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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

APRIL – JUNE 2012 QUARTERLY REPORT



JULY 2012

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Cover Photo: A woman from a village in the Trincomalee District sells *hoppers* (a Sri Lankan dish). She is seen roasting flour for the *hoppers*. She buys her flour from a woman who grinds her flour with a mill she received from a SuRG-funded livelihood program.

Photo courtesy of SuRG Partner

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DISCLAIMER

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

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
AL	Advance Level
ARG	Assistant Registrar General
AU	American University
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Community Development Officer
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPF	Central People's Forum
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DC	District of Columbia
DG	Democracy and Governance
DGP	Development Grants Program
DS	Divisional Secretary
EP	Eastern Province
EPF	Employer Provident Fund
FR	Fundamental Rights
FY	Fiscal Year
GA	Government Agent
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GN	<i>Grama Niladbari</i>
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HC	High Court
HDCC	Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
HAYBP	Hambantota Youth Business Program
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
IT	Information Technology
JSC	Judicial Services Commission
KCP	Karuna Center for Peacebuilding

LA	Local Authority
LAPDP	Local Authority Participatory Development Plan
LG	Local Government
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Magistrates Court
MLGPC	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MSI	Management Systems International
NELSIP	North East Local Services Improvement Project
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIC	National Identity Card
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NVC	Non-violent Communication
OD	Open Dialogue
OL	Ordinary Level
OLD	Official Languages Department
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PDI	Peacebuilding and Development Institute
PDP	Participatory Development Plan
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
PVT	Private
Q	Quarter
QRM	Quarterly Review Meeting
RDS	Rural Development Society
RDO	Rural Development Office
RISEN	Reintegration and Stabilization of the East and North Program
Rs.	Rupees
SE	Social Equity
SL	Sri Lanka
SLCJ	Sri Lanka College of Journalism
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

TNA	Tamil National Alliance
UC	Urban Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VAW	Violence Against Women
WG	Working Group
WIN	Women In Need
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

INTRODUCTION

In March 2008, ARD, Inc. was awarded Contract No. 383-C-00-08-000501-00 to implement the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Sri Lanka Supporting Regional Governance Program (SuRG). The initiative was designed to build on USAID/Sri Lanka’s democracy and governance efforts to address development needs resulting from the then ongoing conflict. The program was intended to support regional governance in the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District by focusing on four program components (social equity, local governance, community empowerment and transformation, 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.



SuRG Partner
Youth Group, Peace Committee and PS members from a Trincomalee partner attend a Batticaloa partner’s Quarterly Task Force Meeting during an Exposure Visit.

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. An additional contract modification to extend the duration of the project until August 31, 2013 was signed in June.

This quarter, SuRG continued to provide technical assistance and support to 22 grantees, 44 local authorities and members of the legal community. SuRG grantees reached out to women, youth, victims of human rights abuse and their families, female heads of household and ordinary citizens to provide legal advice and support; access services; help them raise their voices; provide livelihoods and psychosocial support; build their capacity in a range of ways; and build bridges across ethnic and religious communities in the East, Polonnaruwa, Monaragula, Puttalam, Jaffna, Hambantota and Colombo.

SuRG training this quarter included a workshop for lawyers, judges and law students from the North on labor law, a workshop on gender inclusiveness in local government based on the findings of mini-case studies on women’s participation in two Eastern Province *Pradeshya Sabha* (PS) areas, a workshop on by-laws formulation for PS elected officials and government staff, and Tamil and Sinhala language classes.

This report details these SuRG and grantee activities during the period from April 1–June 30, 2012, along with progress on ongoing contract implementation. Highlights for the quarter include:

- Tamil, Sinhala and English language classes were conducted for 1,500 people including:
 - 289 local government officials (SuRG and OLD);
 - 86 religious leaders; and
 - 1,125 women, youth and community members.

- At nine legal mobile clinics, 450 persons received support preparing applications for legal documents including birth, marriage and death certificates and land documents. During the quarter, 210 documents were obtained.
- Livelihood assistance was provided to 44 women from the East in the form of cash grants valued at Rs. 1,043,000.
- Loans valued at Rs. 902,090 were disbursed by HDCC to 14 women entrepreneurs in Hambantota.
- Legal advice and support was provided to 848 people.
- Family members of 66 detainees received support for travel visits and basic care packages.
- Psychosocial counseling and support was provided to 223 women.
- After extensive advocacy by the Bar Association of Jaffna, the Ministry of Justice has decided to re-establish a labor court in the North after 25 years. In preparation, the Bar Association, with SuRG support, organized a training session on labor law for 70 judges, lawyers and law students from the North facilitated by a Supreme Court Judge.
- Eleven elected officials, 18 government officers and 16 community members from 11 Participatory Governance Forums (PGF) in the East participated in a training on “Gender Inclusive Local Governance” and developed action plans for more effective engagement of women in their PGFs.
- Ten elected officials and 45 government officers from 18 *Pradeshya Sabhas* drafted 17 by-laws at a workshop entitled “Formulation of By-Laws for Local Government Authorities.” (EML)
- HDCC formed the Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs’ Forum with 66 members, the first formal network of businesswomen in the district.
- Partner organizations in the East, Polonnaruwa, Jaffna, and Puttalam provided training and awareness sessions to over 138 WRDSs, youth groups, children’s clubs, village and peace committees and other CBOs on a diverse range of human rights, personal, community and organizational development and empowerment issues. Religious leaders from all four faith groups in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts and Padaviya DS division are engaging youth and adults in 26 projects that support personal and community growth while enhancing inter-faith and inter-ethnic ties among participants. In this quarter, 2,167 people were reached through these projects.

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

The SuRG SE team supported a host of grant activities in the East this quarter initiated by five partners. Activities of two national-level grants signed during the previous quarter were also closely monitored. In addition, WIN negotiated a realignment of its budget and extended its project period to add new activities to be carried out with under-utilized funds.

Training and technical assistance this quarter included support to the Bar Association of Jaffna for a workshop on labor law, funding of partner staff's participation in a 10-day training program on group therapy organized in Batticaloa, and the development of a strategic plan for the Oddamavady GBV Desk by two technical advisors.

The SuRG SE team met this quarter with all 31 participants of the northern lawyer's training workshop on "Emerging Legal Issues on Land in a Post-Conflict Scenario" held in August 2011, in order to assess the utility and impact of the training they had attended. Overwhelmingly the lawyers found the workshop very relevant to the types of cases that they were handling post-war. They also said that the material provided at the workshop had proved invaluable to their practices.

In addition, the team met with lawyers practicing in Kilinochchi and Mullaittevu in order to understand the issues they currently face. There were requests from these lawyers for SuRG materials as well as second round training on some of the topics covered in which they had been unable to participate. The findings of the evaluation are currently being tabulated and will be disseminated in full form early next quarter.

The SE team also conducted a preliminary networking meeting in Mannar to discuss legal aid and case referral.

"I have to thank USAID for conducting a workshop on such relevant topics. I am a fan of the workshop materials which are nicely codified with the latest case law and relevant portions of statutes. I take the book on 66 matters and private land daily to court. I frequently use references cited in these texts in my arguments as well as written submissions to the court. This workshop has helped me immensely...I have also shared the materials with other lawyers who didn't have the opportunity to attend the workshop as well as with the Legal Aid Commission and District Judge. They too have found the material to be very useful. I encourage USAID to conduct a workshop on the same subjects to the new young lawyers in the Vanni area who have not had such an opportunity for training."

ATTORNEY AT LAW, MULLAITIVU DISTRICT COURT AND PARTICIPANT IN SuRG LAWYER'S TRAINING

1.1.1 GRANTS

ARD060

The partner provided support for 32 cases on behalf of 21 individuals during this quarter. The 32 cases comprised 23 High Court (HC) cases, four magistrate's court cases, three Fundamental Rights (FR) applications and two Appeal Court cases.

Five of the High Court cases were successfully concluded on behalf of four clients. Two clients were released, one was sent for rehabilitation and another was acquitted. The acquitted client was indicted wrongfully in two cases under the same charges. The judge, therefore, acquitted the client from one of the cases. The partner will take up the other case during the next quarter. It is important to note that the client was unaware of the error committed and had opted to plead guilty until the partner intervened and prevented this.

Of the three FR cases filed, two clients were indicted while the third, a female, was ordered to undergo rehabilitation. The partner will take up the cases of the two indicted clients when they are called to trial at the High Court.

In the four Magistrates Court (MC) cases, the partner is preparing to file an FR application in the Supreme Court on behalf of one of the clients, while the trial of another client just began. The two other cases ended with one client indicted and the other sent to rehabilitation.

The remaining cases are currently ongoing with a mere calling for future dates. The partner, however, ensures that its panel lawyers represent these individuals during these hearings as it continues to explore solutions and advocate for the release of detainees.

The partner also continues its prison visits as well as a detention center. Through these visits, the partner has identified 12 new cases to be filed on behalf of seven (including three women) willing clients. The partner will file four MC cases and eight HC cases during the next quarter on their behalf.

During this quarter the partner conducted a legal aid clinic in Batticaloa on 28 April. Four attorneys-at-law facilitated the clinic. Sixty people attended the clinic (3 male and 57 female). The partner is exploring possible avenues for legal redress for all issues brought up and has also identified 30 cases to be filed as a result of this clinic.

A two-day paralegal training workshop was held for 21 (2 males and 19 females; 2 Muslims and 19 Tamils) civil society activists, and NGO and CBO workers from Batticaloa District.

Under its non-legal support component, the partner provided small cash grants for 16 families of detainees to visit loved ones detained outside their home districts. Families supported thus far have been from the districts

Mannar Legal Aid Networking Meeting

The SuRG SE team conducted an introductory networking meeting in Mannar to understand the current situation vis-à-vis legal aid, case management and referral processes. As SuRG does not have a direct presence in the North, a partner supported the SE team in organizing and facilitating the meeting. While lawyers from key legal aid providers such as the Legal Aid Commission were unable to attend, representatives of several civil society organizations and activists were present. A total of 32 individuals participated in this meeting.

Discussion at the meeting underscored the dire need for better networking in the area of legal aid in the district, particularly because Mannar lacks a High Court or District Court and cases have to be heard in Vavuniya. It was also noted that a recent departure from Mannar of a legal aid provider, a lacuna has been created with regard to case documentation and referral processes. The SuRG team plans to conduct a second meeting in Mannar during the next quarter and also invite representatives of organizations and legal aid providers from the East in order to discuss a possible modus for setting up a more effective case referral mechanism.

of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavunia, Kilinochchi, Mullaiteevu, Trincomalee and Matale. Funds are intended to cover food and travel expenses incurred to visit the detainees.

ARD06 I

The partner began its Human Rights Certificate Course this quarter. While a total of 55 students (40 were targeted) enrolled in the course 42 have been identified as regular students (34 Tamils 8 Muslims; 27 female and 15 male). Seven out of the planned 15 sessions were completed on topics including an introduction to human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Sri Lankan Constitution and Fundamental Rights, among others.

The predominantly young participants (aged 18-24) have shown great interest and enthusiasm. The presence of both Muslim and Tamil participants has also ensured that there are vibrant discussions on issues such as reconciliation and peace.

The partner's Integrated Skills Course has also gathered momentum this quarter; 24 participants including 15 male and 9 female (21 Tamils and 3 Muslims) have been attending the course's non-violent communication and counseling techniques sessions regularly. It is believed that at least 15 of them will be ready to work with the partner in the coming years as a team of counselors to work with children as well as affected communities. Six participants were selected for a 10-day group therapy training course conducted in Batticaloa (see Section 1.1.3 below for details on the training).

Under the partner's legal assistance component, the partner filed 25 cases. Sixteen of these cases were filed in courts in Trincomalee; cases include divorce, maintenance, abduction, labor disputes, land disputes, arrest and detention and bail application. Nine FR applications were also made at the Supreme Court. The partner also continued to support the 21 cases taken on during the last quarter; thus its current case load under the SuRG project is 46 cases.

The partner also carried out additional work in collaboration with a national partner's lawyers to provide legal representation to the victims of the sudden and multiple arrests that took place in Trincomalee in April. Four were released at the Magistrate's Court in Trincomalee after legal representation was provided. An estimated 13 were sent to detention. The partners are following up on their status.

