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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

JANUARY - MARCH 2013 QUARTERLY REPORT



APRIL 2013

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Cover Photo: Home-stay for youth organized by SuRG grantee in Trincomalee District.

Photo courtesy of SuRG partner

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
AG	Attorney General
AU	American University
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMICH	Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCN	Cooperating Country National
CDO	Community Development Officer
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
CLIN	Contract Line Number
CM	Crisis Modifier
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DS	Divisional Secretary
EOG	End of Grant
EPF	Employees' Provident Fund
ER	Emergency Regulation
ETF	Employees' Trust Fund
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation
FR	Fundamental Rights
FSLGA	Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities
FY	Fiscal Year
GA	Government Agent
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HC	High Court
HDCC	Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce
HDWEF	Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs' Forum
HR	Human Rights
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IO	Investigation Officer
KCP	Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, Inc.
LA	Local Authority

LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LG	Local Government
LLRC	Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Magistrate's Court
MLGPC	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
MR&E	Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation
MSI	Management Systems International
NAITA	National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OD	Open Dialogue
OLD	Official Language Department
PC	Provincial Council
PEC	Project Evaluation Committee
PGF	Participatory Governance Forum
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PS	<i>Pradeshīya Sabha</i>
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
Q	Quarter
RDS	Rural Development Society
Rs.	Rupees
SANGAT	South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers
SE	Social Equity
SL	Sri Lanka
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SLCJ	Sri Lanka College of Journalism
SoGP	Standard of Good Practice for Information Security
SPICE	Supporting Professional and Institutional Capacity Enhancement
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
S/WGI	Secretary of State Office of Women's Global Issues
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TV	Television
UNP	United National Party
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WG	Working Group
WIN	Women In Need
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

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.



Hindu and Muslim religious leaders discuss a draft action plan at a Batticaloa Inter-faith Council meeting.

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 reflected 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 (KCP), 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 2012.

This quarter, SuRG continued to support 14 grantees and their activities and provide technical assistance and training to ongoing partners and other key stakeholders. Additionally, the local government team initiated a second series of training for local authorities (LA) in the Eastern Province. Also this quarter, SuRG closed its Ampara field office at the end of February and began preparations to close down the Trincomalee field office in May.

This report details SuRG and grantee activities during the period from January 1–March 31, 2013, along with progress on ongoing contract implementation. Highlights for the quarter include:

- Sixty-three lawyers were trained by SuRG as follows:
 - Seventeen (10 male, 07 female) lawyers from the North and East trained on land matters; and
 - Fifty-nine (39 male, 20 female) lawyers from Jaffna were trained on the salient features of pleadings and pre-trial procedures in civil litigation.
- Twenty-one birth certificates were issued. Livelihoods assistance valued at Rs. 619,949 was provided to 23 women.
- Twenty-six (25 male, 01 female) leaders of the Muslim Majilis from 12 universities participated in a one-day program to discuss women's leadership in Majilis. (AU)
- Two five-day workshops on family mediation and basic counseling skills were conducted for 60 (44 male and 16 female) Muslim religious and community leaders including *quazis*, *ulamas*, trustees of

mosques, women juries, family counselors, media, marriage registrars and members of the Mosque Federation, Jamiyyathul Ulama, the Mediation Board, An-Nahjathul Islamiya and Arabic colleges.

- Religious leaders from all four major religious groups in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts and Padaviya Divisional Secretary (DS) Division worked with youth, adults and school children on 24 community projects to support personal and community growth while enhancing inter-faith and inter-ethnic ties among participants. These projects engaged 1,511 people—605 in language classes, 35 in a computer class, 25 at sewing training, 20 in Palmyra handicraft training, 150 in *shramadanas* and 676 in awareness programs on child rights and child abuse (KCP).
- Five hundred forty-two religious leaders were joined by 83 civil society and community leaders at a national conference on “National Reconciliation and Development through Inter-religious Coexistence” held in Colombo to promote inter-religious reconciliation and dialogue and highlight experiences and lessons learned from KCP grant activities.
- Thirty-seven local government officials in the Eastern Province were trained on monitoring, reporting and evaluation.
- One hundred staff and 30 elected officials in the Eastern Province were trained on procurement procedures and contract administration.
- Eighty-four staff and 30 elected members from 32 LAs in eight provinces qualified by the Ministry in its 2012 Performance Evaluation were trained in office management.
- Two hundred fourteen people from the North, South and East participated in exposure visits as follows:
 - A SuRG partner organized an exposure visit for 49 youth group members and 10 women’s group members from 13 villages to visit another SuRG partners’ youth groups in Trincomalee;
 - Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) organized an exposure visit for 11 Hambantota District Women Entrepreneurs’ Forum (HDWEF) members to the Central Province Women’s Chamber of Commerce in Kandy;
 - A SuRG partner organized a two-day exposure visit for 37 youth groups and Women’s Rural Development Society (WRDS) members to a Women’s Farmers’ Organization located in Anuradhapura District;
 - A SuRG collaborated with Women In Need (WIN) to organize a three-day exposure visit for 65 youth from Trincomalee to meet and interact with youth from Jaffna; and
 - A SuRG partner organized an experience-sharing exposure visit organized in Batticaloa for 42 women beneficiaries to meet with an Ex-Member of Parliament and National Coordinator at the Ministry of Traditional Industries, and a former political candidate from Batticaloa.
- Approximately 260 people attended three street dramas performed in villages in Trincomalee District by a SuRG partner’s youth group members. The dramas addressed issues of school dropouts and child labor, alcoholism and domestic violence, land and conflict, and robbery.
- A one-day conference was held in commemoration of International Women’s Day for all program participants, members of local women’s groups and community leaders involved in women’s issues in Trincomalee.
- Legal advice and support was provided to 164 people.
- One hundred fifty-one people were provided non-legal support, including prison visits and psychosocial counseling and other non-legal support.

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

“It has been my pleasure to be a part of these [SuRG lawyers] trainings. I can see the hard work and thinking that goes into planning them. As a result, I have also been motivated to put my best into them and work hard on my presentations and materials. I have been to a number of trainings organized by other groups and most of them are not really trainings but speeches made by legal luminaries. These workshops are real trainings and have been valuable to the lawyers of the North and East. I receive calls from judges from the North and East from time to time referring to something in my handout or to something participants in the workshop may have mentioned; they never hesitate to tell me what a difference they have seen in the participants after taking part in the workshops and also thank me for the workshop material.”

JUDGE , CIVIL APPELLATE COURT

This quarter saw the closing out of several of the component’s largest grants. End of grant reviews held this quarter pointed to overall successful project implementation and numerous positive outputs and outcomes vis-à-vis project objectives as well as those of the Social Equity (SE) component as a whole.

In February, a SuRG partner was provided with a two-month grant to help consolidate some of the efforts it undertook under its “Towards a Democratic Society” project, which ended in December 2012, and prevent gaps in program implementation. This period also allowed the SuRG Partner to put in place the necessary planning towards longer-term sustenance of its activities. Another SuRG partner was also provided with a one-month no-cost extension to complete activities during the quarter.

The SE team also concluded its lawyers’ trainings with the completion of a residential training on land matters for lawyers from the North and East and a final regional workshop on civil procedure in Jaffna for lawyers from Jaffna. The SuRG workshops have been widely lauded within the legal fraternity, particularly those living in the North and East. Furthermore, the resource persons who worked with the team over the last four years expressed their appreciation of the program and their being included in these efforts to ensure legal practitioners in the North and East are better equipped to provide quality services to their clients.

I.1.1 GRANTS

ARD060

The SuRG partner concluded its project in January after a one-month no-cost extension period. SuRG has supported this partner—primarily in the area of providing legal aid for victims of human rights

violations—since 2009. As such, this marks the conclusion of a strong and committed partnership built over four years to preserve and protect the rights of victims denied access to justice.

During the project period, the SuRG partner provided legal assistance to 66 clients (including nine females) in 97 cases. The cases were taken up with the assistance of panel lawyers. The partner exceeded the originally targeted number of cases by seven.

A total of 25 cases concluded successfully and the detainees were either released or ordered rehabilitation. One client was acquitted. A total of seven indictments of four individuals (two females) were also recorded during the project period.

At the request of the detainees and their families, a total of 16 cases were closed. In the 10 Fundamental Rights Applications filed in the Supreme Court, only two yielded successful results; five cases ended in indictments and three cases are ongoing.

