due in large part to frequent changes in government staff as result of new recruitment and transfers.
- PGF members participate regularly in PS sessions. They are involved in the decision making process; their opinions are taken into account in development and other social service activities implemented by the PS.
- There is an interest and willingness to participate and get involved in citizens committees. Committees include representation of all ethnic groups and the participation of women is comparatively high.
- Target groups tend to represent the most disadvantaged people with little or no involvement of middle class representatives.
- The PGF has provided the only opportunity for these villagers to participate in community decision making and learn about the functions of the PS and their rights to services. Leadership training has helped build the confidence these villagers need to express their views and discuss their problems with their representatives.

The partner has decided to continue activities with the existing committee. They will work with the SuRG partner already involved to organize and implement project activities in the area. As most PGF and PS members believe that citizen participation on the committees is their activity, the partner will have to work carefully with them and encourage gradual ownership of the process by participating citizens. Current practices, such as providing tea and reimbursing travel expenses, are a barrier to sustainability that the partner will have to unravel carefully.

In Ampara, the partner met with the PS Chairman and Secretary and members of the PGF. The PGF is currently being reformed as indicated above and based on criteria agreed on at the SuRG "Building Sustainable Processes in Local Government Authorities" workshop.

The assessment showed that SuRG initiatives have made a positive impact on participatory governance. The staff shows a positive attitude. The Chairman has prepared a vision and mission statement emphasizing the significance of peoples participation in governance.

The partner is sharing the findings of both these PS assessments with its panel of experienced trainers and consultants on participatory governance to prepare a training curriculum which will be completed and implemented next quarter.

I.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

SuRG continued its support for aspiring journalists through its scholarship program to the Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLCJ) Journalism Diploma Programme and with ongoing technical assistance to the women journalists from Trincomalee trained in print and electronic media under a 2011 SuRG grant.

Based on consultation with women trainees from Trincomalee and media experts, SuRG is identifying experts in print and electronic media to conduct a series of workshops in electronic media and print media, to begin in the summer of 2012 for the women journalism participants. The workshops will focus on developing an understating of journalism and news reporting, journalism and modern technology, understanding journalism in the context of Sri Lanka, investigative journalism and using a studio. Trainees will then develop 15-minute documentaries using a Trincomalee studio to record the stories for local radio stations to air. Trainees will also write two articles for newspapers with guidance and editing from resource persons.

ARD062

SuRG awarded its third grant to the partner for scholarships to the 2012 Journalism Diploma Programme this quarter. The grant, signed in January, provides 15 scholarships to students from the North, East and Hill Country. SLCJ extended the academic period for this year's diploma program from one year to one-and-a-half years to include additional skills development courses and internships at national media organizations. New courses focus on computer skills, social media and Tamil, Sinhala and English languages. SuRG scholarships cover full tuition but living expenses for only the 12-month period that coincides with the remainder of Tetra Tech ARD's SuRG contract.

Twenty SuRG scholarship recipients graduated from the 2011 Program on March 29, 2012.

I.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

SuRG continued its routine program monitoring and evaluation efforts through a combination of activity and grant monitoring, reviews of partner reports, grant review meetings with partners and data quality verification.

Performance Management Plan

During the quarter, SuRG conducted a complete review of the existing Performance Management Plan (PMP). The revised PMP reflects program and indicator adjustments made since the development of the first SuRG PMP at the start of the program in 2008 as well as requests from USAID to include new F indicators and Mission PMP indicators. The revised PMP also incorporates lessons learned to date regarding the importance of qualitative assessments and reviews of SuRG results, such as enhanced participation, strengthened social mechanisms for community empowerment and reinforced space for public discourse. These qualitative assessments also provide an important mechanism for SuRG to incorporate lessons learned and best practices into new and ongoing programming and proved especially useful for making strategic programming adjustments. The revised PMP will thus include qualitative assessments on the following activities: human rights education; lawyers' trainings; community advocacy initiatives; local governance component impact; the SLCJ journalism program; and the impact of inter-religious cooperation for community development and social empowerment activities.

The revision of the PMP also entailed a thorough review of definitions used for all indicators to ensure that definitions as outlined in the original SuRG PMP remain relevant and useful. Details of each change made to definitions and indicators added and removed will all be included in the final version of the PMP scheduled to be submitted to the Mission early next quarter.

Regional Inspector General's Office Performance Audit

Between March 1 and April 3, USAID's Regional Inspector General's (RIG) Office conducted a performance audit of SuRG to determine whether the SuRG program was achieving its primary objectives. The audit covered program activities through December 31, 2011 under all four SuRG components. The audit team:

- Reviewed program results achieved and reported to date;
- Reviewed outputs to determine sustainability and impact of selected activities;
- Validated reported performance results data through spot testing; and
- Visited grantee offices and select activity sites during which they interviewed headquarter and field partner staff, local officials, clients and beneficiaries.

The two-person team met with SuRG staff from all three SuRG offices and partners in Colombo, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Polonnaruwa. The team used the SuRG Colombo and Trincomalee offices as their operating base and SuRG staff provided translation and logistical and transportation support throughout their visit. The audit included visits to nine SuRG grantees and subcontractors. They also met with three LAs in Trincomalee and three in Batticaloa. SuRG staff worked with the partners and LAs to organize the auditors' field visits and accompanied the team to the various site locations.

The RIG team debriefed USAID before departure. They will provide a draft report to the USAID Mission in Sri Lanka in mid-June 2012, and will receive feedback from the Mission by mid-July. The final report is scheduled to be issued in early August 2012.

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