The partner carried out six prison visits during this quarter. Convincing people to file cases continues to be a challenge. Families are afraid of reprisals and also believe that if legal action is taken, it would worsen the chances of their loved ones being released.

Under its support for female-headed households program, the partner finalized selection of the 30 women who will be entitled to livelihood support. The partner also finalized the list of beneficiaries to receive educational care packs; distribution of these will begin early next quarter.

Female heads of household selected are all extremely vulnerable women and it is believed the assistance provided will not only assist them in making a living and sustaining their families, but also regain a sense of dignity and confidence. Thirteen of these selected women received support which included five grocery shops, five flour and chili grinding mills, cloth for readymade dress-making, a refrigerator for producing popsicles and ice for fishermen, and a water pump and cow for home gardening. The remaining women will receive their support early next quarter. Fifteen women participated in a workshop on "analyzing business

"I am really happy and thankful to SuRG for providing this livelihood package which will be very helpful to me to look after my family. I struggled to support my family since my husband was killed in 2006. I started this business last month [May 2012] and my family and I are gradually becoming happy, so my mental and physical stress is being relaxed."

RECIPIENT OF A GRINDING MILL FOR FLOUR AND CHILI, AND A WIDOW WHO TAKES CARE OF HER FOUR CHILDREN, MENTALLY CHALLENGED SISTER, AND AGING MOTHER

ideas and checking for feasibility.” This workshop was conducted by a freelance livelihood and vocations consultant. A second workshop was conducted on “savings and bookkeeping in business and how to keep records of daily turnover.” This workshop, which included practical exercises, saw 23 women participating. The final workshop for this quarter was on “women’s empowerment, identifying crisis, confidence building, and moving from dependency to inter-dependency to self-reliance.” This training was conducted by a woman with over 15 years of experience in the field. The workshop, which was highly practical in nature, was greatly appreciated by the participants; 23 women participated in it. Participation at the workshops, however, was relatively lower than in the previous quarter due to a series of challenges. First, several of the beneficiaries selected initially either remarried or migrated abroad in search of work. As a result, the partner conducted a second round of selection. Furthermore, participation was also poor due to the holidays in April as well as other meetings conducted by the GN that coincided with the workshops.

The partner continued its assistance to families with members held in detention and rehabilitation centers. Fifty such families received care packs and travel expenses. During this quarter, four individuals were released and joined their families; eight others from the waiting list were added to sustain the total at 50.

A booklet bearing the Tamil translation of the “Evidence Ordinance” was sent to the printers at the end of this quarter and will be released shortly. A second book on the “Penal Code” is currently being translated and will be sent for printing during the next quarter. A booklet titled “Custody of the Child,” printed in Tamil under a previous SuRG grant was translated into Sinhala and has also been sent to the printers. Additionally, a new pamphlet on “Labor Law” was being proofed and will be given for printing during the next quarter. A pamphlet on “Laws Relating to Matrimonial Rights” is currently being written.

ARD033

The partner’s working committees, which were formed with 48 WRDS members from 24 villages following capacity building exercises during the first quarter of the grant period, continued to meet at bi-monthly meetings this quarter. A total of 24 meetings took place and supporting documents were gathered for the preparation of 170 case files to support resettled people of a DS division in Batticaloa District acquire basic legal documentation.

A residential workshop on leadership, negotiation and communication was conducted between 4 and 6 May. A total of 19 working committee members participated in this workshop out of the targeted 24.

Additionally, these working committee members were also involved in WRDS activities, including ensuring all WRDSs possessed proper registration and continued to function effectively. The working committee members support their respective administrative bodies to conduct regular meetings in their villages and maintain greater contact with the villagers. Eleven of these WRDSs are now able to function consistently with regular meetings and minimal supervision from the Rural Development Office (RDO).

“Before the arrival of [the partner] in our villages we had very little chance to interact with the Muslim community. Through [partner] meetings though, we are able to discuss our issues with the Muslim community and work together to prioritize issues facing our communities.”

SECRETARY RDS

Four out of the planned five community stakeholder meetings to explain the importance of and plan the mobile clinics, were held this quarter. A total of 74 individuals from 24 villages, (34 male and 40 female) attended these meetings. This number included GNs, Samurdhi Development Officers as well as members of WRDSs and RDSs.

After 46 Years of Marriage Couple Obtains Marriage Certificate at Mobile Legal Clinic

After 46 years of marriage, at age 62 and 72 the couple were an unusual sight at a mobile legal clinic in the Batticaloa District.

For years the *Grama Sevaka* (village leader) urged the couple to apply for their marriage certificate, as it would provide legal proof of their marriage and might be needed by their children in the future. But it was hardly a priority as they tackled daily life in the midst of a war during which they were twice displaced and lost a son.

So when the partner's mobile legal clinic came right to their village and project staff helped the couple put their application together, they finally applied and obtained their marriage certificate. Even at their age and after so many years of marriage, the couple recognized the importance of obtaining this and other legal documents. As explained, "My parents owned land, but they didn't have any form of legal documentation to prove that they owned the land or that they were married. So when they died the children didn't get any part of the land. By getting our marriage certificate now, that sort of thing can be avoided for our children."

INGO staff facilitated these meetings and explained the importance of documents such as birth, marriage and



People from four villages in Batticaloa apply for their missing legal documents at a Mobile Legal

death certificates, as well as the processes that needed to be followed to secure them. The Death Registration Temporary Provisions Act of 2011 was also discussed together with its importance. Participants also planned the proposed "pre-clinics" in their target area at these meetings.

Six community preparation programs or "pre-clinics" were conducted this quarter; a total of 275 (97 male and 178 female) people participated. Several government officials were also present including the Registrar of the District Registrar's Office, GNs, Justices of Peace, as well as INGO officers. All applicants received guidance on the forms that needed to be prepared and the types of supporting documents that would need to be furnished.

This quarter also saw the completion of one final mobile clinic out of a planned total of six. The 275 applicants of the pre-clinics and 39 others (17 male and 22 female) participated in this event where 355 document applications were made for the issuance of documents. Forty-eight applicants received marriage certificates and 42 received birth certificates at the clinic.

Death certificates and late birth registrations require signatures to be placed before the Assistant Registrar General (ARG). This will be carried out—possibly at a combined event—following completion of the remaining final mobile clinics.

ARD055

During the last quarter, the partner carried out a detailed review of its case records from its previous SuRG-funded program and identified 77 cases which required follow-up. Thirteen cases were taken from this caseload of which four received favorable verdicts last quarter. The remaining nine were also concluded successfully this quarter and a further 20 cases (19 maintenance and 1 missing person case) were drawn from this batch of cases for follow-up this quarter; the cases were heard at two Magistrate's Court in Batticaloa District. All 19 maintenance case clients received

MOBILE LEGAL CLINIC : APPLICATIONS FILED AND

Type of Document	Number of Applications	Documents Obtained
National Identity Card	161	0
Birth Certificate	121	42
Death Certificate (Disappearance Only)	24	0
Marriage Certificate	49	48
Total	355	90

DOCUMENTATION OBTAINED

favorable verdicts and have begun receiving maintenance. A legal aid group provided a lawyer for all of these cases.

The partner also received 19 new cases for legal assistance. The cases included eight maintenance cases; four fraud (monetary) cases; two domestic violence cases; four land disputes and one divorce case. The maintenance cases were filed in the courts together with two land disputes and three fraud cases. One fraud case and the two domestic violence cases were referred to the Mediation Board.

The partner provided assistance to 102 community members with missing or lost legal documents. Eighty-one people applied for marriage certificates and 21 have applied for National Identity Cards through their respective *Grama Niladharis*.

The partner also continued work with its three project task forces. Task Force I had three meetings during which issues such as dengue eradication and land titles were discussed. The PHI who was present at the meeting thereafter initiated an awareness campaign in seven villages with the assistance of the task force members and the MOH. A total of 171 participants (42 male and 129 female) from seven villages participated in this awareness campaign.

Task Force II conducted two meetings with two *Pradeshhiya Sabbas*. Present at the meetings were the chairmen and members of the respective *Pradeshhiya Sabbas*, members of the Advisory Committee, the Community Development Officer and Planning Officers, among others. The authorities have taken several positive steps to follow up on issues raised at the meetings, including fixing street lights, renovating a road and sending potable water to a village.

Task Force III which liaises with the Police and Civil Protection Units conducted three meetings during this quarter. They raised concerns about school dropouts, consumption of liquor in public places among others. Several positive steps have been taken as a result including greater police patrolling in areas where liquor is sold and consumed and identifying school dropouts, making home visits and convincing parents and schools to ensure re-enrollment.

Under its capacity building component, the partner completed two training programs for members of all three task forces as well as other community members. Topics included land rights and securing greater citizen participation in local governance. A total of 39 individuals participated in these trainings, including 18 men and 21 women (31 Tamils; 8 Muslims).

ARD052

The partner's Human Rights Diploma Course that commenced last quarter continued throughout this quarter. Forty participants (22 men and 18 women, of whom 22 are Muslim and 18 are Tamil) continued to attend the course. Students sat for a mid-term examination and also covered subjects such as language rights; minority rights; child rights; civic and Fundamental Rights; administrative law; environmental rights; Domestic Violence Act; forensic medicine and medical negligence; and non-violent communication among other topics.

Under its awareness-raising component, the partner held 13 awareness-raising sessions in eight villages. The sessions focused on Fundamental Rights, women's rights, child rights and remedies available for victims and provided 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 that were most pressing in these villages, such as discriminatory practices of the police, domestic violence, maintenance, school dropouts and obtaining vital documents. The topics for discussion were selected by the communities themselves, following which, potential avenues for redress or remedy were also discussed.

DS Shares Learning from HR Course with New Government Recruits

The Divisional Secretary (DS) of a DS Division in the Ampara district is also a student in the second batch of SuRG partner's Human Rights Diploma course.

Before even completing the course, he is sharing what he learned with his colleagues and with the public. Recently assigned to train 248 graduate recruits for postings in government departments, he has incorporated topics and materials from the course into his training sessions. "I have conducted four training sessions for these graduate trainees so far and my sessions included topics such as basic law and fundamental rights, court systems in Sri Lanka, child rights, women's rights, administrative law and constitutional law. I used the module and other materials provided by the Human Rights Course in my training sessions."

He is also writing a book in Tamil on critical aspects of basic law for the general public.

Thankful to be a student in the course, he states, "This course provided me vast knowledge on human rights and applicability...I wholeheartedly appreciate the course for if I was not a student of this course I would not be able to do these training topics properly...I thank [the partner] and USAID for this valuable course which is helping many direct and indirect beneficiaries in the district."

He is one of 40 students studying in the second batch of this course. Thirty eight people graduated from the first batch on International Human Rights Day 2010. The HR diploma program was the first and remains the only course

A total of 165 individuals (70 male; 95 female) participated in these awareness sessions (59 Tamils; 106 Muslims). A number of participants attended two sessions, as two awareness sessions were held in five of the 13 villages. The partner was encouraged by the fact that there was much greater male participation in four of the villages. Securing male participation has always been difficult, and this increase in numbers proves that it is indeed possible if there is persistence and innovative ways such as home visits to convince men of the importance of their participation and fixing flexible meeting times so that working men are available to participate.

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. The partner could not carry out all the planned sessions this quarter due to challenges in identifying willing and enthusiastic participants from the WRDSs. A total of 20 sessions however, were conducted this quarter. Out of these, five were on the topic of "Leadership and Best

Practices of Effective Leadership;" seven sessions were on the topic of "Setting up Office, Filing, Management, Book Keeping and Finance;" four sessions were held on "Identifying Critical Community Issues and Advocacy as well as Proposal Development," and finally, four more sessions were on the topic of "Rights and their Protection, Legal Documentation, Legal Remedies and Linking with Support Organizations." A total of 158 women attended these capacity building sessions (63 Tamil; 95 Muslim).

Following these workshops, four WRDSs began developing a proposal on securing child rights—an issue they identified as pressing within the current socio-economic environment—to submit to UNICEF. Furthermore, participants have taken steps to increase participation within their WRDSs and ensure consistency in functioning. The changes are particularly visible within three participating WRDSs.

ARD053

The partner has been supporting 31 legal aid cases including 11 from its previous SuRG grant. Three out of these 11 cases (including two maintenance cases and a dispute over money) were successfully completed during this quarter. Of the cases initiated under this grant, the partner continues to support 19 maintenance

cases and one case involving a dispute over money. Of these, one maintenance case was completed during this quarter.