Currently, 49 cases of 37 detainees (two females) are ongoing. The cases comprise 33 High Court and 10 Magistrate's Court cases, three Fundamental Rights Applications in the Supreme Court and three Court of Appeal cases.

Approximately 46 prison visits were carried out during this project period by the legal coordinator and panel lawyers. Through these visits the lawyers were not only able to provide legal services, but also study the grievances of the detainees and their mental wellbeing. Lawyers also update detainees on the status of their case and counsel them not to lose faith in the system.

The SuRG partner continued to lobby with officials at the AG's Department and the Prison Authorities to address prisoners' grievances. In one instance, the partner was able to move a motion in the Court for prisoners to receive medical treatment for physical and mental health issues in hospitals.

The SuRG partner also provided small cash grants for 38 families of detainees to visit family members currently being held in detention centers outside their home district. The grant covered travel and food expenses incurred when visiting the detainees and, on a few occasions, consultation with the detainee's lawyer.

The SuRG partner conducted a total of four mobile legal clinics in Batticaloa District under this project. Legal consultations were provided to 102 clients (including 86 women). A total of 103 complaints were recorded.

As noted above, apart from arrest and disappearance cases, the SuRG partner also took up migration cases to be dealt with through the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment. In addition to panel lawyers, the SuRG partner uses trained paralegals to both organize these clinics as well as take up certain issues with the relevant authorities. The SuRG partner then follows up on cases forwarded to these authorities.

A two-day paralegal workshop was held in the second quarter of the project in Batticaloa District for 23 activists (19 were female) and nongovernmental organization (NGO) and community-based organization (CBO) workers. Subjects discussed included the roles and responsibilities of a paralegal together with several areas of substantive and procedural law, particularly those related to human rights including the Fundamental Rights Chapters as enshrined in the Constitution.

A two-day follow-up workshop was held during the third quarter for the same 23 participants. This workshop focused on how the paralegals had progressed in serving the people in their areas following the first workshop and how best to deal with the cases that had been brought to their notice since they began work within their communities.

The SuRG partner conducted a two-day awareness cum training program for Human Rights Defenders in November. A total of 19 individuals from NGOs and women's organizations in Batticaloa District participated. The session provided background on several important areas of human rights law and the

concept of human rights in general. There was also a session on gender-based violence and violation of women's rights.

ARD061

In February, a SuRG partner was awarded a two-month grant in order to consolidate several activities carried out under its project, which ended in December 2012.

The SuRG partner filed 12 cases in the Trincomalee courts and also prepared seven FR applications in the Supreme Court on behalf of victims. A total of 13 cases were also concluded during this period. The SuRG partner made six prison visits in Trincomalee and provided legal counseling for 48 people. The SuRG partner's current case load is 38; 12 applications are pending before the Supreme Court and 26 cases of a varied nature are pending in the Trincomalee courts.

Twenty-six vulnerable and war-affected women (widowed or alone because their husbands have either disappeared or are being held in detention) received training in food-processing techniques, including how to make pickles, fruit cordials and chutney, among others. Emphasis was placed on making use of produce available locally and at a lower price. A Sinhala woman who is highly conversant in Tamil conducted the training. She started her own food-processing business years ago on a small scale, but now runs a business that makes her more than self-sufficient. She has also been training other women for the last 10 years. This training was followed by another two-day workshop on marketing and business development. Twenty-five women participated. Topics covered included labeling and branding, developing and expanding business ideas, the importance of business and entrepreneurship, ethics of a vendor, production and pricing strategies, sales and identifying a market.

Two hundred fifty additional copies each of the Criminal Procedure Code and Evidence Ordinance were printed during this grant period to meet popular demand for the books. Further, 1,000 copies each were printed of a pamphlet on criminal law, covering areas such as the 48-hour police custody law, developments in the application of the law on sexual abuse in the Supreme Court, among others; and a pamphlet on civil law covering such areas as actions under Sec. 66 of the Primary Courts Procedure Act, prescription and property partition law.

A three-day workshop on "playback theatre" was conducted for members of the Youth for Peace Forum. A total of 23 youth participated (17 female and 6 male; 21 Tamil and 2 Muslim). A Rev. Fr. from the Hatton conducted the training. He also brought with him three Rev. Brothers, two from Bangladesh and one from Pakistan, who shared their experiences working with the community and the use of playback theatre in their work. A leadership workshop was also conducted for the youth. A total of 12 youth participated (7 female and 5 male; 9 Tamil and 3 Muslim) in this workshop.

ARD068

In December, the SuRG partner was awarded a grant to implement a project. The project aimed to build on its previous SuRG-sponsored project by continuing capacity building efforts with 24 WRDSs in the areas of community engagement, issue identification and addressing gender-based violence (GBV). The project comprises two components, namely:

- capacity building of WRDSs; and
- linking communities with their local authorities.



MSI/SuRG

Graduates of the human rights education course formed the Youth for Peace Forum. In this photo, members participate in a group activity at the Playback Theatre' workshop held in Trincomalee District.

During this quarter, as per the requirements of the first component of the project, eight Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) trainings, one organizational management training and two gender trainings were conducted with a total of 288 participants. Under the second component, eight monthly advocacy working committee meetings were held with 102 participants present. One of these meetings took the form of a celebration of International Women’s Day. Thirty-seven members from the WRDSs participated in the program. The women present at the meeting spoke of the challenges they faced as women, and how they had begun to overcome these to become more involved in community development. Ten women representatives also met with 10 *Pradeshya Sabha* (PS) members (all male) to discuss in particular two issues they had identified during the PRA training; namely, the need for drinking water facilities and a proper drainage system.



The village map drawn by participants at the PRA Training held for WRDS members in Batticaloa District.

Certain activities that had been planned for this quarter under component two, including additional meetings with the local authorities and the GBV task force could not be carried out due to heavy rains in the target villages as well as a lack of cooperation on the part of the members of the GBV task force. One of the targeted PS was also dissolved in April. In order to address this, the SuRG partner was granted a one-month no-cost extension, during which it hopes to complete all outstanding activities.

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

ARD046

WIN completed its 20-month long project in February. The project, which evolved continuously over the 20 months, was an overall success despite a number of challenges both external as well as internal. This was in part due to the active involvement of SuRG staff who worked closely with the teams in the field to strengthen their capacity and improve their outreach and effectiveness. This aspect was greatly appreciated by the field staff who noted both personal and professional growth as a direct result of this project.

Under its staff capacity building component, a total of four programs were held, including WIN’s island wide annual review meeting. Other programs included an intensive skills building exercise for staff in Jaffna, Batticaloa and Puttalam, held in the Tamil language; a workshop on proposal writing for Jaffna staff; and a workshop on personality development and non-violent communication for staff in Puttalam. A total of 126 staff members participated in these programs. In addition, SuRG sponsored one staff member from the WIN Jaffna office to participate in the South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers (SANGAT) gender training in South India, while eight other staff members from across the country participated in SuRG’s PRA training.



Participants present community issues identified during the WIN Women’s Group meeting held in Jaffna District.

During the last six months of the project, Jaffna staff requested and obtained the support of a senior counselor from the Jaffna Hospital who visited them every month to discuss cases and offer advice. This

process also provided staff with an opportunity to discuss their own coping strategies in dealing with stressful circumstances and information on a daily basis.

Under its second component of outreach and awareness, WIN reached out to a total of 1,454 individuals through 65 programs. While target groups varied from community members to government officials and health care providers, the overall goal of these programs was to generate greater awareness on issues of gender-based violence and their causes together with what can be done to address them. WIN also used these meetings to create awareness on the services it provides. Staff noted that the number of case referrals, particularly from remote villages that they had previously not accessed, increased significantly after these programs, as did the support offered to WIN from officials who also participated in a number of these programs. Below is the complete list of programs held under this component of the project.

WIN Outreach and Awareness Programs

Target group	Number of programs	Number of participants	Location
Mid Wives/health workers	3	82	2 in Jaffna 1 in Puttalam
<i>Grama Niladharis</i>	3	65	Jaffna
Medical Officers	2	94	1 in Jaffna 1 in Puttalam
<i>Samurdhi Niladharis</i>	2	63	1 in Jaffna 1 in Puttalam
Para-legals	2	54	1 in Jaffna 1 in Puttalam
Community	14	872	5 In Jaffna 9 in Puttalam
Youth	2	37	1 in Jaffna 1 in Puttalam
Mid-level government officers	2	28	2 in Jaffna
Assistant Counselors	2	54	Island wide
Women's Group meetings	33	105	Jaffna

The Assistant Counselors program was conducted as a substitute for a previously planned training program with family court counselors that did not receive approval from the Chief Justice. The two programs (one in Tamil and one in Sinhala) were held in close collaboration with the Family Health Bureau.

All of the above programs were one-off events except the meetings with women's groups in Jaffna, which were held with six sets of women from six villages over the course of six months. The objective behind setting up these groups was to create a network of women at the grassroots able to identify, report and monitor gender issues within their villages.

WIN staff noted that the most successful of the outreach and awareness programs were the workshops carried out for youth. These programs appeared to have an immediate impact on the psyche of the young people, particularly boys who began to reconsider many ideas that they had been socially conditioned to believe. WIN staff feel that working with young people will greatly help the cause of spreading awareness and bringing about positive change.

WIN also published and distributed a total of 3,000 brochures in English, Tamil and Sinhala containing information on gender-based violence and avenues available to seek help.

Under its third component of providing services to victims of violence WIN provided support to a total of 1,752 new clients. Of these, 1,085 received legal counseling and representation while 1,401 received psychological counseling. A number of these clients also availed WIN's services on multiple occasions. It must be noted that there were significant challenges in calculating the number of beneficiaries under this category as WIN had previously preferred to count the number of visits each client made as opposed to the actual number of clients. Although this figure was corrected after the second quarter of the first year, overall numbers should be considered as close approximations.

The WIN hotline received 27,484 distress calls from across the country during the project period, and 434 clients were housed in the Matara and Colombo safe houses. In Jaffna and Puttalam, a total of 159 new maintenance cases were filed together with support for ongoing cases. Other cases filed included divorce, and DNA paternity test cases. Nine new protection orders were filed and 14 were obtained during the project period.

1.1.3 TRAINING

SuRG Lawyers Training

The SE team conducted two workshops for lawyers during this quarter. The first of the two workshops, held in Jaffna in February, was the final in a series of one-day workshops focusing on the salient features of pleadings and pre-trial procedures in civil litigation. A total of 59 participants, (39 male, 20 female) including three senior judges of Jaffna were present at the workshop. The workshop was well received as was the presence of the resource persons, Rtd. Justice Wigneswaran and Justice A.W. Abdus Salam, with much appreciation directed to the fact that a workshop of this nature had been held in Jaffna.

The second residential workshop held in March targeted junior lawyers, particularly from the Vanni region (but also from other parts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces) who were unable to attend previous SuRG workshops on the topic of land law. A total of 17 young lawyers (10 male, 07 female; 12 Tamil, 5 Muslim) participated in this workshop, which focused on the topics of private property, property partition and application of Section 66 of the Primary Courts Procedure Act.



Lawyers from the Vanni region and other parts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces participate in a moot court session during the "Training Workshop on Land Matters" held in Haborana.

"I did not have much experience in civil law and it was a challenging area for me. I hope the knowledge and confidence I have gained through this training workshop will help me to take on more civil cases, particularly land matters... At this workshop I was able to obtain direct feedback from the respected judges [Justices Wigneswaran, Salaam and Laffar] who offered their wealth of experience to us. This is a rare opportunity for us."

ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

Resource persons for the workshop were Rtd. Justice C.V. Wigneswaran, Justice A.W. Abdus Salaam and Judge Laffar Thahir. Participants were especially appreciative of the participatory approach adopted by Judge Laffar during his moot court session, the comprehensive material provided by Justice Salam and the opportunity to interact with a legal luminary such as Justice Wigneswaran. Furthermore, as the number of participants was much smaller than usual, participants had the opportunity to receive almost one-on-one advice on a number of issues and doubts from all three eminent legal personalities.

Gender

SuRG sponsored the participation of two women at a “Gender and Development Workshop” organized by Indian NGO SANGAT in collaboration with EKTA. SANGAT and EKTA have conducted this course in the Tamil language on a variety of occasions over the last three years for women from Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu to build the capacity of women’s rights defenders, to strengthen understanding of gender concepts and provide the knowledge and tools needed to develop and apply gender analysis and to formulate policies and programs focused on or incorporating gender justice and equality. This year’s course was conducted in Batticaloa.

SuRG sponsored the participation, the Women’s Desk Coordinator of a SuRG partner and a journalist from Nuwara Eliya who is a reporter for the Tamil Mirror, at the program held in Batticaloa in February.

1.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The CEaT team continued its grantee support and monitoring throughout the quarter. End of grant reviews to assess project implementation, impact and challenges and provide partners input regarding implementation and impact for future programming were conducted.

The CEaT team also continued its direct implementation of activities for Youth Groups and Peace Committees formed by a SuRG partner and conducted the first phase of a two-part training program on participatory rural appraisal and community mobilization for partner representatives.

1.2.1 GRANTS

ARD047

After almost 16 months (representing 76 percent of total time allotted) of implementation of its project, American University (AU) had only spent 34 percent of its grant funds. AU’s slow implementation was due in part to a particularly slow start-up and persistent delays hiring staff and then keeping staff on board once hired. In response, SuRG requested AU submit a detailed pipeline and a realistic implementation plan for the remainder of the program. The grant was then modified reducing the total grant funds and revising activities to reflect realistic implementation goals given the time remaining and based on the local partner’s capacity and experience to date.

In spite of these persistent challenges, activities picked up considerably this quarter as the local partner reached out to a range of stakeholders within the Muslim community; began building a strong network of organizations based on its research, training and other activities; and initiated advocacy initiatives. SuRG activities conducted this quarter, as detailed below, included the continuation of the “Family Mediation and Counseling Program,” a board retreat, the “Strengthening the Muslim Majilis in Universities: A Gender Perspective” workshop and ongoing training for the staff.

AU also hired a consultant from the UN University of Peace in Costa Rica to conduct a final project evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess:

- The quality of the local partner’s programs and their ability to achieve their main goals of building its capacity as a leading advocacy organization that convenes different Muslim constituencies to bring their needs and concerns into the national and public discourse.
- The impact of programs on participants and on local communities or sectors, and the Muslim community as a whole.
- The quality of research reports and advocacy handbook produced.

- The original program design.
- Potential areas for growth or areas of opportunities.
- The management capacity of the local partner to design, implement, and monitor research and advocacy programs and provide recommendations for strengthening that capacity.
- The impact AU had on supporting capacity building of the local partner.

The consultant travelled to Sri Lanka on March 24 to conduct interviews and focus group discussions with local partner staff and board members, USAID, Tetra Tech ARD, project beneficiaries and other key stakeholders.

Counseling and Family Mediation Workshops

This workshop was organized and conducted to build the capacity of Muslim religious and community leaders to effectively engage in family mediation through basic counselling concepts.

The five-day training program was conducted twice and focused on mediation strategies and principles of basic counseling to resolve conflicts within families. This workshop was facilitated by a Psychological Counselor and Clinical Psychologist attached to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. He was supported by resource persons with experience in counseling, law, GBV in the Muslim family and training. Participants represented the Mosque Federation and Jamiyyathul Ulama, *quazis*, *ulamas*, trustees of mosques, women juries, the Mediation Board, An-Nahjathul Islamiya, Arabic colleges, family counselors, media, and registrars of marriage.

“This session will be very useful to me when I perform my duties as Quazi member.”

PARTICIPANT, COUNSELING AND FAMILY MEDIATION TRAINING

Topics covered at the workshops included mental health, grief and loss, problem-solving skills, helper characteristics and emotional intelligence, helping skills, self-care and burnout prevention, conflict resolution, presentation skills, dealing with different groups, substantive and procedural laws, introduction to family counseling, psychological reasons for family conflicts, family problems in Sri Lanka with Muslim family case studies, methods to reduce family conflicts in villages, Islamic models in resolving personal and family disputes, and co-existence in Sri Lanka. A total of 60 (44 male and 16 female) participants attended the two workshops.



Participants engage in a role play activity on effective counseling techniques at the “Counseling and Family Mediation” workshop held in Colombo.

At the end of the workshops, the local partner received a number of requests from participants to conduct follow-up workshops in the provinces. In response, the local partner organized a one-day workshop in March in Galle. A Counseling Officer at the Ministry of Social Services served as a resource person for the workshop. The 20 (12 male and 8

female) participants included village representatives, members of the Masjid administration, religious leaders, principals, teachers, social service workers and businessmen.