The partner retains a lawyer who works part-time on cases selected for legal aid. This lawyer provided legal counsel to 11 clients who came to the partner's office. Ten female clients and one male client were referred to the Legal Aid Commission for further assistance.

The partner organized a workshop on land on May 16. The workshop was facilitated by a Retired Assistant Land Commissioner for the Eastern Province. Twenty-two women and three men participated in this workshop.

As part of the partner's efforts to ensure the psychological wellbeing of women, special counseling programs continued this quarter with the support of professional counselors and psychiatrists. Six programs were conducted in six villages. In total, 36 women (20 Muslim and 16 Tamil) participated; 26 of them have also been attending regular mental health clinics over the last three months at the local Base Hospital.

Peer support sessions also continued this quarter; 18 such sessions were carried out by community women. 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 on their own and share experiences and problems. They also try their best to provide support to each other in times of need.

During this quarter, 31 women received livelihood support (13 psychosocial recipients and 18 women who received legal aid, all initiated under the partner's previous SuRG grant). A one-day training was held in which 19 women participated. The training was on basic accounting and business management. Presently, 87 women and four men are involved in livelihood activities.

Five, two-day training workshops on gender equality and leadership for adolescents were conducted during this quarter. Of a total of 103 young people who participated, 53 were girls and 50 were boys. Another five, two-day workshops on gender-sensitive leadership and non-violent communication were also conducted during this quarter. The 97 participants aged between 18 and 30 included 52 females and 45 males.

During this quarter, the partner also worked with young married couples to raise awareness on women's rights and gender equality. They conducted a one-day training session for 13 married couples on building understanding between spouses to ensure healthy marital relations and households.

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

ARD046

During this quarter WIN continued to provide legal and counseling support services to women and children victims of violence in the Jaffna and Puttalam districts. A total of 284 new clients (82 in Jaffna, 202 in Puttalam) accessed WIN's services during this quarter and 384 repeat visits were also made (144 in Jaffna, 240 in Puttalam). WIN answered 6,977 distress calls on their hotline during this quarter and housed 72 women and children in its shelters in Colombo and Matara.

"I struggled with my children and experienced a lot of sorrow and hardship. No one volunteered to help us. But, fortunately someone referred me to WIN which is a wonderful place. I benefited a lot from counseling, legal support and also I am feeling relaxed and self-confident. I have regained my self-esteem ... I will always be grateful to WIN."

WIN CLIENT, JAFFNA

A total of 158 new clients (71 Jaffna; 87 Puttalam) accessed WIN's psychological counseling services while 138 repeat visits were also made (104 Jaffna; 34 Puttalam) for similar services. In Jaffna, the main reasons for new clients seeking out these services were relationship problems, domestic violence and financial problems. While in Puttalam, the main reason was emotional and psychological abuse.

During this quarter, 228 new clients accessed WIN's legal advice, information and counseling services, while, clients also made 323 repeat visits seeking similar services. Lawyers filed 21 new maintenance cases this quarter. In addition, one divorce case and six cases requesting DNA testing for paternity were filed in Jaffna, while a rape case and two assault cases were filed in Puttalam. No new protection orders were filed in either district during this period. This continues to be a challenge as clients prefer to amicably resolve problems as far as possible rather than going to court.

WIN conducted a staff training program for the Puttalam Crisis Centre staff this quarter; seven staff members from Puttalam participated together with five WIN Colombo staff from the hospital and police station counseling desks. The training program was to act as a refresher program for WIN staff and focused on topics such as time and stress management, creative thinking, problem-solving, personal development, non-violent communication and new techniques in psycho-social counseling. Puttalam staff requested this program as they believed that in addition to developing their skills, they needed a forum to discuss issues faced on a daily basis with experts. Thus, the program was designed to address particular problems that staff face such as working with difficult clients, resolving personal stress resulting from dealing with traumatic experiences on a daily basis, personal motivation and creative thinking.

SuRG also supported WIN's Annual Review Meeting held on June 15. One hundred and seventeen WIN staff members, comprising counselors, lawyers, social workers, accountants and administrative staff from all of WIN's centers around the country attended the program. Staff from each of the centers made brief presentations of their achievements this year and the main challenges they continue to face in trying to address GBV which many felt is a burgeoning problem in the country.

During this quarter, a total of six outreach and awareness programs were conducted in Jaffna and Puttalam with various stakeholders groups in order to create awareness and generate discussion on the topics of domestic and gender-based violence, their causes and steps that can be taken to address or prevent these problems within society. A total of 195 people (48 male, 147 female) participated in these events.

The first such program held in Jaffna for this quarter targeted mid-level government officials on the topic of abuse of women and children. Child abuse in Jaffna District continues to be on the rise. According to Jaffna Teaching Hospital sources, this year 62 child abuse cases were brought to the hospital, out of which 34 of these were sexual offences. Twelve female and eight male government officials including Women Development Officers, Child Rights Protection Officers, Probation Officers and Cultural Officers participated in the program. Topics covered included the legal rights of a child, women's rights, the abuse of women and children, the causes and the social and legal steps that can be taken to address child abuse and VAW. Similar programs were conducted for 19 *Samurdhi Niladbaris* (11 female, 8 male) from the Velanai, Kayts and Delft divisions and 19 *Grama Niladbaris* (6 female; 13 male) from Maruthankerny, Karaveddy, Thellipalai, Jaffna, Uduvil and Point Pedro.

A community awareness program was also held in the Velanai DS division for 69 people (68 female, 1 male). A significant number of the participants suffer from domestic violence as a result of alcohol abuse by their husbands. They believe that eradicating the sale of alcohol within their villages would greatly reduce this



Participants at WIN's Community Awareness Program on domestic and gender-based violence in Jaffna District.

problem for them and what they believe to be a problem that the majority of women in their area also suffer from.

Puttalam staff, too, conducted a similar community awareness program in the Karuwalagaswewa DS division; 42 women and eight men participated. Staff provided participants with a description of the services offered by WIN and then went on to discuss the importance of counseling in resolving family problems and preventing them from escalating into extreme violence.

In addition, the Puttalam Center conducted a two-day residential workshop for 18 youth (10 male; 8 female). The participants ranged from 18 to 24 years of age. The workshop aimed to change perceptions amongst youth on the role of women and girls and increase sensitization toward GBV/VAW. It also sought to improve their communication skills, including introducing the concept of non-violent communication, and promoting leadership qualities. Topics such as gender, gender stereotyping, and perceptions of masculinity, together with HIV and sexually transmitted diseases were also discussed.

A street drama group of 12 youth from Matara were brought to Puttalam to perform for the youth at the workshop. Their performance centered on VAW. The Puttalam youth interacted with the drama troupe and shared ideas and experiences.

Early in the quarter, the project suffered a setback when the Judicial Services Commission (JSC) refused to permit the family court counselors' program to go ahead. This despite WIN receiving written permission from the Ministry of Justice at the end of last quarter. After a series of unsuccessful negotiations with the Ministry and the JSC, and due to the apparent finality of the decision, WIN together with SuRG decided not to pursue the matter further. In its place, WIN proposed to use the available funds for a program targeting Assistant Counselors, in collaboration with the Family Health Bureau. In order to complete this and other activities that were added to the plan following the mid-term review last quarter, WIN was granted a two-month no-cost extension period.

1.1.3 TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Labor Law

The Northern Province has not had a Labor Court since 1987. Labor cases from the North have since been heard mainly in Anuradhapura or elsewhere on the island. As a result, a number of clients from the North have preferred not to take labor matters to court.

The Bar Association of Jaffna began advocating with the Ministry of Justice and the Chief Justice for the re-establishment of a labor court in Jaffna and was granted permission by the Ministry early this year. While the infrastructure is nearly ready, the Bar Association observed that the northern legal community—lawyers, law students and paralegals—were unfamiliar with the laws applicable to this area of substantive law and so decided to conduct a special seminar on the topic. The seminar was held on 16 June in Jaffna with SuRG support. A total of 67 lawyers, judges and law students—predominantly from Jaffna, but also from Kilinochchi—participated in the workshop.

The seminar covered international standards; domestic law; the role of labor tribunals; compensation awarded by Labor Tribunals and other institutions; streamlining industrial disputes; women in employment; recovery of EPF and labor rights in Sri Lanka. He also provided insight into recent case law. Participants were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and interact among each other and with the resource person. Several



A "Seminar on Labor Law" organized by the Bar Association of Jaffna in collaboration with SuRG.

participants including the High Court judges took this opportunity to clear areas of longstanding confusion or dispute. A highlight of the event was a discussion on the pros and cons of non-lawyers being able to appear in Labor Tribunals.

COUNSELING GROUP THERAPY TRAINING PROGRAM

SuRG supported the participation of nine people in a 10-day training program on group therapy organized by the Professional Psychological and Counseling Centre (PPCC) in Batticaloa at the Dream Catcher Training Centre in Batticaloa. One SuRG partner plans to form a network of counselors with the nine Trincomalee-based participants after the course. Other course participants were counselors from PPCC.

“I am 50 years old and in my career of 24 years I have never had this type of training. I am the person in charge of the Counseling Unit in the Zonal Education Department. But before this training, I had never received any training on counseling. I am confident that now I can use what I learned in my work at the office and school levels. I have already changed my behavior and attitudes when talking with others.”

IN SERVICES ADVISOR (ISA) ZONAL
EDUCATION OFFICE, TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

Topics covered during the training included the main contents of yoga; why group therapy is needed; Irvin Yalom’s therapeutic factors, contents and processes; small group exercises and large group sharing; opportunities and challenges for group therapy, guidelines for group participation; principles and ethics of group therapy, and how to terminate the group upon completion of the group therapy session.



Students at the group therapy training program organized in Batticaloa District.

STRATEGIC PLANNING – ODDAMAVADY GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) DESK

Two technical advisors were commissioned by SuRG to develop a strategic plan for the Oddamavady GBV Desk. Critical to the assignment was the process through which these advisors would develop the plan; that is, engaging staff and stakeholders of the GBV Desk in participatory consultations including interviews and two workshops. A total of 19 individuals participated in the first workshop held in Giritale. *Grama Niladharis*, Probation Officers, a Child Rights Promotion Assistant, a Relief Sister, and a Teacher Advisor (In-service Advisor) in addition to GBV Desk and Valachenai Hospital staff, which included the Medical Superintendent, the Psychiatrist, Medical Officers, Nursing Officers, Public Health Nursing Sister, a Public Health Midwife, the Psychosocial Assistant, and the Social Welfare Officer, members of the GBV Desk partner organizations Koralaipattu North Development Unit (KPNDU) and the People’s Welfare Association all attended the workshop. During the workshop, participants prepared goals and objectives for the strategic planning process. These participants became the “Core Group” that would directly influence the design and implement the strategic plan. Following the workshop, the advisors conducted a series of interviews with other relevant stakeholders and gathered information on the types of services currently available for victims of GBV, the opportunities available to address GBV as well as the challenges. The advisors also met with the GBV Task Force, Women’s Coalition for Disaster Management (WCDM), hospital staff and other key informants such as the police, members of the Mediation Boards and affected women who were willing to meet and share their experiences and ideas.

The advisors then drafted a strategic plan to share at a second workshop with the Core Group and other local stakeholder organizations Oxfam Australia, Koinonia and ESCO. A total of 23 individuals participated in the second workshop held in Trincomalee. Participants discussed and revised the draft. The plan is being reviewed by SuRG and will be finalized early next quarter for implementation by the GBV Desk and dissemination to donors and other stakeholders.

I.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The CEaT team continued to support and monitor ongoing grant activities throughout the quarter.

The team also conducted two Quarterly Review Meetings (QRM). The first meeting took place on June 26, in Batticaloa for 17 representatives of seven partner organizations from Batticaloa, Ampara and Polonnaruwa. The second QRM was held on June 28, in Trincomalee for 24 representatives of six partner organizations from Trincomalee and Jaffna. The one-day sessions provided opportunities for partners to present their work and share best practices and lessons learned and extend their network. The sessions also included time for partners to review M&E and financial recordkeeping practices.