The workshop was designed to explore causes of and address increased family violence; underscore the importance of the family unit; introduce a psychological approach to family problems; and analyze and reduce family problems in the rural sector. Topics covered at the workshop were applicable psychological provisions

to family life; methods to approach family problems; principles of a happy family life; and causes and types of family problems among Sri Lankan Muslim families.

Participants outlined the following mechanisms to introduce learning at the village level: conducting speeches in weekly Friday sermons; providing knowledge on family life through parents' meetings in the schools; providing ideas on family life for Advanced Level students; and forming a women's organization.

Board of Directors Retreat

AU had originally planned two two-day board retreats—one to be held in November 2012 and the second to be held in March 2013. However, due to difficulties in getting the full board together, the November session had to be cancelled and the March session was re-planned as a one-day program which was held in February with the participation of all seven board members.

The purpose of the meeting was to update the board members on recent activities; discuss the sustainability of the local partner beyond SuRG and USAID funding; brainstorm strategies to raise the profile of the organization and define its position in the Muslim community; and articulate staff needs.

The Board reiterated and refined the organization's focus areas to ensure they reflect the current and most urgent concerns of the Muslim community. The focus areas are as follows:

- Internally displaced persons, particularly resettlement and land issues of Northern Muslims.
- Discrimination and minority issues.
- Intra and inter-religious harmony.
- Muslim women's issues.
- Policy reform and constitutional reform.

The Board also identified potential funding opportunities, appointing individuals to take the lead for each. In addition, the group identified immediate actions to be taken to raise the presence of the organization. Other recommendations include conducting forum discussions every two to four months and building a partnership with the other civil society organizations.

Strengthening Muslim Majlis at Universities - A Gender Perspective

Traditionally, Muslim Majlis are organizations run by Muslim students to monitor the welfare of Muslim students in the universities. It is a formally constituted body within the university and recognized in university by-laws. Typically, Majlis are seen as another student body to support and promote the spiritual needs of students. Leadership roles are usually held by male students.

Considering the recent increase in the number of female university students, the local partner identified the need for student organizations to better address the unique needs of female students and organized a one-day workshop for 26 office bearers (25 male and 01 female) from Muslim Majlis from 12 universities in February to discuss this issue. The objectives of the workshop were to introduce basic gender concepts; discuss the perspectives, beliefs, myths, and behavior around Muslim women leadership with reference to Islam; and identify challenges to Muslim women leadership and strategies to overcome them.

During the sessions, participants discussed how Muslim Majlis in universities can address social norms impeding women's leadership in the university. The discussion formed the basis for an ongoing dialogue between the local partner and the Majlis on this subject and helped to elicit participants' support for nominations to the organization's Leadership Program for Women University students to be conducted next quarter.

Professional Development for Staff

In an effort to support ongoing institutional development, a staff professional development workshop series was initiated this quarter. Staff participated in each of the half-day training sessions on the following topics:

- Networking and collaborating with other organizations;
- Human resource development, training and staff motivation;
- Program design, proposal writing and implementation; and
- Budget development.

ARD069

The SuRG partner continued implementation of its project this quarter, training 389 people from 57 CBOs as detailed in the chart below.

Training January – March 2013

Name of Training	No. of Trainings Conducted		Gender Breakdown	Ethnic Breakdown (Tamil/ Muslim)	Total Pax
Laws and Legal Documentation	07		52 M, 63 F	115 T, 00 M	115
Leadership	06		69 M, 118 F	166 T, 21 M	187
Office and Program Management	04		25 M, 62 F	87 T, 00 M	87

Due to heavy rains and flooding as well as the SuRG partner's over-commitment of staff after obtaining additional funding for new activities from other donors, the SuRG partner was unable to complete training on financial management, and office and program management as planned. They were also unable to conduct advocacy meetings planned for the quarter. The SuRG partner was granted a one-month no-cost extension to complete these activities in April.

ARD048

In March, KCP, in collaboration with its local partner, completed the activities of the project. The project will close in April after the completion and distribution of remaining project publications.

Since its inception in August 2011, the project has worked with 80 core religious leaders and 80 religious community members from all leading faiths to foster community reconciliation through conflict transformation skills building, inter-faith dialogue, community development and social empowerment projects.

Through the nine inter-faith training workshops and three inter-faith dialogues that promoted better understanding, trust and mutual respect of each faith and each other, two exposure visits—one to Galle where core religious leaders learned best practices from an influential Galle inter-faith group, and the other in which religious leaders from Galle were hosted in Batticaloa, 30-district inter-faith council meetings and 47 community development projects—the core group of religious leaders have become

“We have learned to not allow our religion to box us in. Now we see that as religious leaders we have similar values. We are all human beings. The fact that we practice separate faiths and wear different types of religious garments need not separate us.”

A HINDU PRIEST FROM TRINCOMALEE

social change agents in their communities bringing together diverse and previously separated groups and creating trust and mutual understanding between ethnic and religious divides.

Activities implemented this quarter are detailed below.

Community Projects

Over the life of the project, a total of 47 community projects, including language and computer classes, women's vocational training, *shramadanas*, cultural events, community awareness programs and sports festivals were organized by inter-faith groups of the core religious leaders. These projects have helped bridge religious and ethnic divides between communities while strengthening cultural understanding, tolerance and respect among community members (see box story below). This quarter, second rounds of 21 weekly classes were completed including 18 language classes, a computer class and two women's vocational trainings on Palmyra handicrafts and sewing. Only one round of these classes was originally planned; however, due to popular interest and impact, second rounds were added.



KCP

Hindu, Muslim and Christian graduates from the first Palmyra palm handicraft training program, organized by KCP organized inter-faith groups of religious leaders, work together to complete an order for the Palmyra Development Board Batticaloa Regional Office.

Project inter-faith councils managed all ongoing community projects in their districts and, this quarter, developed three new community projects, one per council, giving them practice in designing and implementing a project from scratch. The projects included a *shramadana* in Batticaloa to repaint places of worship, and awareness programs on child abuse and child protection for high school students of mixed ethnicity in Padaviya and Trincomalee.

Trainees in Palmyra Handicrafts Generate Revenue and Promote Inter-faith Harmony

After attending a Palmyra palms handicraft training program organized by KCP trained inter-faith teams of religious leaders, a group of 21 Muslim, Hindu and Christian women from Batticaloa are now working together on their own initiative, meeting in each other's homes to complete an order from the Palmyra Development Board Batticaloa Regional Office for 500 baskets. Their goal is to open their own shop in town to increase their profits.

The women come from Muslim and Hindu villages where tensions between the communities have been high ever since the war when Hindu villages were strongholds for the LTTE and government troops were active in the Muslim villages. The women's work together has helped ease these tensions and build better relations. One of the Hindu participants explains, "Before the Palmyra training program, we did not have any contact with women from the Muslim village. We were not comfortable with each other because of what happened during the war. We first got to know the Muslim women in our [Palmyra] program and [further] when we got invited to their homes for festivals, even for weddings. Now we know many women in their villages...Sometimes young men from their side or ours want to stir up a fight; maybe because they have been drinking. We call each other to give a warning so that we can do something. We might tell our boys to pay no attention, or if it seems serious, call the police."

The Palmyra training is one of 47 community development projects that engages youth and adults in ways that support personal and community growth while enhancing inter-faith and inter-ethnic ties. Approximate 4,300 people in Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Padaviya participated in KCP community development projects.

Inter-faith District Councils

During this quarter, the district inter-faith councils conducted 13 district meetings to manage community projects, prepare for the national conference and plan for the sustainability of the councils beyond the project. The Batticaloa and Trincomalee councils are currently applying for NGO status while the Padaviya council has decided to operate as a group within the Sarvodaya structure.

In March, the Director of KCP met with the core groups of each district council. She worked with each on a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and helped them develop vision and mission statements, clear goals for the coming months, and ideas for activities to support those specific goals. Each council core group produced a draft action plan to be presented and discussed at the Final Symposium with other council members.

Religious leaders of these inter-faith councils looked into ways to raise new funds from their religious institutions and local businesses for community activities. The Batticaloa council has already started to implement programs without SuRG funding. In March, they held two peacebuilding awareness programs, one in a Muslim village and another in a Hindu village.

National Conference

On March 2, a national conference titled “National Reconciliation and Development through Inter-religious Coexistence” was held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) in Colombo at which the 80 core religious leaders were joined by others from around the country bringing the total participant numbers to 542 religious leaders and 83 civil society members and journalists. Highlights of the conference were broadcast on four TV news programs. During the conference, local partner staff presented the achievements of the overall project and showed a video montage of its activities.

The conference marked the first attempt by project religious leaders to advocate at the national level. During inter-faith council meetings, they had developed a joint recommendation on how to improve inter-faith harmony in Sri Lanka; two religious leaders—a Hindu priest and a Buddhist monk—presented them at the national conference. Additionally, all conference participants received a copy of a children’s storybook with peace stories from each faith group developed during the project and a comprehensive Lessons Learned Document that outlined the achievements of the program and listed the religious leaders’ joint recommendation.

Final Knowledge Sharing Symposium

A Final Knowledge Sharing Symposium was held to reflect on the changes participants noted in themselves and their communities and for district councils to ratify action plans developed by their core groups. A total of 88 participants attended including core religious leaders and the most active of the trained youth religious leaders.

ToT Training for Local Partner Staff

KCP staff, with input from the local partner, created a Training of Trainers (ToT) manual in inter-faith peacebuilding based on the trainings and dialogues held over the course of the program. The manual, printed in English, Tamil and Sinhala, contains explanations of theory, models for teaching, and instruction for interactive exercises. A number of the exercises were included in a three-day ToT in inter-faith peacebuilding to build the capacity of local partner staff to continue similar work after the project. The workshop was led by KCP’s Director and an independent peacebuilding consultant. Sixteen local partner staff engaged in social programming and two staff members from the National Peace Council attended the workshop held in March.

Publications and Productions Promoting Inter-faith Harmony

This quarter, KCP published the inter-faith peacebuilding ToT manual described above as well as a children’s book highlighting stories promoting peace from each faith group (both published in all three languages), and

a Learning Sharing Document in Tamil and Sinhala detailing program activities and lessons learned which includes the joint recommendation of the district councils for improved inter-faith relations. A 30-minute video documentary depicting program activities was also produced and aired at the National Conference. Five hundred copies of the ToT manual and 6,000 copies of the children's books were printed this quarter. These publications will be distributed to district schools, education centers, libraries, CBOs, NGOs and government institutions.

ARD064

The SuRG partner completed its six-month project in March. The project aimed to address community-level issues and strengthen relationships among multi-ethnic communities through work with women's and youth groups from 13 Tamil and Muslim multi-ethnic villages in Trincomalee District.

Over the life of the project, the SuRG partner conducted 78 women's group monthly meetings to provide a space for participants to raise community issues and identify possible solutions. Three hundred thirty-nine people (266 female, 73 male; 179 Tamil, 150 Muslim, 10 Sinhala) participated in the 39 meetings held this quarter. Highlights and results of the meetings include:

- Sixteen children who had dropped out of school returned to school with the combined effort of the local women's group and the Women's and Child Desk. Women's group members also requested and received support from well-wishers for school stationeries for these students.
- The local PS had long been inactive. During the project, members from three women's groups continued to meet with the Chairman and other officers, follow up and frequently submit their village-level issues. As a result of their continuous efforts, the PS incorporated three women of these groups into the PS's Development Committee. This has created an opportunity for greater responsiveness to women's needs and is also a recognition of the women's community development efforts. Additionally, the PS has promised to look into the request letters submitted by these women's groups regarding assistance for road construction, street lamps and a permanent pre-school building and take necessary action.
- As per the requests made by the local women's group, a 200-meter internal road was repaired and graveled and three poor families were supported by the Provincial Council opposition party to get electricity connections.

The SuRG partner also conducted 78 youth group monthly meetings throughout the project. Thirty-nine were held this quarter with the participation of 287 youth (254 male, 33 female; 101 Tamil, 186 Muslim). The following issues were addressed:

- A local youth group requested from Green Movement, a consortium of local NGOs dedicated to increasing environmental awareness, selection of the Al-Nooriya Muslim Vidyalayam for a tree planting program. The youth group members also helped plant trees at the school once the program was approved.
- In January, another youth group requested the PS repair a road which was an unlevelled and sand-filled road. Per their request construction work for a concrete road has begun.
- Youth group members collaborated with the SuRG partner staff to approach several vocational training institutions for training. As a result, five youth are attending courses in welding, IT, accounting, and English at the Technical College and National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) in Trincomalee.
- Youth and other students in a remote village used to travel 9 kilometers to access a library. As a result of the request by the youth group, the PS made a small library in and stocked it with books and daily newspapers.

Following the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) awareness session conducted last quarter for youth group members and graduate trainees working at the DS Office, this quarter the SuRG partner conducted three awareness sessions on leadership, teenage marriage and school dropouts, and environmental and cultural issues for youth and women's group members. The sessions provided participants with new skills and knowledge and increased their ability to identify, tackle and solve common community issues, and connect across ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds. A total of 130 people including 62 women and 68 men (52 Tamil, 78 Muslim) participated in these sessions.

Thirty-nine women beneficiaries (three from each of the 13 project villages) including 23 Tamils, 15 Muslims and one Sinhalese each received in-kind livelihood support worth Rs. 25,000 for small business, home gardening, livestock rearing, sewing, textile business, and food making. Twenty-two of these in-kind grants were disbursed this quarter. Beneficiaries were selected from low-income families who have previously not received livelihood assistance or from female-headed households. The SuRG partner dispersed the loans after reviewing the feasibility of the business plans submitted by those who met the selection criteria. The loan recipients were provided two skills development trainings. In the first training held in December, they learned about self-employment, self-evaluation, marketing, opportunities for employment, and bookkeeping, and in the second training held in March, they discussed the progress and challenges of their businesses, and marketing and production strategies to improve them.



The winning art from a school-level art competition on peace building and reconciliation among multi-ethnic communities held in Trincomalee District.

The SuRG partner collaborated with the DS Office to conduct a cultural program in March with the participation of women's and youth group members, school students, religious leaders and government officers. At this event Tamil, Sinhala, and Muslim school students performed dramas, songs, dances, and speeches. The SuRG partner had conducted an art competition among school children earlier in the quarter on the theme of peacebuilding among multi-ethnic communities, and the winners received prizes at this event. Additionally, religious leaders trained under SuRG's KCP project delivered speeches on peace, co-existence and ethnic unity through religion. A total of 169 participants including 70 males and 99 females and 77 Tamils, 90 Muslims, and two Sinhalese participated.

Included in the project at the request of the Divisional Secretary was the collection of information on population, service providers and prevalent social issues in the division and the publishing of a book with the findings. Graduate trainees who attended the SuRG partner PRA training had collected most of the information, but they needed two more months to complete the task. Since the SuRG partner was unable to wait that long to publish the book, the DS Office took over the activity. The SuRG partner then, using the remaining grant funds from the activity, organized an exposure visit in March for its youth group members and a few women's group members to visit youth groups under another SuRG partner's project. This served as a follow-up activity to the exposure visit SuRG organized in February where that SuRG partner's beneficiaries travelled to meet this partner's beneficiaries. Participants met to discuss their community advocacy work and then traveled together to Pasikudah for a social outing. A total of 59 participants, including 49 males, 10 females, and 21 Tamils and 38 Muslims, participated.

ARD036

The SuRG partner continued its five-month project working with youth groups and WRDSs in six Sinhala and Tamil villages. A range of activities were implemented this quarter including exposure visits, workshops, cultural events, a youth camp, monthly meetings and advocacy initiatives.

“For people like us who have remained in Jaffna in monotonous lives, this was a great opportunity. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly with Sinhala brothers and sisters. This is my first [such] experience. These kinds of opportunities are very important for youth like us.”

YOUTH , JAFFNA

In January, the partner organized a one-day youth workshop which framed the coexistence building activities to follow. Topics covered included defining youth, conducting a SWOT analysis for personal development, importance of team work, challenges youth face in today’s society, defining coexistence, how to build coexistence and the challenges faced in doing so. Twenty-six youth, including 13 males and 13 females (12 Tamil, 14 Sinhala), participated.

Following the workshop, the first of two cultural knowledge-sharing events was organized during Thaipongal Day on January 14, at which 20 Sinhala youth (12 male, 8 female) participated in home-stays with Tamil youth learning about the festival, its significance and traditions from their Tamil peers and elders. For many of the Sinhala participants, this was the first time they entered and stayed the night in a Tamil home. After the home-stays, all participants as well as WRDS members and other adults from the community gathered at a local Kovil to celebrate Thaipongal conducting a *pooja* ceremony. By the end of the event, the participants were so comfortable with each other that rather than return to their villages as planned, they spent the rest of the day socializing.