I.2.1 GRANTS

ARD057

During this reporting period, the partner facilitated 39 Youth Group monthly meetings at which participants discussed pressing issues in their communities and possible actions. A total of 182 youth (131 male, 51 female) from the 15 project villages (5 Muslim, 5 Tamil and 5 Sinhalese) in Seruvila and Muthur DS divisions participated in these meetings. Issues raised and activities discussed during these monthly meetings included:

- In response to a request from the Youth Group in earlier monthly meetings, an awareness session on the impact of smoking was conducted for youth. Smoking has noticeably increased recently among youth. The session addressed the harmful and addictive effects of smoking and encouraged youth to stop.
- An awareness session on road accidents was conducted for youth. Though the main road is now being used as a highway, most children in the area are unaware of this and travel on the road in a hazardous manner. The awareness session covered topics including road safety and road accidents caused by drunk driving and speeding.
- As requested by the Youth Group, an awareness speech was given on accidents, casualties and vulnerability of road users by the Principal at the school's morning assembly.
- Two Youth Groups discussed the importance of making more books available at their public library. They stressed that a library is a university to the village and a neutral place where people can gather, network and work together on school projects and community issues. The Youth Groups have requested partner staff help them find donors and support to obtain books.

The partner also conducted 36 Peace Committee monthly meetings to discuss and develop action plans for village-related problems. A total of 120 people (103 male, 17 female / 45 Muslims, 32 Sinhalese and 43 Tamils) attended these meetings. Issues identified for follow-up action from Peace Committee members include:

- In one community, the allotment of houses for vulnerable people was being given to villagers who already had houses while the most vulnerable in the community were overlooked.
- The Peace Committee referred a local dispute over ownership of paddy land between two families to the police.

- Many Peace Committees raised the issue of land encroachment to land, by government officials and religious extremists.

A total of 28 people (20 male, 8 female) including eight Sinhalese, 10 Tamils and 10 Muslims participated in a network meeting organized by the partner between the Presidents of Peace Committees and Youth Groups and various government officials to discuss unresolved village-level issues. The Planning Director at the DS, Police-Officer in Charge, and religious leaders and PS members participated in the event. The issue of unfair housing allotments and the lack of proper transportation where the public depends on a small ferry which is available only occasionally were the main issues raised during the meeting. The Planning Director explained the selection criteria used for housing allotments and indicated that citizens can make complaints at the GN Office against such violations. He also promised to talk about the transportation problem with the DS. Participants felt the networking meeting gave them much-needed encouragement to work at the village level on community issues as they now can be comfortable seeking support from government officials for their needs.

In April, the partner conducted a two-day workshop on non-violent communication. The objective of the workshop was to emphasize communication techniques to achieve mutual understanding through relationship building. A total of 41 people (20 male, 21 female) participated in the workshop including 17 Tamils, eight Sinhalese and 16 Muslims.

In June, the partner conducted its third street drama workshop for 37 youth (17 male, 20 female) including 14 Tamils, 11 Sinhalese and 12 Muslims. The workshop was facilitated by the Assistant Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs in Trincomalee.

A one-day workshop on Problem Solving Techniques for selected members of Youth Groups and Peace Committees was conducted in June. The purpose of the workshop was to help participants identify and resolve village-level problems. A total of 40 people (33 male, 7 female) participated in the workshop including 15 Tamils, 10 Sinhalese and 15 Muslims. The workshop was facilitated by a Visiting Lecturer of the Open University of Sri Lanka in Ampara, and a lawyer in Trincomalee District.



SuRG Partner
Youth Group members engage in a group exercise during a Non-violent Communication Workshop held in Trincomalee District.

The partner also conducted an exposure visit to the Batticaloa District this quarter for selected Youth Group, Peace Committee and PS members. A SuRG grantee in Batticaloa hosted the visit and shared best practices and strategies for conducting activities and service delivery for community development. During the visit, participants met the Eastern Provincial Council Chief Minister with whom they raised issues of youth unemployment and the lack of doctors in the base hospital. The host Youth Group organized a musical program for the participants. A total of 44 people (27 male, 17 female) participated in the exposure visit including 12 Tamils, 19 Sinhalese and 13 Muslims.

ARD047

American University (AU)-Peace and Development Institute (PDI) continued to provide support to the local implementing partner to strengthen and sustain the organization and to guide implementation of their training and advocacy programs. During this quarter, a funding proposal to sustain the partner after its USAID and SuRG/AU grants end was finalized and a plan was developed to submit the proposal to other donors and to organize meetings with these potential donors to discuss the project. In addition, the partner

applied to USAID for funding under their Civic Dialogue and Cross-Community Activities of the Development Grants Program (DGP).

Implementation of activities under this grant has been slow from the start due to problems in identifying a qualified Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Acting Executive Director of the partner this quarter accepted the title of CEO and agreed to stay on with the organization until the end of the AU-PDI project. AU-PDI is continuing to work with him to develop a staffing plan to ensure a competent person or persons are in place to replace him once the project is over. The Board has agreed to recruit two senior-level staff to work; one who will work on the strategic plan, programs, training, and courses; and another who will concentrate on management, finance, and institutional aspects.

The partner implemented a number of activities this quarter including a Women’s Advocacy and Policy Formulation Workshop, consultations on land in the North and the East, and follow-up on the Social Science Research Methods Course (SSRMC) and the Capacity Building on Rights and Advocacy training.

The Women’s Advocacy and Policy Formulation Workshop held in April provided an opportunity for Muslim women and men to develop their capabilities as national-level advocates. The workshop was held in Colombo and was facilitated by an expert on Women’s Studies specializing in gender and development research and training of trainers. Twenty-five participants (22 women and 3 men) attended the workshop from Galle, Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Mannar, Puttalam, Kurunegala, Kandy, Polonnaruwa, Colombo, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, Kegalle and Badulla. After identifying three priority areas to work on—enhancing the psychological and economic statuses of deserted women in Trincomalee District; social and economic development of women in Batticaloa District; and marriage and divorce practices in Ampara District—participants developed advocacy plans to be implemented in the coming months. Participants were also given resources to enhance their knowledge on topics such as relating Islam to advocacy, negotiation and leadership skills, human rights and media.

In May and June, the implementing partner conducted consultations on land resettlement issues in the North and East, respectively. The objectives of the consultations were to understand issues being faced by resettled Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and those awaiting resettlement; explore the perception of the Muslim community; critically review the current resettlement policy and programs in the Northern and Eastern Provinces; and to collect stories of success, failure, challenges and threats to resettlement to be shared at a national-level Land Settlement and Disputes Workshop to be held in the coming months. A total of 64 people (13 women and 51 men) participated in the consultations including state officers, teachers, members of community service organizations, members of mosque committees, senior citizens, and IDPs. Representatives from each district presented their problems with regard to resettlement and land dispute issues. Key issues per district and crosscutting issues in both provinces were identified and recommendations were drawn up for the partner to use in future advocacy efforts related to land resettlement and to help design future workshops on land dispute resolution.

“I have been participating in various seminars, conferences, workshops for the last 20 years. In all those meetings, they spoke about our problems, whilst we were the audience. This is the first time that we are speaking about our own problems through our [own] experiences.”

**PARTICIPANT
LAND RESETTLEMENT CONSULTATION**

In April, the partner organized a three-day follow-up workshop with the researchers from the Social Science Research Methods Course (SSRMC). At the workshop the partner checked on the progress of the researchers, and provided support and feedback on their concerns. Senior lecturers and professors from the University of Colombo facilitated the workshop and provided training on analyzing quantitative and qualitative data and technical scientific writing. Each researcher presented his or her research and one-on-one feedback sessions were held between the researchers and facilitators. Researchers have submitted their progress reports and are working toward submitting their final reports by the end of August.

Also this quarter, the partner maintained close contact with participants from the Capacity Building on Rights and Advocacy training held last quarter and has been following up with the community-based advocacy plans developed at the training.

ARD034

The partner continued implementation of its “Community Empowerment through CBO Capacity Building” project working with 33 CBOs in seven GN divisions in Batticaloa District.

During this reporting period, the partner conducted two-day workshops for CBO members on organizational management in 11 villages. Two hundred forty-seven people (97 males, 150 females) participated in the training.

With the help of CBO members trained in legal documentation workshops, the partner collected information on 717 persons in the 11 project villages who need assistance obtaining legal documents including birth, death and marriage certificates. CBO members used a data collection sheet developed by the partner to identify persons requiring such assistance. Together with 81 cases identified last quarter, the partner has now identified 798 cases of legal documentation needs. Mobile legal clinics are planned for next quarter to address these cases.

The success of these activities led CBOs in a village outside of the project area, to obtain the partner’s data collection sheet and use it to identify 118 cases of legal documentation needs in their village. Furthermore, the DS requested the partner to expand its legal documentation services to the remaining nine GN divisions in the division. In response, the partner altered its legal assistance plans to incorporate all 16 GN divisions. They then conducted two pre-mobile legal clinics with the support of officers from the DS and NRC. At these clinics 73 people (43 females, 30 males) received assistance to prepare their applications for their missing legal documents. Next quarter, the partner will organize 14 additional pre-mobile clinics. Cases identified will be followed up at the two final legal mobile clinics scheduled later in the quarter.

Incorporating data collected last quarter, the partner prepared a draft of its *Service Providers’ Directory* which will provide contact information of social service providers (NGOs, INGOs, government institutions) throughout the Vaharai DS division. The draft, divided by sector within three sections (province, district and division), was submitted to the DS Office and other stakeholders for their input. Once this input is received and the draft finalized, 500 copies of the directory will be published and disseminated.

ARD059

The partner continued implementation of its “Community Empowerment and Mobilization for Muslim and Sinhalese Communities Co-Existence Project” in Polonnaruwa District. The project was originally planned for seven villages within the DS division, but in response to requests made by a community not targeted for the project, this quarter the partner expanded project activities to include them.

The partner started the quarter by forming a village committee and children’s club in the new community and conducting orientation meetings. During the meetings, the partner discussed project objectives, activities, outcomes, and budget allocations for their respective activities, how to further strengthen the relationship between Sinhalese and Muslim communities, and how to engage communities and obtain their support during project implementation.

During the reporting period, the partner held 20 monthly meetings with the village committees of all eight villages where a total of 343 people (166 Sinhalese and 177 Muslim) participated, including 214 women and 129 men. Highlights of issues, next steps and best practices discussed during the meetings follow below.

- Participants discussed their personal experiences of how relationships between the Muslim and Sinhalese communities have strengthened as a result of the project. Anecdotes included, sharing food between the two communities, inviting people from other communities for special occasions in individual households, conducting business between the two communities and sharing knowledge gained about each other's religious doctrines and practices.
- Discussions took place about the need to provide legal documentation. A data collection process was started this quarter to identify people who need legal documentation and 51 cases have been identified so far. Two mobile clinics will be organized next quarter to address these needs.
- The partner discussed the progress of their revolving loan fund disbursement and progress of the individual loans disbursed last quarter for cultivation, self-employment, construction of houses, toilets and wells, and other livelihood activities. Though this is not part of the SuRG project, the initiative is intended to ensure sustainability of SuRG activities.
- Participants also appreciated the activities of the children's clubs and provided encouragement and support for their children to participate. They recognized the importance of children's unity as a means of creating long lasting peace between the two communities.

A total of 24 monthly meetings were held with the eight children's clubs. During the monthly meetings, the partner and the children discussed future activities to be implemented, progress and impact of activities implemented last quarter, ethics of using the sports equipment distributed by the partner last quarter, maintenance, caring and sharing of equipment, and new initiatives suggested by children during the divisional children's club meetings held this quarter. A total of 262 children (120 Muslim, 142 Sinhalese) participated in these meetings including 133 girls and 129 boys.

"I have had a new experience today, because typically we do not go to social events. But today, our parents gave us permission to attend and support this *Dansala*. Together we [Muslim and Sinhala children] collected money to organize this event. We decided to hold it in a place where both communities go. I'm very happy because I made Sinhala friends and we worked together to accomplish this task. The villagers were very curious about this event because, probably just like me, it's the first time in their lives they've seen Muslim and Sinhala children working together. This is a very exciting experience for me."