In February, the SuRG partner collaborated with the WIN to organize a three-day exposure visit for local youth to meet and interact with youth from a village in Jaffna. The event which allowed participants to interact with each other and forge new relationships also incorporated lessons on leadership, teamwork, non-violent communication and gender-related issues. The Jaffna youth warmly welcomed the Trincomalee group incorporating traditional meals and performing a street-drama on societal gender discrimination. By the end of the three days, participants had exchanged their contact details and were discussing a return visit to Trincomalee. For most of the Jaffna youth, this was the first time they had interacted with Sinhala people. A total of 65 youth (36 male, 29 female), including 44 Tamils and 21 Sinhalese, participated.

Culminating the activities for youth planned for the quarter, the SuRG partner held a three-day youth camp in Seruvila where the 31 youth participants (16 male, 15 female; 15 Tamil, 16 Sinhala), who were divided into mixed teams by gender, ethnicity and religion, engaged in a range of group activities and games promoting leadership and communication skills and working together beyond language, gender, ethnic and religious barriers. For example, at the beginning of the camp, when a team would lose a game they would blame the language barrier as being the reason for their loss. However, seeing other teams winning the competition, and later on their own team winning different events, amidst the language barrier, allowed the youth to realize that there were ways a group can work together without knowing each other’s language. Since the participants had taken part in a range of SuRG partner activities before the camp, they were comfortably interacting with each other and enjoying themselves across ethnic, religious and gender divides.



Youth from Jaffna and Trincomalee participate in a group activity district during an exposure visit.

As part of the “supporting CBOs” component of the project, the SuRG partner organized a two-day exposure visit for 37 youth group and WRDS members, including 23 women and 14 men (21 Sinhala, 16 Tamil) to the Sevana Women’s Farmers’ Organization, located in Anuradhapura District. Sevana started in 1998 with 11 members each contributing Rs. 10; it has grown into an organization which is today owned and governed by 80 local women with a budget of Rs. 4 million. Members from Sevana discussed how they

started the organization, the challenges faced and how they were addressed, their financial and governance structures, rules and regulations and revenue-generating ventures. As most of the Seruvila youth groups and WRDSs were still in the midst of establishing themselves and facing challenges that prevented their organizations from moving forward, being able to talk with and see for themselves where the Sevena Women's Farmers' Organization has come from humble beginnings was highly motivational for the participants who returned with hopes of incorporating similar strategies in their organizations.

The SuRG partner also organized four advocacy initiatives through which youth group and WRDS members were able to interact with the Divisional Secretary and PS Chairman. They started off with a workshop on service delivery held in January, where the 43 participants gained knowledge on different types of government offices and NGOs and the services they provide, and how to identify and address the challenges in obtaining services. The SuRG partner had helped the leaders from these organizations utilize the knowledge they gained during the service delivery training to prioritize village needs separated by those that can be addressed by the DS and those that can be addressed by the PS. Equipped with flipcharts detailing these needs, members from youth groups and WRDSs presented their villages' needs to the DS and PS Chairman. Highlights and next steps include:

- In five of the six villages, there are issues relating to *Samurdhi* benefits; those who should receive benefits are not receiving them, and those who should not receive benefits are receiving them. To address this issue the DS requested the help of the community members to identify these people. As such, members from the youth groups and WRDSs are gathering the relevant information.
- There has been a shortage of buses in one village. Following the request made at the PS, a new bus service was started.
- Within a month of the meeting with the PS, the Chairman addressed the need for street lamps in three villages.
- Per the request of the PS Chairman, youth group and WRDS members wrote and submitted official request letters to the PS regarding renovation of side roads, common wells and drainage systems; and lack of playgrounds, road signs and community buildings. The Chairman promised to address these issues, and members from the relevant youth groups and WRDSs have been following up with the PS to ensure he keeps his promise.

The SuRG partner, continued to follow up with the essential legal documentation applications community members submitted at the mobile legal clinic conducted during its previous project. This quarter, 21 birth certificates were received.

ARD 038

The SuRG partner completed the second phase of its project in March. The project aimed to empower women by increasing their political influence and participation in Trincomalee District. Over the course of the project, the 60 selected women beneficiaries (49 Tamil, 11 Muslim) from two DS divisions participated in a series of activities including monthly meetings, open conferences, training sessions, a women's conference and an experience-sharing visit to Batticaloa District.

The SuRG partner is the first organization to work on promoting women's political participation in the district and they specifically selected women beneficiaries from rural areas providing them the confidence and opportunity to work in the public arena. For most of the women, this was the first time they were exposed to activities and views beyond their communities.

Project activities provided beneficiaries with specific skills and a basic knowledge about politics and political entry creating within them a thirst to learn more and the confidence to pursue their political dreams. This is especially important as most political leaders who enter the field do so without a basic knowledge of or the necessary skills for the job. To ensure a support system for the women beneficiaries beyond the project, the

SuRG partner created a network for project participants. However, as the network is still young, the SuRG partner plans to continue assisting the members after the project to strengthen the network until the members are able to run it on their own.

During this project, the SuRG partner conducted 12 monthly meetings with six held this quarter. At the joint monthly meeting held in December, the women beneficiaries commemorated the International Day for Eliminating Violence against Women and South Asia Women’s Day. During the monthly meetings held this quarter the women beneficiaries learned about non-violent communication and mediation as tools for conflict resolution, how to strengthen personal, professional and political relationships. Twelve open conferences were also held during this project (six held this quarter) in order to create a positive public opinion on women’s participation in politics and to raise public awareness on the *Pradeshya Sabha’s* responsibilities. These conferences were facilitated by Community Development Officer of the Trincomalee ACLG Office, and the District Officer at the Social Service Department in Trincomalee. A total of 290 participants, including 31 males and 259 females and 26 Sinhalese, 235 Tamils and 29 Muslims participated.

Following the training on local government structures and community participation held in December, the 60 women beneficiaries attended three training sessions this quarter on social networking and internet usage, understanding CEDAW and women’s networking, and developing an action plan for the women’s network. These sessions were facilitated by an IT resource person at the Town & Gravets DS Office, and freelance resource persons and translators at the Chief Secretary’s Office of the Eastern Provincial Council.

During an experience-sharing exposure visit organized in Batticaloa, the 42 women beneficiaries (35 Tamil, 7 Muslim) who participated met with Ex-Member of Parliament and National Coordinator at the Ministry of Traditional Industries, and a former political candidate from Batticaloa. Both women shared their experiences and views on political entry, interests, successes and challenges they faced as women in their political careers. They also shared strategies they used to gain the support of religious leaders to overcome religious and cultural social barriers. The participants were instructed on the importance of learning, reading to gain knowledge about political trends and current affairs, and developing language skills highly beneficial for listening to, learning and expressing political views.

On March 8, to commemorate International Women’s Day, a one-day conference was held as a final event of the project for all program participants, members of local women’s groups and selected persons involved in women’s issues in Trincomalee. Themes related to women’s leadership, politics and women’s participation, empowerment and equality were discussed in the conference. At this event the SuRG partner women beneficiaries, on their own initiative, launched a magazine called “Red Carpet” which includes women’s (including a few of the project beneficiaries’) views and experiences on public and political participation. The magazine marked the first effort by the women’s network to promote public awareness of women’s political participation. Members worked together to secure funding for the publication from local businesses and well-wishers. A total of 122 people, including 99 females and 23 males (111 Tamils and 11 Muslims), participated in the conference.



Tetra Tech ARD/SuRG
The “Red Carpet” magazine, prepared by women beneficiaries and funded by local businesses and supporters, includes women’s views and experiences on public and political participation. The magazine was launched on International Women’s Day.

I.2.2 SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE OF WOMEN'S GLOBAL ISSUES (S/WGI) GRANT

ARD050

In January 2013, HDCC completed its Secretary of State Office of Women's Global Issues grant titled "Promoting Entrepreneurship and Empowering Women in Hambantota District" which launched in July 2011 to empower women by promoting entrepreneurship among disadvantaged women and female youth, and by enhancing the capacity and role of businesswomen in the district.

Under the "Promotion of entrepreneurship among disadvantaged women and female youth" component, HDCC provided 60 loans, ranging from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 200,000 to support entrepreneurs engaged in manufacturing of coconut oil, garment products and ladies handbags, poultry farming, mushroom production, beauty parlors and salons, and plant nurseries. The final project loan, valued at Rs. 70,000, was disbursed this quarter bringing the total value of loans to Rs. 5,043,807.

To identify prospective loan recipients, HDCC conducted 15 meetings with government and nongovernmental offices and organizations focusing on women's issues and conducted 32 recruitment and awareness sessions. A total of 1,260 women participated in these sessions with ultimately 60 being approved by HDCC's Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) to receive loans.

As a means to market their products and network with buyers and sellers in the business community, HDCC provided free stalls and transportation for 34 women entrepreneurs who received loans to the "Hambantota Navodaya 2012 Industrial and Trade Exhibition" organized by HDCC in June 2012.

HDCC employed a series of field visits during the project to monitor and provide technical assistance to loan recipients. HDCC staff conducted regular field visits to compare loan recipients' business activities against their business plans, and to ensure loan conditions were being met. The 60 mentors (54 newly appointed during the project) made visits to provide assistance to loan recipients on standard bookkeeping and business practices, business registration and marketing and improving business ethics. In addition, members from the PEC visited business places to observe the status of businesses and inquire into the reasons for delayed loan repayments.

The loan recovery rate increased to 88 percent in January 2013 from the previous quarter (74 percent), though the rate was still lower than its highest of 94 percent in June 2012. The drop is a result of the flooding that took place last quarter which created business losses throughout the district and the departure of two loan recipients who went abroad to find work without repaying their loans.

This quarter, HDCC conducted a workshop on voluntary mentoring, skills development and positive attitudes for 30 mentors (16 male, 14 female). Additionally, HDCC launched a Mentoring Handbook detailing ways to improve relationships between mentors and their mentees and effective tools in mentoring. The handbook was launched in a ceremony conducted in February and will be given out to all 60 mentors.

HDCC also provided a range of trainings to prospective and approved loan recipients, as indicated in the chart below.



Chairman of the Mentor Coordination Committee of the Hambantota Youth Business Programme presents a copy of the Mentoring Handbook to the President of HDWEF at a launching event held at HDCC in Hambantota District. Also in the picture are HDCC's CEO (far left), and President (far right).

HDCC Training Programs for Promoting Entrepreneurship of Disadvantage Women and Female Youth (September, 2011 – June, 2012)

Training Program	Number of Participants	Topics Covered
Generate Your Business Idea	25	Identifying one's ability to start a business, generating a business idea and selecting the best business idea.
Start Your Business	25	Business start-up, identifying legal issues, maintaining records, the value of a positive attitude and customer relations
Improve Your Business	50	How to establish costs for manufacturers or service providers, business records management, customer satisfaction, buying and selling, business planning, controlling stock, and linking people and productivity
Technical Training on Pottery Industry	140	Techniques of pottery making, pricing, promoting and marketing
Personal Skills Development	94	Successful entrepreneurship, winning over the business world, and using the 4Ps—product, promotion, place and price
Customer Care	60	How to value customers, total customer care, quality products and tools for selling
Technical Training on Sewing	26	Sewing techniques for women's garments

Under the “Enhancing the capacity and role of businesswomen” component, HDCC established the Hambantota Women Entrepreneurs’ Forum (HDWEF) creating an opportunity for women entrepreneurs in the district to network and share best practices with each other, access Chamber resources, and increase the lobbying power of women in business. The network is especially beneficial for upcoming entrepreneurs who are not yet members of the Chamber as they are able to learn from women entrepreneurs who are already well established and are Chamber members. During HDCC’s Annual General Meeting held in September 2012, four women were elected into the Chamber’s Board of Directors including the three women who were previously on the Board and a new member, HDWEF’s President. All four of the female members of the Board of Directors are also members of the HDWEF.

As decided during the HDWEF committee meetings held last quarter, in January, HDCC organized an exposure visit for 11 Forum committee members to meet members of the Central Province Women’s Chamber of Commerce in Kandy where participants shared their experiences and best practices while working with their respective chambers. At the end of the event, participants agreed that both chambers should look into establishing market linkages between the women entrepreneurs’ of Kandy and Hambantota and that both parties should explore possibilities of working together to promote and market their products.

Also in January and on the recommendation of the HDWEF committee members, HDCC organized a networking session between Forum members and key personnel from government and financial institutions related to entrepreneurship. The sessions were led by officials from the Divisional Secretary’s Office, Labor Department, Inland Revenue Department, KPMG Audit Firm, Central Bank and other commercial banks. The event provided Forum members an opportunity to directly ask questions from relevant officials and bring their attention to issues faced by women entrepreneurs in the district. A total of 44 people participated.

Under the component, HDCC also provided a range of trainings to women entrepreneurs in the district, inclusive of those in the HDWEF, as indicated in the chart below.

HDCC Training Programs to Enhance the Capacity and Role of Businesswomen (August, 2011 – January, 2013)

Training Program	Number of Participants	Topics Covered
Together We Can Achieve	50	Business ethics and social responsibility, how to manage a business, identifying a business market and how to reach it, and costing and pricing
Managing a Business	54	Business management practices, the business registration process, taxation, ETF and EPF contributions
Motivation and Positive Thinking	60	Retaining, managing and motivating staff to improve their efficiency and retaining customers
Leadership Training for Potential Leaders	12	Leadership, communication, presentation, public speaking and team work
Customer Care	29	How to value customers, total customer care, quality products, and tools for selling
Team Building	20	Groups and teams, advantages of team building, effective team building and the five stages of team development

1.2.3 TRAINING AND DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION

Participatory Rural Appraisal and Community Mobilization Training

In early March, CEaT organized the first of a two-part training program on “Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Community Mobilization” for partners. Twenty-one representatives (13 female, 8 male) from 10 organizations attended the five-day residential workshop conducted by a SuRG partner.

Topics covered included participatory development, sustainable development, social mobilization, project cycles and exit strategies, and the challenges and best practices in implementing projects that incorporate participatory development. PRA was introduced as a model to achieve participatory development and participants were educated on a number of tools that can be used to conduct a PRA. The workshop underscored for participants, in many cases for the first time, the importance and necessity of participatory processes and methodology and of creating ownership among community members for the development work that affects them. The training focused on implementation and used activities that allowed participants to put concepts into practice. They began applying what they learned as soon as they returned to work as indicated by a counselor at WIN Puttalam.

I really appreciate the PRA training provided by SuRG. The day after the training ended, there was a counseling program organized by the WIN Puttalam Office. I thought it was a very good opportunity to apply



SuRG partner

Manager of the WIN Women's Resource Center in Mathara, explaining her group's work utilizing the Pair-wise Ranking tool during the “Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Community Mobilization” workshop held for SuRG partners.

the lessons I learned at the PRA training to a real field situation... I used the Problem Tree tool to analyze domestic violence during the session. By utilizing the diagram the participants were able to visualize the reasons for domestic violence and its consequences (fruits). They all discussed in length how to cutoff the reasons (roots) in order to not let domestic violence cause further consequences. They realized that the consequences (fruits) of domestic violence are what we see, and that the reasons (roots) lay 'hidden beneath the soil,' yet causing painful results. If those roots are taken away there would be no domestic violence...It is very handy to have tools put into practice. We will continue to keep applying PRA tools to our work so that we are able to improve our programs a lot.

Phase two of the training will be conducted in May. In the interim, participants were asked to review concepts, experiment with tools learned in their daily work and create a step-by-step exit strategy for work they are doing in communities to share and analyze with the group in the second session.

ARD057

SuRG continued its work with Seruvilla and Muthur DS division Youth Groups and Peace Committees formed by a SuRG partner. In February, 50 Youth Group and Peace Committee members (03 female, 47 male; 31 Tamil, 19 Muslim) participated in an exposure visit with youth and women's group members involved in community advocacy work in another SuRG partner's project. During the visit, participants learned about new approaches to community advocacy. At the end, they agreed to organize a friendship cricket match among the youth groups.

The SuRG partner youth group members also participated in a *shramadana* to repair a former RDS building recently given to youth groups to use as a library. Forty-nine males including 37 Tamils and 12 Muslims from Youth Groups and Peace Committees participated.

“This project has created a great opportunity for us to build healthier, stronger, more inclusive communities by increasing positive interactions between youth from different identity groups. The project tried to create a space where open dialogue can take place between youth from communities with diverse cultural, religious, geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. Since we lost our property and loved ones during the ethnic conflict we used to see the other community as our enemy. However, USAID supported us to shape our values and build relationships with other ethnic groups.”

YOUTH GROUP MEMBER



Youth Group members perform a street drama in Trincomalee District to raise awareness on prevalent community issues.