14 YEAR OLD MUSLIM MEMBER OF SuRG PARTNER CHILDREN'S CLUB

The partner also organized two divisional children's clubs meetings with 25 representatives (12 male, 13 female and 8 Sinhalese, 17 Muslim) from the eight children's clubs. Topics included the coordination of leadership, skills development and communications trainings, implementation of initiatives raised during children's club meetings, fundraising mechanisms, encouragement of individual savings among club members, and activities to strengthen the bond between clubs and between the two communities. The divisional children's club also organized a *Dansala* (alms giving) during the Poson Poya day (a Buddhist religious holiday) and provided beverages for the pilgrims and other community members living in the area. The members of the divisional children's club worked together to collect funds and implement the event. This was the first time such an event was organized in the area with the participation of children from both Sinhalese and Muslim communities.

Three trainings were conducted for divisional children's club members during the quarter under the topics of leadership, skills development and communication. Basic concepts of each topic were emphasized during the trainings and a total of 28 children (16 female, 12 male and 20 Muslim, 8 Sinhalese) participated. Though each of the trainings were meant only for the 24 members of the divisional children's club, other children from village-level children's clubs who were interested also participated.

The partner continued its language classes during the quarter, conducting a total of five language classes, two Tamil and three Sinhala. One hundred fifty-two Sinhalese children and 122 Muslim children were enrolled to learn Tamil and Sinhala, respectively.

ARD048

The Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (KCP) continued implementation of its “Inter-religious Cooperation for Community Development and Social Empowerment in Trincomalee and Batticaloa Districts, and Padaviya Division” project with its local implementing partner. Ongoing meetings held, activities implemented and interaction among project religious leaders continue to cement ties among participants and generate interest and enthusiasm in their congregations and communities. Community-based inter-faith development projects led by inter-faith teams of project religious leaders are engaging youth and adults in ways that support personal and community growth while enhancing inter-faith and inter-ethnic ties among participants. To date, 26 projects are ongoing and seven have been completed. Projects include Tamil, Sinhala and English language training, computer training, sports and youth camps, awareness-raising sessions, *shramadanas*, and livelihood and vocational training. In this quarter alone, 2,167 people representing all four faith groups were reached through these projects. The chart below shows a breakdown of ongoing development projects by district and by type of project.

INTER-FAITH DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

District	Language Training	Peacebuilding	Economic Empowerment	Total
Batticaloa	2	1	1	4
Trincomalee	11	0	2	13
Padaviya Division	3	1	5	9
Total	16	2	8	26

In order to enhance collaboration and coordination on inter-faith projects, the religious leaders decided to hold monthly division meetings even though there is no project funding set aside for the meetings. In Batticaloa, one group has filed for formal recognition as a CBO from their DS. This quarter, 20 religious leaders (1 Buddhist, 5 Muslims, 6 Christians and 8 Hindus) attended the Batticaloa division meeting to review progress on inter-faith development projects and explore options for future projects.

In addition, district-level meetings were held in all three project areas. The district quarterly meetings were attended by 11 religious leaders (2 Christians, 4 Muslims and 5 Hindus) in Batticaloa District, 10 religious leaders (6 Buddhists, 2 Christians and 2 Muslims) in Padaviya DS Division, and 31 religious leaders (5 Buddhists, 13 Hindus, 7 Christians and 6 Muslims) in Trincomalee District.

During the quarter, the partner also conducted the second round of an exchange program among project religious leaders from the East and from the partner’s inter-faith network based in Galle. Last quarter 40 religious leaders (11 Buddhist, 10 Christian, 10 Hindu and 9 Muslim) travelled from the East to Galle and this quarter 16 religious leaders from Galle representing all four faith groups travelled to Batticaloa for a two-day visit and exchange. The exchange, which was launched by the Batticaloa Governing Agent, Mrs. P.C.M. Charles, was attended by project religious leaders along with 100 additional civic and religious leaders from Ampara, Monaragala, Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa districts. Religious leaders participated in a “Religious Exchange” in which they discussed how their faith and values influence their lives; they visited program inter-faith development projects and explored how community development work could be used as a means towards national reconciliation; and took part in a cultural program.

The partner also held an inter-faith dialogue workshop in Batticaloa for 21 participants (14 Tamils and 7 Muslims) including 15 religious leaders who were not able to attend the February workshop and six language teachers who expressed interest after hearing about the training in the language classes. The session focused on approaches to inter-faith peacebuilding and methods of using inter-faith peacebuilding to promote community development and social empowerment.

ARD056

Project activities came to a standstill during the quarter for the partner's "Strengthening Community Co-existence through Social Mobilization of Women's and Youth Groups" project targeting 13 villages in Trincomalee District.

In December 2011, once the grant agreement was signed, the partner requested approval to implement project activities from the DS. As they had received approval to conduct similar activities under the first SuRG grant, they moved forward with implementation while approval was still pending. The DS had verbally indicated to the partner that he was okay with the project, but that final approval would need to come from the GA.

In late March 2012, the partner was notified by the additional GA that they should use their project funds for livelihood activities in place of the planned activities or the project would not be approved. Since then, the partner has suspended its project activities while negotiating with the DS.

In June after no progress was made, SuRG met with the partner's board members to discuss how to move forward in light of the current situation. It was decided to amend the project to include livelihood activities. Once formal approval from the DS is granted, the partner will submit a revised timeline and budget for a three month no-cost extension to implement these and other remaining activities.



Tetra Tech ARD/SuRG

Muslim, Hindu and Christian women from Batticaloa attend Palmyra palms training at the Puthukudiyirruppur Training Center in Batticaloa District as part of a women's empowerment project implemented by KCP beneficiary religious leaders.

ARD036

The partner continued working with nine CBOs in six Sinhalese and Tamil GN divisions in Trincomalee District. In April, they conducted six workshops for CBO members in each GN division. During the workshops, participants analyzed the strengths and weaknesses within their organizations and identified community problems in their villages. One hundred thirty participants (63 Tamils and 67 Sinhalese) from the nine CBOs attended the workshops during which 86 community problems were identified. The partner then identified a total of 30 of these as common to all six villages.

The partner followed up the workshops with a training for CBO leaders on service delivery to help them identify and engage relevant service providers to address the 30 crosscutting community problems identified during the April workshops. At the end of the session, participants were given names and contact details of the local service providers and encouraged to actively seek their assistance. Thirty-four CBO leaders (20 Tamils and 14 Sinhalese) attended the training.

The partner then held two monthly meetings for members from all nine CBOs to prioritize the crosscutting community problems they will address next quarter and to devise an action plan. Twenty-three of the original 30 community problems were identified for action in the first meeting, and then in the second meeting, five

of those problems were prioritized for immediate attention next quarter and an action plan for their resolution was developed. The issues deemed priority are lack of medical facilities and doctors in hospitals; lack of teachers in schools; school dropouts; problems caused by elephant fences; and illegal alcohol production. Forty-six CBO members (22 Tamils and 24 Sinhalese) participated in the sessions.

The partner also conducted two one-day capacity building trainings in May based on findings from the CBO needs assessment sessions conducted last quarter. The trainings covered leadership and effective communication, and advocacy and team work. Seventy-two CBO members participated in both sessions, including 33 Tamils and 39 Sinhalese.

Sinhala and Tamil language classes for youth continued throughout the quarter with the participation of 57 Sinhalese youth and 63 Tamil youth. At the end of the reporting period, the partner organized a cultural and sporting event for the youth who are participating in these language classes. The event provided an opportunity for the youth to practice their newly learned language skills by interacting with each other and helped to develop mutual understanding and respect. Sixteen Tamil and 24 Sinhalese youth participated.



Sinhala and Tamil students from youth language classes engage in a group activity at a cultural and sporting event for the students to interact with each other and practice their newly learned language skills.

“I am learning Tamil and he is learning Sinhala, we both try to speak each other’s languages with what we have learned in our class and by using body language. Today he is my partner [in a group activity]. I’m very happy that I now have a new friend.”

STUDENT OF SURG PARTNER TAMIL LANGUAGE CLASS

ARD058

During this quarter, the partner established the remaining three of the project’s planned 28 People’s Forums (PFs), conducting project orientation meetings in those GN divisions and selecting 10 members, including CBO leaders, religious leaders and retired government officers, from each division to participate in the new PFs. One hundred seventy-three people (99 males and 74 females) participated in the three project orientation meetings. Participants were informed of the roles and responsibilities of community members and local government authorities. The three PFs were established and office bearers nominated by community members for the positions of presidents, secretaries and treasurers.

The partner organized a two-day leadership training in late April for nine PFs. The objective of the training was to help PF members understand how to lead a team in promoting participatory local governance. Eighty members participated in the training including 41 men and 39 women.

The partner also formed a new super-structure called the Central People’s Forum (CPF) in which all 28 GN divisions are represented by three members from each of the 28 PFs. Seventy-two members out of the intended 84 participated in the CPF formation meeting which included 58 Sinhalese and 14 Muslims (22 men and 50 women). The aim of the forum is to support the coordination of development activities in all 28 GN divisions. As such, the forum will meet prior to PGF meetings to decide on issues to be discussed at the PGF

meetings. Additionally, two out of the three CPF members from each GN division will be selected to sit on the four advisory committees of the PS.

By the end of the quarter, SuRG learned that the Chairman of the partner Board of Directors, who is the authorized signatory to the grant, was dismissed from his post without proper notification. In addition, concerns were raised about a potential conflict of interest due to an overlap among the board, program management and local authorities which SuRG felt could compromise the partner's management practices.

In response, SuRG formally suspended partner activities on June 5, 2012 to provide time for a review of these issues and ongoing management and program implementation. On June 13, 2012 a mid-term program and administrative review was held with partner board members and staff to review work completed to date, outstanding activities, and the status of the board of directors, project staff and overall management practices. The SuRG team found that there has been significant involvement of the local authorities from both the DS and PS level in the affairs of the partner. This was especially evident through the partner's hiring practices of staff members and placement of PS members and DS officers on the Board of Directors. It also became clear that the DS has significant influence over partner staffing and financial decisions. In addition, the review raised questions about untimely submission of reports, poor and inaccurate documentation of events and a lack of systems and supervision of staff.

ARD054

The partner continued implementation of its "Relationship Building between Diverse Social Groups in Tamil and Muslim Communities" project in eight neighbouring villages in Batticaloa District. When conducting its activities, the partner pairs the villages into four groups of Tamil-Muslim villages, ensuring that the two communities work together.

The partner started off the quarter with a launch meeting for farmers of the two villages. Though the partner met with the farmers of these villages last quarter to discuss relevant issues, an action group was not formed at that time. Therefore, during the launch meeting, which was attended by 18 people (8 Tamils and 10 Muslims and 5 women and 13 men), a total of 10 members, five from each ethnicity, were chosen as action group members who will follow through with advocacy on identified community issues.

At a follow-up action group meeting for the two villages, members discussed their responsibilities and were asked to identify pressing community issues. Nine people participated (6 Tamil, 3 Muslim and 7 men, 2 women) in the meeting which was facilitated by a freelance trainer and journalist. The following issues were identified as priority for action:

- Lack of a permanent GN Officer;
- Lack of proper drainage systems, causing floods to disrupt livelihoods and transportation and spread water-borne diseases;
- Special treatment by the DS Officer to some people in the village;
- Lack of training in home gardening;
- Unclean well water which is not suitable for drinking or farming;
- Lack of electricity;
- Disturbances from stray animals;
- Prevention of tree fungus during the mango season which destroys crops;
- Lack of legal land documentation;
- Need for houses, toilets and wells;
- Road repairs and construction needs; and

- Renovation of the water tank which covers 30 acres of land providing water for highland cultivation and fresh water fishing.

The partner held two land awareness workshops this quarter in two villages. A retired Assistant Land Commissioner of the Eastern Province facilitated both workshops. The first workshop was attended by 26 people (21 male, 5 female and 22 Muslim, 4 Tamil). The second workshop was attended by 34 people (14 male, 20 female and 23 Tamil, 11 Muslim).

The partner also conducted a two-day Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) training for Tamil and Muslim WRDS members. The participants visited a border village that was badly affected by the war and multiple displacements. The participants spoke with the villagers to identify issues faced by them such as flooding, village resources not being utilized properly, roads lacking proper drainage systems, lack of street lights, lack of technical training for youth; lack of furniture in schools; lack of play material in the nursery run by the PS; contaminated water wells; lack of houses and toilets; school dropouts; lack of care for elderly people; and lack of legal land documentation. After identifying these issues, in a group activity the participants put together a five-year village development plan. A total of 20 women (12 Muslim, 8 Tamil) participated in the training. It was the first time they had engaged in a village mapping exercise.

Three one-day leadership and financial management trainings were held for Muslim and Tamil WRDS members from three sets of paired villages. Fifty-eight women (22 Tamil, 36 Muslim) participated in the workshops.

The partner also conducted four awareness workshops on gender and gender-based violence for members of four WRDSs. These workshops were organized separately for Tamil and Muslim community WRDS members. A total of 84 women (44 Tamil, 40 Muslim) participated.

During the quarter, the partner started one beginner's and three advanced Sinhala classes. Twenty-seven students (10 males, 17 females and 5 Tamil, 22 Muslim) registered for the beginner's class and 49 students (19 males, 30 females and 17 Tamil, 32 Muslim) registered for the advanced classes. The advanced class started last quarter was completed in May and the six students who sat for the final exam passed.

The partner continued to face challenges hindering implementation of project activities. Staff resignations and delays in identifying and training new staff slowed activities. In addition, approval from the two DS Offices which is needed to conduct meetings between farmers and land officers was also delayed. Reports were submitted to each DS Office; by the end of the quarter, the partner had received approval from the one DS Office, but they are still awaiting approval from the other.

ARD038

During the reporting period, the partner led four monthly discussions at the village level with its women beneficiaries. These meetings provide a space for the women to identify issues, share their experiences and discuss strategies to improve women's political participation. The partner Field Officer chaired the meetings and shared what she learned from Gender and Development training in India which she attended with support from SuRG last quarter. Two women who participated in the SuRG Gender Inclusiveness in Local Governance workshop held in April shared what they learned during the monthly discussions. Both of these women and another woman beneficiary are also members of the Local Authority Participatory Development Plan (LAPDP) committee and one is also in the Social Audit Group in her PS in Trincomalee. They were able to share their experiences working with local authorities. A total of 61 women (51 Tamil, 10 Muslim) participated in the four meetings.

The partner led seven film discussions this quarter for 319 participants (251 female and 68 male, including 314 Tamils, 2 Sinhalese and 3 Muslims). As in past quarter showings, they screened the Tamil film "Sivakasi," which depicts the journey of a woman, who, with the support of a man who encourages her political dreams,

becomes the Minister of Local Government in spite of several challenges, and a documentary film prepared by a local NGO that highlights the importance of voting at an election.

With the support of its women beneficiaries, the partner conducted 10 one-day open conferences in selected villages to provide the residents a space to raise village-level problems and discuss possible solutions. Members of RDSs, WRDSs, religious leaders, government officials and ex-political candidates were also invited to the meetings. A total of 393 people, including 325 females and 68 males (344 Tamils, 48 Muslims, and 1 Sinhalese) participated in these meetings. The resource people for the event were the Community Development Officer at the Trincomalee ACLG office, and the *Grama Niladhari* of a GN division in Trincomalee. Issues raised during these meetings and the actions taken included:

- Local infrastructure needs, such as rehabilitation of a road, repair of drainage facilities and the need for a community development center in two villages. The resource people encouraged the partner women beneficiaries from these villages to send a letter to the PS explaining the issues with relevant data and justifying a need for solutions. After a letter was sent, road rehabilitation got underway and a Community Development Society has been formed with the support of the CDO. In another village, a meeting was held by the PS with the residents to discuss next steps in building a drainage system.
- Residents were concerned that their pre-school was not functioning since the teacher left three months ago. The Mowlavi from the village, who participated in the partner's meeting, found a new pre-school teacher and is paying part of her salary through the mosque fund.
- Residents of one village were upset that sewing machines meant for public usage were being kept in custody at the local RDS. Following the meeting, partner women beneficiaries from the area went and spoke with the RDS President and were able to regain public access to those sewing machines.

In early June, a total of 43 women (34 Tamils and 9 Muslims) participated in a two-day residential training conducted by the partner in Trincomalee to discuss networking strategies and participatory planning for future interventions. The partner intends to connect the 60 women beneficiaries of the project in a network so that they have a support system beyond the life of the project. A SWOT analysis for women who plan to participate in politics, along with experience sharing of ex-political candidates and a discussion of future interventions were among the agenda items of the training. The training was facilitated by a freelance journalist and Visiting Lecturer of Political Science from the University of Colombo, a retired Administrative Officer of the Eastern Provincial Council, and a Graduate Trainee at the DS Office. Two are TNA ex-political candidates who contested in the 2011 Trincomalee Local Authority and PS elections, respectively.

ARD049

The partner continued implementation of its grant “Deepening Buddhist Practice of Social Engagement and Interfaith Dialogue” in the districts of Monaragala, Ampara and Polonnaruwa, and this quarter, further extended the project to Batticaloa District. Activities included one beginner's forum, two gender forums for nuns, four inter-faith forums, a network meeting for religious leaders from all four districts, and continuation of Tamil language classes.

Beginner's Forum

In June, the partner conducted a Beginner's Forum on Social Reconstruction and Building Relationships in Moneragala. The forum was facilitated by a Buddhist monk and a former Member of Parliament and current Member of the Southern Provincial Council, and another Buddhist monk who is the Chairman of a Mediation Board. The 15 monks and 10 nuns who attended the forum traveled with the partner team and facilitators to a *Pradeshija Sabha* in order to study its governing bodies and how it functions as an institution on behalf of the people in the area. Through a brief introduction, its services were explained to the clergy by the former Chairman and current member of the PS and the present Secretary to the PS. Following the introduction, the clergy present inquired about income sources of the PS, functions of the collected taxes,

neglected areas under the institution and the institutional power a Chairman has for the good will of the community.

Gender Forums

Two Gender Forums were held during the month of May in Monaragala and Polonnaruwa districts with the participation of 34 and 20 nuns, respectively, in each forum. The forums are part of the partner's efforts to empower 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 forum was conducted by a professor from the Department of Political Science at the University of Peradeniya. The theme of the forum was violence against women, including areas of family law, types of domestic violence, sexual violence, violence against women in politics, and society and its social impact. The second forum, conducted by the same facilitator, was on the same topic.

Inter-faith Dialogue Forums

Four inter-faith dialogue forums were conducted this quarter; two in Ampara and one each in Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa. The first forum was held in a border village in Ampara in order to build and renew relationships among two communities which had weakened as a result of the war. During the forum the participants shared their experiences of growing up in the area, how the two villages lived peacefully before the war, present-day challenges, and how united religious leaders can help solve the problem. A Buddhist monk facilitated the forum and a total of 44 participants (22 Buddhists, 18 Hindus and 4 Muslims), including religious leaders and community members from both villages, participated in the event.

The second forum was held in Polonnaruwa District with the same facilitator. This was the first time an inter-faith forum was held in Polonnaruwa. The forum was also attended by the voluntary workers of the DS Office who shared their views about the crime and corruption rates in the villages and district and how the situation has worsened due to the lack of trust and lack of coexistence among the various ethnic and religious communities. A total of 53 participants attended the forum including 36 Buddhists, 15 Hindus and two Christians.

The third inter-faith forum was held in the Ampara district and was attended by 72 participants, including 54 Buddhists, 15 Hindus and three Muslims. It was held in an area where there is an equal number of Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese people living together. The



Buddhist, Hindu and Christian religious leaders at an Inter-faith Dialogue held in Polonnaruwa District.

“The freedom in this country was achieved by the Tamils, Muslims and the Sinhalese joining together. This freedom has been destroyed by the politicians to fulfill their likes and needs. This is a fact that everyone must know. The first thing which must be done is to send a message on this matter to the village through the respective religious leaders, and we should join together in doing this.”

SINHALA COMMUNITY MEMBER, PARTICIPANT AT PARTNER'S AMPARA DISTRICT INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

forum revealed how the Sinhalese elders of the community are able to speak very good Tamil and how Tamil lay people used to participate in Buddhist temple functions, depicting how prior to the war, communities interacted easily and often. The forum was on the topic “why inter-faith dialogues are needed here.”

The fourth inter-faith forum of the quarter and the second inter-faith forum for the district of Batticaloa was held in a mosque in a village newly constructed for the Muslim community after the 2004 tsunami. This was the first time the partner has hosted an

inter-faith forum in a mosque. The forum was organized by the heads of the mosque and the villagers, and was facilitated by two Buddhist monks. Religious leaders from all three project districts participated in the forum. It was the first time some of the Buddhist monks and nuns had been to a mosque. Villagers pointed out how pleased they were to see the monks and nuns arrive and how, for many of their children, it was the first time they had seen a Buddhist religious leader at mosque. A total of 94 participants, including 62 Muslims, 15 Buddhists, 10 Hindus and seven Christians participated in the forum.

“We were pleased and proud to see so many monks and nuns walk into our mosque. Yesterday when they visited our village for the first time, our children ran away and hid because they had never seen an orange robed religious leader so close or inside the mosque. This is a very memorable event in our lives. ”

MUSLIM LAY PERSON, PARTICIPANT IN PARTNER BATTICALOA DISTRICT INTER-FAITH FORUM

Network Meetings

A network meeting was conducted for selected religious and community leaders from all four districts to establish a network to share knowledge, identify and address common issues in a consolidated and unified manner, and serve as a mechanism to sustain the work of the project. The meeting was held in June in Monaragala District and was facilitated by a member of the Faculty of Cultural Studies at the University of Colombo and an external consultant. Participants engaged in group analytical exercises to identify key issues and overall learnings of the project. A total of 42 participants, including 35 Buddhists, three Muslims, two Hindus and two Christians attended the meeting.

Tamil Language Classes

In June, 23 monks from Ampara completed the partner’s nine-month Tamil language class. After the completion of classes in the districts of Polonnaruwa and Monaragala, a year-end exam will be held for participants from all three districts. Thirty-one monks are continuing classes in Polonnaruwa, and 20 monks and 12 nuns are continuing classes in Monaragala.

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

ARD050

HDCC continued implementation of its “Promoting Entrepreneurship and Empowering Women in the Hambantota District” project. Scheduled to conclude on June 30, HDCC was awarded a no-cost extension until August 31 to complete all proposed activities.

During this reporting period, HDCC held seven awareness meetings with government and non-government offices and organizations focusing on women to raise awareness about the S/WGI-funded loan program, identify beneficiaries, coordinate activities, and find mentors for future loan recipients. The chart below summarizes the awareness-raising sessions held this quarter.

HDCC Awareness Raising Sessions

Target Participants and Host Organizations	No. of Participants
Members of ‘Ruhunu Nadee’ Community-Based Organization - Lunama	21
Members of Community-Based Organizations - Barawakubuka	33
Members of ‘Ruhunu Nadee’ Community-Based Organization - Samadigama	51
Members of Science and Technology Resources Center - Sooriyawewa	43
Member of Beralihela Society of Hambantota Development Foundation	56
Members of ‘Ruhunu Nadee’ Community-Based Organization - Wattiya	18
Members of Society of Hambantota Development Foundation - Saliyapura	50
Total	272

Based on the information collected during the awareness-raising sessions, 72 women who were interested and had the capacity to start their own business were identified as prospective beneficiaries for the loan program. After HDCC conducted individual field visits to those selected women, 25 who fulfilled the Hambantota Youth Business Program (HYBP) criteria were shortlisted. The selection criteria includes feasibility of the proposed business idea, potential profit margin, business sustainability, skills and knowledge of the individual, attitude, age (17-45), residence in the district, ability to access credit from banks and marketing potential.

These women then attended HDCC's "Improve Your Business" training program in June. The objective of the training was to provide the prospective entrepreneurs guidance on business start-up, identifying legal issues, maintaining records, the value of a positive attitude and customer relations. Assistant Directors of the Small Enterprise Development Division in Hambantota and Matara, respectively, were the resource people for the training.

After the workshop, the 25 participants prepared their business plans with the support of HYBP officers. Although they presented a range of business ideas, the women were hampered by low levels of literacy and numeracy and a lack of support from family members for their involvement in project activities.

Fifteen of the 25 business plans were converted into loan applications and were submitted to HYBP for review. Once HYBP ensured that the applications met the loan criteria, they forwarded the applications to the Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) for final loan approval authority. Two PEC meetings were held to discuss the 15 loan applications; all 15 were approved. Fourteen of those loans were issued during this reporting period (see chart below) amounting to Rs. 902,909. One loan has not yet been released as the applicant has not yet fulfilled all the PEC loan disbursement conditions.

HDCC Loans Issued to Women Entrepreneurs April – June 2012

No.	Residential area	Type of Business	Loan Amount LKR
1	Ambalantota	Manufactures and sells spices	30,000
2	Julampitiya	Runs a beauty parlor	137,100
3	Tissamaharama	Produces envelopes and small medicine packaging bags and sells to the hospital and pharmacies	40,000
4	Katuwana	Tailoring (women's and children's garments)	60,000
5	Weerawila	Service Centre (tire repairs and sales)	162,610
6	Hambantota	Produces and sells sweets	35,000
7	Sooriyawewa	Produces and sells mushrooms	30,000
8	Weerawilla	Assembles and sells cleaning equipment (brushes, brooms etc.)	50,000
9	Hambantota	Manufactures and sells men's shoes	83,500
10	Tissamaharama	Runs a plant nursery	100,000
11	Ambalantota	Manufactures and sells toys (dolls and teddy bears)	50,000
12	Beliatta	Extracts coconut oil	50,000
13	Hambantota	Produces gamboge cream	40,000
14	Hambantota	Manufactures ladies' shoes and mosquito nets	34,699

Mentoring and Field Visits

Nine new mentors and six existing mentors were appointed to provide instruction and guidance to the 15 female loan beneficiaries. Selection criteria included mentors must be accomplished business persons in the community with priority given to females who have managed similar businesses; they must be willing to dedicate time to act as a mentor; have a satisfactory education level; and be above 30 years of age.

HDCC staff conducted field observation visits to compare business activities against the business plans, and to ensure loan conditions were being met. Thirty-eight out of the 47 women who have received loans under the project were visited this quarter. The visits revealed that relationships between beneficiaries and mentors are positive; mentors are providing necessary feedback to loan recipients; standard bookkeeping practices and business practices are being met; marketing practices are improving; and standard business ethics are adhered to. Beneficiaries are required to pay their monthly loan installments to HYBP on or before the 25th of every month. Recovery officers visited the homes or business places of the beneficiaries who did not meet the deadline to inquire about the delayed payments. The recovery rate for the loans is currently at 94 percent.

Workshops

In April, HDCC conducted a Leadership Workshop for 12 participants (10 Sinhalese, 2 Muslim) facilitated by the Assistant Director of the Small Entrepreneurship Development Division in the District Secretariat of Matara.

HDCC also organized two technical workshops in May for HYBP beneficiaries engaged in the clay industry (pottery making), at Beliatta and Tissamaharama. One hundred forty pottery makers attended the training which was conducted by resource people from the National Design Centre of Pottery in Colombo.

HDCC conducted a Personal Skills Development Program in early June for 94 participants including 91 Sinhalese and three Muslim women. A certified trainer, motivational speaker and Director of Sadaharitha Plantation was the resource person for the workshop. Topics covered included preparing for the competitive business market, secrets of successful entrepreneurs, mental power to win the business world, and how to use the 4Ps—product, promotion, place and price—for the success of a business.

Networking and Lessons Learned Workshop and First Annual General Meeting of the Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs' Forum

On June 9, HDCC conducted a Networking and Lessons Learned Workshop along with the first Annual General Meeting of the Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs' Forum. A total of 66 businesswomen including 62 Sinhalese and four Muslims from the district participated in the event.

The workshop aimed to provide businesswomen of Hambantota an opportunity to increase their exposure by speaking with a reputed businesswoman at the national level and to provide them with an opportunity to network with other HDCC members. The proprietor of Leka Batik, Galle, shared her business experience at the workshop and the Assistant Director of the Small Entrepreneurship Development Division in the District Secretariat of Matara voluntarily facilitated the event's discussions that revolved around pre-business background, initial stages of the business, mobilizing and utilizing resources (physical and human), challenges faced and how to overcome them, information on business training, winning the market and promotion activities, expansion of the business, human resource management, contribution to social service activities, and important facts to be considered by women entrepreneurs.

"We know that women in this area face a lot of challenges when running a business, but I am confident that if we get together and collaborate through this Network we will be able to overcome those challenges and move forward."

NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE HDCC WOMEN'S NETWORK AND DIRECTOR OF CHANAKA METAL PVT LIMITED

The Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs' Forum underpins the formation of a Businesswomen's Section in the Chamber which will help overcome cultural barriers, increase the representation and lobbying power of women in business, and harness the potential of women by empowering them, economically and psychologically, to make creative and informed life and career choices through integrated interventions. This forum will be a networking platform to help economically marginalized women empower themselves. Its objectives will be to facilitate information-sharing amongst different groups of women, to encourage women to take control of their businesses, to set their own agendas and timetables, and to gain skills and knowledge needed to increase their business confidence. Meeting these objectives is intended to contribute to equal access to economic and productive resources, and the eradication of poverty amongst this section of the population. During HDCC's Annual General Meeting, 11 entrepreneurs were nominated to the Board of Directors of the forum and the objectives, constitution, potential activities, and membership conditions of the forum were discussed.



The newly elected members of the Board of Directors of the Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs' Forum at the Forum's first Annual General Meeting conducted by HDCC in Hambantota.

Trade Fair

The "Hambantota Navodaya 2012" Industrial and Trade Exhibition was held from 8-10 June at the Welipatanwila School Ground in Ambalantota. The trade fair was organized by HDCC in collaboration with the Hambantota District Secretariat, Ministry of Industries of the Southern Provincial Council and other



Loan recipients from the HDCC's S/GWI grant program display their products and services at HDCC's 2012 Trade Fair, at the Welipatanwila School Ground in Ambalantota.

government, non-governmental and private organizations. Additional support and financial assistance was provided by the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

The fair housed a total of 122 stalls occupied by small and medium-scale entrepreneurs providing various products and services. The trade fair aimed to expand market opportunities for businessmen and women from the district, introduce information on new technology and the business market, create links between entrepreneurs and service providers, enable entrepreneurs in the district to share views and ideas with large-scale entrepreneurs working at the national level, and place unemployed youth in employment providing them with self-employment opportunities and guidance for vocational and tertiary education.

Thirty-four women entrepreneurs of the HDCC-S/GWI project were provided stalls free of charge to

exhibit their products and were also compensated for any transportation costs in bringing their products to the fair. For some of these women this was the first time they had participated in such an exhibition. They were not only able to sell their products, but also network with potential buyers, learn new business ideas, interact with other entrepreneurs and form new relationships.

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

SuRG, with the support of USAID, continued this quarter to lobby the Ministry of Local Government and government authorities in the Northern Province for approval to initiate the SuRG Technical Assistance and Training Program in the North. On May 4, the USAID Mission Director discussed the program with the Governor of the Northern Province. The meeting was followed up with a letter requesting formal approval. In addition, the USAID SuRG COR and Tetra Tech ARD SuRG COP and Program Manager for LG met with the Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and the new Additional Secretary for Local Government on May 22. They, too, expressed their support for the program and indicated they would point out the same in a letter to the Governor of the North. The letter had been drafted for the Secretary's signature at the end of the quarter but had not yet been signed.

While the Northern Province is on hold, the LG team maintained its focus on the Eastern Province, continuing efforts to promote women's participation in local government activities and decision making, developing and organizing a workshop on by-law formulation, and monitoring and supporting Participatory Governance Forums (PGF) and Working Group meetings in SuRG's 11 partner LAs.

Also this quarter, Phase II of the SuRG-sponsored Official Language Department's (OLD) Level II Tamil and Sinhala language classes in seven LA areas were completed. Classes in the remaining 22 LA areas will finish early next quarter.

1.3.1 EASTERN PROVINCE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Training

Gender Inclusive Local Governance

Early in the quarter, SuRG commissioned a researcher and gender expert to work with SuRG's Gender Advisor and the LG team to explore women's participation in local authorities in the East and develop strategies and recommendations to promote increased and more meaningful engagement of women in local government activities and decision making. The process began with the development of short case studies on women's participation in two PSs. These two PSs are both SuRG partner LAs where the project has set up Participatory Governance Forums and has strong contacts and relationships with PS members and staff and the community. One was chosen because of the challenges it faces with women's participation and the other was chosen because of its relative success in engaging women in a meaningful way.



Vice Chairman of a Trincomalee District PS engages in a group activity with community representatives from the Ampara UC, during the "Gender Inclusiveness Local Governance" workshop held in Habarana.

"I learned from this workshop that women and men can have different needs. I also learned how we can highlight women's needs and bring women to the frontlines."

VICE CHAIRMAN, PRADESHYA SABHA

The material gathered from interviews in both areas with PS members, government staff, PGF members, citizens and community leaders was used as the basis for case studies as well as to inform and guide development of a workshop for PGF members, including elected officials, government staff and community members on inclusive local governance with an emphasis on gender.

The three-day “Gender Inclusive Local Governance” workshop was held in Habarana in late April. Four members from each of SuRG’s 11 partner LA PGFs, as well as two partner staff members and two CLG/ACLG officials were invited to the workshop. Fifteen elected officials, 12 government staff and 20 community members attended the workshop (24 women, 23 men and 30 Tamil, 10 Muslim and 7 Sinhalese). The workshop was designed by a consultant and the SuRG gender advisor and facilitated by the SuRG LG team. Outside resource people also led sessions on participatory mechanisms at the local level, and monitoring local government and gender-sensitive budgeting, respectively.

The workshop was designed to provide participants with a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their local authorities, participatory governance and gender equality in order to promote the incorporation of gender concerns into local governance and increase women’s participation in the same.

The program included a series of presentations and group activities. Topics ranged from personal and family gender roles to roles of women and men in the public spheres. It was clear from the active and at times heated debates among participants that there is a wide range of understanding of these issues, as well as opinions. For example, one male elected official explained, “Women in our country have a right to vote and get involved in political processes – we have had a female president and prime minister – but at the local level we just don’t see as much participation. So far, only men have told us about problems women have...we haven’t had any suggestions given to us by women.” His colleague, however, saw things very differently: “I’m the Chairman of the Alaiadivembu PS...I want to emphasize that we should consult women when giving things like drinking water. That is our responsibility as a PS.”

Overall, participants were comfortable discussing participation and inclusiveness within the narrow framework of local governance systems and processes. Resistance would arise, however, when the subject matter veered towards a discussion of rights and equality. For example, the mention in passing of a quota for women’s nominations in local elections was vehemently defied and revealed deeply held social and cultural resistance to concepts of women’s participation in politics and the public sphere in general. As one participant stated, “The problem is that when women go into politics, the family life gets destroyed.”

So while it is clear that the subject of this workshop remains a sensitive and provocative one and warrants additional attention, the workshop was still able to challenge participants’ notions of inclusiveness and gender and provided useful strategies to enhance women and other community members’ participation in local governance activities.

The case studies, including overall conclusions about women’s participation and recommendations will be finalized in the next quarter.

Formulation of By-Laws for Local Government Authorities

Section 126 of the *Pradeshya Sabha* Act specifies 140 subject areas for PS by-laws, making the identification and prioritizing of these subject areas a legal requirement for PSs. However, few PS in the East comply with this requirement. Reasons include a lack of knowledge of legislative provisions in levying duties, taxes and fees; a lack of proper understanding of the importance of identifying and prioritizing subject areas that should be covered as per the legal provisions; a lack of drafting ability and capacity at the local level; a lack of both financial and technical capacity to formulate by-laws for LAs; and the absence of regular training processes for LAs. Without by-laws a PS is unable, among other things, to collect their legally allowed dues in the form of trade licenses, taxes, service charges and other fees. As such, and at the request of the Eastern Province CLG and Chief Secretary, as well as a number of LA members, SuRG commissioned EML to develop and conduct a training program for Chairmen, Secretaries and a clerk or revenue inspector of PSs in the Eastern Province.

“The workshop on by-law formation was immensely helpful and very practical. The resource people were excellent...Knowing the legal and practical side of these by-laws will help the Pradeshiya Sabha Chairmen and other officers to conduct their work confidently. It will also help to increase funds coming into the Pradeshiya Sabha...I would like to thank USAID and its staff for providing us this opportunity.”

CHAIRMAN, PS

The first of two, three-day workshops on by-law formulation was held in June for a total of 55 participants from 18 PSs and the ACLG/CLG office, including 17 elected officials, 34 PS staff and 4 officers of the ACLG/CLG office (44 male, 11 female and 31 Sinhalese; 12 Tamil and 12 Muslim).

The workshop was facilitated by SuRG and EML; key resource people were a former Additional Secretary for the MLGPC; the Commissioner of a Municipal Council; a former Assistant Commissioner of Local Government –

Investigation for the MLGPC; and the Team Leader at EML.

The training was designed to provide participants with an understanding of the importance of by-laws and the benefits to operating under a set of ratified and approved by-laws, as well as the skills needed to draft by-laws on priority issues in their community. In addition, participants were informed about the process of approval and application and enforcement of by-laws by LA heads and senior staff.

During the workshop, each PS team was expected to draft by-laws on priority issues in their community. At the end of the training, 17 by-laws had been drafted and reviewed by course resource people. Participants will take these drafts back to their LA to finalize them and within two weeks, will submit them to the CLG for further review and revisions. At that point, the full set of by-laws will be prioritized and recommended for adoption and approval by the Provincial Council as a set of standard by-laws for PSs in the Eastern Province. The table below details by-laws drafted by participating PSs.

Pradeshya Sabha	By-Law Drafted
Padiyathalawa	Prevention of infectious disease
Lahugala	The regulation, supervision, inspection, control of forgery
Dehiyathakandiya	Imposition of levy and recovery of rates and charges
Damana	Inspection of food and seizure of unwholesome articles of food
Namaloya	Brick manufacturing
Mahaoya	Maintenance, regulation and control of public services – public bathing places
Uhana	Regulation, supervision of cattle sheds, galas, night paddocks for cattle and halting places and the control of the location thereof
Koralaippattu	Maintenance, regulation and control of public services – playgrounds
CLG/ACLG Office	Control and supervision of public or private markets and fairs
Erauvur Pattu	Stray animals, nuisance reducing and controlling
Koralaipattu West	Regulation, supervision, inspection and control of trades deemed to be offensive or dangerous
Koralaipattu North	Examining food and banning unhealthy food
Lankapura	The regulation of processions and assembly for performance of music on roads and thoroughfares
Morawewa	The maintenance and management of immovable property vested in or under the control of the PS
Verugal	Collecting fish, controlling and supervising iced fish selling centers
Muthur	Solid waste management
Kinniya	Regulation, supervision, inspection and control of slaughter houses and the levy and recovery of fees for their use

A second workshop with the remaining PSs in the East will be held early next quarter.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Participatory Governance Forums

SuRG continues to provide technical assistance to its 11 partner local authorities' Participatory Governance Forums (PGFs). This quarter, they held 11 PGF meetings at which a range of issues were discussed including:

- NELSIP has either funded or is preparing to release funds for development projects proposed by each LA in their 2012 Local Authority Participatory Development Plan (LAPDP). NELSIP makes its funding decisions based on the LAPDP. NELSIP is now identifying projects for 2013 funding and has requested LAs to revise divisional-level Participatory Development Plans (PDP) and their LAPDPs with the participation of the community. PGF members took a lead role and guided PSs in the prioritization of development needs for the PDPs and LAPDPs. All of SuRG's partner LAs submitted their LAPDPs to NELSIP on time and they were prepared with the highest participation of community representatives in the province.
- The central government has allocated funds to each LA under its “*Deyata Kirula* Development Program” for the Eastern Province and has requested proposals for priority development projects. Projects were identified in the PGF meetings and members provided basic information necessary to develop project proposals.
- NELSIP formed community based “Social Audit” groups to oversee the progress of each funded project. The group consists of five members and includes many PGF members. In all 11 of SuRG's partner LAs, a social audit group has been assigned for all development activities to be carried out by the PS for monitoring purposes. In each monthly PGF meeting, social audit groups report on the progress of project activities and discuss any issues they encounter. Issues this quarter included delayed project activities of contractors, non-payment of contractors, insufficient community contributions in Seruvila PS, Ninthavur PS, Alaiadivembu PS and Eravur Town UC, and problems created by families living along roads being renovated. The PGFs decided to bring the first three issues to the attention of the relevant LA chairmen and donor organizations and the officer in charge for handling complaints was assigned to look into the last matter.
- All 11 PGFs decided to record complaints made by members in a relevant ledger for further action and for presentation on progress in the following PGF meeting.

Working Group Meetings

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

- SuRG's partner LA WGs with input from the PGF completed their LAPDP on time and submitted them to NELSIP. Further, the proposals for the “*Deyata Kirula* Development Plan” were also submitted to the CLG by WGs for projects identified and prioritized by PGF members.
- Handling monthly salaries and details of loans of LA staff is a challenge in most Eastern Province LAs. OTI/RISEN will conduct a two-day

Batticaloa LAs Equipped with Computers and Furniture

At the request of SuRG, the OTI/RISEN program signed a grant with the Batticaloa ACLG to provide much needed computers, IT equipment and furniture to LAs and the ACLG's office in Batticaloa. The SuRG LG team worked with RISEN to conduct an equipment needs assessment in each of the district local authorities.

New computers and IT equipment will ensure that PSs are able to utilize the SuRG-developed financial software package to manage their accounts. The software was disseminated to all PSs in the Eastern Province with training for relevant staff last year and has been a big help to PSs when preparing their final accounts. However, computer availability is scarce in many LAs and a number of staff trained to use the software have been transferred. The OTI/RISEN equipment along with the refresher training on the financial software they will conduct once computers are installed and running will help to mitigate these challenges and support efficient financial management of Batticaloa District PSs.

residential training program for relevant staff from all 12 Batticaloa LAs and the ACLG's office on using Geographical Information System (GIS) software for the payroll system. In SuRG Batticaloa partner LAs, WGs assigned two staff members to gather the necessary information about the staff for the training.

- WG members will prepare contract documents, award contracts and monitor the progress of all NELSIP projects activities in monthly meetings held with the contractors.
- Analysis of unresolved complaints to be discussed in the WG meetings every three months and determination of further action.
- Poratheevuppattu PS, Ninthavur PS and Verugal PS decided to send salient points of their monthly council meetings to PGF members from next month onwards.

I.3.2 GRANTS – ARD05 I

The partner continued implementation of its “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Mitigate Corruption and Enhance Good Governance” project. Building on analysis and field research completed last quarter, the partner engaged experienced practitioners—a former Chief Secretary of the North Central Provincial Council, and current Commissioner of Local Government of the North Western Province, and the former Deputy Director of the Commission to Investigate Alienation of Bribery or Corruption—to develop curriculum and materials and facilitate project training of Participatory Governance Forums and PS elected members and staff.

Three training sessions entitled “Promoting Citizen Participation for Enhancing Good Governance” were conducted in the project PS in Polonnaruwa District and one session was conducted in the project PS in Ampara District. In Polonnaruwa, 33 community members, seven elected officials and 19 PS staff attended the training. In Ampara, seven elected officials and 13 staff members were trained. At these sessions, participants explored opportunities and avenues open to the public to participate in their local government, learned about the services of the PS and discussed the advantages of such engagement for communities and individuals. In addition, the training explored common types of corruption as well as tools and strategies for citizens and PSs to mitigate corruption.

The partner also held an interactive dialogue with the Polonnaruwa PGF, attended by one PS member, 10 PS staff and 10 community members, on ways to improve citizen participation in PS activities and PS responsiveness to citizen concerns. Participants identified key obstacles to citizen engagement as the community's lack of knowledge and understanding about PS services, a lack of responsiveness on the part of the PS to the public's grievances and complaints, and general lack of resources available for service provision. Actions that the PGF and the PS might take to address these challenges include organizing an essay or poster contest on public accountability, providing awareness-raising sessions, conducting seminars for OL/AL students, organizing *shramadanas*, involving PGF members in needs assessments, data collecting, constructing roads and other PS activities, using the PGF as a means of communication between the PS and the public, and organizing a public meeting to discuss concerns that can be addressed by the PS and implement a system for follow-up.

These initial sessions with the PGF raised a number of challenges for the partner's successful implementation of the program. Most of the PGF members representing the community are from humble social and economic backgrounds with little or no influence or experience speaking up to authorities in the way professionals or other community leaders might. As such, they are very reluctant to express their views or challenge the political authority of the chairman or other elected members of the PS. In addition, the founder and primary coordinator of the PGF's internal organizational issues can hinder proper coordination by the partner. However, the partner is now working directly with key members of the PGF which should make for smoother coordination going forward.

Finally internal staff changes of the PS may also affect the project activities. For example, the secretary of the PS, who participated in the introductory project training and the preparation of the action plan, was recently changed. The new secretary will be starting from scratch.

1.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

SuRG continued to monitor its Open Dialogue grant. The grant, which provides scholarships for aspiring journalists from the North, East, border districts and the estate sector to attend the Sri Lanka College of Journalism Colombo-based journalism diploma program, is the fourth consecutive grant through which 79 students have received scholarships. This quarter, SuRG M&E and Open Dialogue staff have designed a mini-assessment to take stock of how scholarship recipients from the previous grants are applying their learning, whether they are practicing journalism and why or why not as well as to get their feedback on the SLCJ course and opportunities and challenges for young journalists. A questionnaire has been designed and will be administered through phone, personal and focus group interviews next quarter.

SuRG is also working with graduates of its former grantee's Trincomalee Journalism Diploma Course who are interested in further media studies. After consultations with interested graduates, SuRG has developed a program that would provide those interested in further studies and practical experience with a combination of classroom and field-based learning exercises in print and radio. Activities will include training sessions on the craft and tools of journalism and radio broadcasting and the development and writing of radio and print stories. SuRG has identified local resource people and experts to conduct the training and support and mentor participants. The program is expected to begin next quarter.

ARD062

SuRG's 15 scholarship recipients attending the Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLCJ) 2012 Journalism Diploma Programme completed their first semester assignments this quarter and will sit for their exams early next quarter.

This year's students were able to acquire basic computer skills rather quickly during the first semester, so SLCJ decided rather than conduct the follow-up computer course planned for the second semester to organize a course that would provide space for students from all three languages to interact and learn together. Currently, extracurricular activities organized by students are the only opportunity students of different language streams have to interact. While students generally appear to get along well, there are few opportunities for them to interact further. The common seminar class introduced in place of the second computing class will include several activities for the entire student body, such as guest lectures by industry experts; networking sessions with news editors, directors and other members of the media; and discussion sessions on current affairs. SLCJ also hopes to further student interaction through a field trip to Jaffna in August.

"I have always had an innate ability and interest in journalism. Therefore, I was in pursuit of a course on journalism to follow. I found out about the SuRG sponsored journalism course in an advertisement in the *Verakeesari* newspaper. I applied, got in and graduated. We learned many things and established a wide spectrum of contacts with eminent and amateur journalists. More importantly, we learned the ethics of journalism which are lacking in many persons who are involved in grassroots level reporting.

SuRG JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT /
FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND TEACHER

I.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

SuRG submitted a revised Performance Management Plan (PMP) for 2012 to USAID on April 11. The PMP draft, completed at the end of last quarter, included revised definitions and indicators based on current programming and plans, verification of results reported in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and plans for qualitative monitoring and evaluation of ongoing activities.

Upon completion of the 2012 PMP, the M&E staff conducted workshops for SuRG technical staff in each office. At the workshops, staff reviewed and discussed indicators, plans for qualitative monitoring and evaluation and new reporting and monitoring documentation procedures, including monthly, quarterly and event monitoring forms.

The M&E team also conducted data quality assessments and an M&E review at the offices of grantees in Trincomalee this quarter to verify that data reported is accurate and documentation is in place. The visits revealed no major issues and showed that overall effective systems and documentation are in place for proper data collection and reporting.

2.0 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

In May, Tetra Tech ARD requested a realignment of the budget and a no-cost extension to extend the project end date from February 28, 2013 to August 31, 2013. The request was approved by USAID and a contract modification signed on June 25. The no-cost extension allows SuRG time to obtain approval from the GOSL to initiate and complete its local government programming in the Northern Province as planned. In addition, the extension provides time for grants awarded through the State Department and USAID/Washington to incorporate the full slate of activities and funding their original proposals envisioned. The grants were adjusted both in duration and funding to be fully implemented within the time frame of SuRG's contract at the time the grants were signed.

The budget realignment allows SuRG to maintain the Ampara field office open through February 2013, the Trincomalee field office through May 2013, and the Colombo office through August 2013.

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