In March, two Peace Committee and Youth Group network meetings were conducted with government officials to gain support and technical advice regarding community issues. The facilitators of the meetings—the Muthur Youth Service Officer, the Police Officer in Charge, and a member of the Mediation Board—covered topics such as non-violent communication and raised awareness on community issues including illicit liquor and drug usage, child and women's abuse, burglary, school dropouts, and land issues and their preventative mechanisms. A total of 31 people including 22 males and 09 females (17 Tamil and 14 Muslims) participated.

A three-day street drama workshop was conducted for 30 selected Youth Group members (17 male, 13 female). Following the training participants performed their street drama in three different public

locations raising awareness on prevalent community issues such as alcoholism, domestic violence, burglary, school dropouts, child labor, and land issues.

A close-out ceremony was organized to review project activities and impact. During the event, the 15 participating Youth Groups received sports equipment and certificates were awarded to Youth Group and Peace Committee members in appreciation of their voluntary service to the community. A total of 150 people participated, including 115 males and 35 females (91 Tamils, 53 Muslims and 6 Sinhalese).

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Following on last quarter’s decision by USAID to reprogram LG funds slated for training in the North to the East, SuRG worked with EML, the CLG and the MLGPC to develop a follow-on training program for the East. EML’s subcontract was revised accordingly and training got underway. In addition, at the request of the Ministry, SuRG and EML adapted and delivered a training module on management for mayors, chairmen, secretaries and relevant management assistants from 32 LAs in eight provinces qualified by the Ministry in its 2012 Performance Evaluation. SuRG also supported the Batticaloa Assistant Commissioner for Local Government’s Office training for district librarians.

“This is a golden opportunity for us. I have been working for 28 years in the same position, but I have never received a training program of this type before. All the resource persons are leading people in the country. I was able to get answers for issues and problems directly related to my job.”

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER,
ASSISTANCE COMMISSIONER OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT OFFICE. AMPARA DISTRICT

Throughout the quarter, SuRG also continued to monitor its 11 partner LAs in the East’s working groups and Participatory Governance Forums (PGFs).

In addition, this quarter a SuRG partner completed its project in Polonnaruwa and Ampara with the printing of project advocacy manuals.

1.3.1 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

SuRG continued to provide technical assistance to its 11 partner LAs in the East at their 22 PGF and 22 Working Group (WG) meetings held during the quarter. Due to the government’s annual *Deyata Kirula* programs held this year in the Eastern Province, no PGF and no WG meetings were held in March.

During the quarter, SuRG initiated the second phase of technical training conducted by EML for LAs in the Eastern Province. Workshops were conducted this quarter on “Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation for Field Staff,” and on “Procurement Procedures and Contract.”

Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation for Field Staff Workshop

A workshop on monitoring, reporting and evaluation for field staff was developed at the request of the Commissioner of Local Government (CLG) and the Chief Secretary. The workshop targeted department Community Development and Investigating Officers (IOs).

The three-day residential workshop, attended by 32 Community Development Officers (CDOs) and five Investigating Officers (29 male, 8 female and 18 Tamil, 13 Sinhala and 6 Muslims), was held in January. The training was designed to improve the capacity of participants in investigation, supervision, and monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MR&E) of local



Participants at the “Workshop on Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation” for field staff of the Department of Local Government Eastern Province take part in a group exercise.

authority activities. Sessions were intended to provide core knowledge on the subject area, change the attitudes of CDOs and IOs to support their LA's with proper MR&E services and develop participants' skills so they can provide better monitoring and evaluation services and ensure high standards of professional ethics in reporting. Key topics covered at the workshop were:

- Current status of local government (LG) in the Eastern Province.
- Local government administration and responsibilities of the LG department.
- Concepts and tools of monitoring applications.
- Evaluation—concepts, tools and practical aspects (Pre- and Post-Evaluations and techniques)
- Reporting techniques.
- The role of the department of local government.
- Application of MR&E in the local context.
- Action planning for application of learning.

Procurement Procedures and Contract Administration Workshop

Incorrect decision making and practices related to procurement and contract administration by local authorities can result in the loss of millions of rupees. For example, in the Eastern Province, LAs have not identified and demarcated areas for development simply because neither councilors nor officials realize or understand the proper role of the council, resulting in significant losses in rates and taxes annually. The workshop on procurement procedures and contract administration was intended to increase elected and staff members' knowledge and understanding in these areas and help to reduce incorrect practices and decision making.

Two five-day residential workshops were conducted in February and March with a total of 130 participants (116 male and 14 female; and 39 Tamil, 36 Sinhala and 56 Muslim) including 30 elected officials (18 chairmen or mayors and 12 vice chairmen or members) and 100 government officers (27 commissioners or secretaries, 47 management assistants, 07 program assistants, 09 technical officers, 03 superintendents, 06 development officers and 01 community development officer).

The workshops addressed council and committee administration as well as procurement procedures. Specifically workshop sessions were held on the following topics:

- Current status and legal responsibilities when conducting council meetings.
- Importance of decision-making processes in council meetings.
- Stakeholder participation in council administration.
- Issues due to non-adherence of laid down procedures in relation to council administration.
- Principles of the procurement/tender procedure.
- Standing Committees, Special Committees and Joint Committees.

“First of all I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to USAID for making my dream come true. I had an intention to work with the local authorities selected at the 2012 Performance Evaluation and increase their capacity so that they can serve as role models in Sri Lanka and help replicate their success in other local authorities. I have planned a series of training programs for these local authorities, and USAID has assisted me to conduct the first training on my list. I will definitely follow-up with these local authorities and include what I learned from this workshop.”

ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, MLGPC

- Role of the mayor/chairman as the leader of the council, council members and committee meetings.
- Contract administration of council projects and administration of direct labor projects.
- Material management in local authorities and quantity surveying.
- Environmental factors of project and procurement management.
- Introduction and framework for the preparation of guidelines.

Training for Local Authority Librarians in the Batticaloa District

The Batticaloa District Assistant Commissioner of Local Government's Office conducted a two-day workshop for 75 district librarians and assistant librarians with SuRG support so they might provide better service, enhance and upgrade the district library system and increase patrons. The training covered acquisition systems; book clarification systems; cataloging and classification practices; library grading rules and regulations; types of libraries; readers' circles and motivation; free integrated library system; and special articles and newspaper collection systems.

Office Management Workshops

At the request of the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils (MLGPC), SuRG and EML adapted and delivered a training module on office management for mayors, chairmen, secretaries and relevant management assistants from 32 LAs in eight provinces. Participating LAs were chosen based on their selection at the Ministry's 2012 Performance Evaluation (an annual management competition).

The three three-day residential workshops were conducted to support and train leadership and key staff in office management practices to facilitate more efficient and effective service provision. The course was designed so that knowledge and skills in office management would enable participants to create an office environment that facilitates positive morale and teamwork and increased productivity; introduce appropriate modern office management tools and techniques to their office management systems; and improve communication among staff members. Topics covered at each workshop included:

- Introduction and overview of office management.
- Office management process.
- Management process and resource service.
- Directing public complaint management.
- Quality dimensions for grievance handling.
- Planning and decision making.
- Staffing - performance management, motivation, job descriptions and team building.
- Organization and office communication.
- Filing system/meeting minutes/office communication/client charter.
- Controlling/monitoring/supervision/evaluation.

The first workshop targeted elected officials and was attended by 10 mayors or chairmen and 20 vice chairmen or commissioners (30 male; 04 Tamil, 24 Sinhala, 02 Muslim). The remaining two workshops were attended by a total of 84 staff (47 male, 37 female; 01 Tamil, 83 Sinhala), including 17 commissioners or secretaries, 25 management assistants and other relevant staff.

1.3.2 LANGUAGE TRAINING

SuRG wrapped up its Tamil and Sinhala Official Language Department (OLD) Level II training last quarter with the post-evaluation examination. Held in November, 284 government officers from 29 LAs sat for the exam. Results were announced by the Official Language Department (OLD) this quarter and are detailed in the chart below.

SINHALA AND TAMIL LANGUAGE TRAINING LEVEL II PARTICIPANTS AND EXAM RESULTS

Language	Sat the Examination			Passed the Examination		
	Total Participants	Male	Female	Total Participants	Male	Female
Sinhala	186	85	101	168	73	95
Tamil	98	51	47	82	35	47
Total	284	136	148	250	108	142

1.3.3 GRANTS

ARD 051

A SuRG partner was awarded a grant for its project in Polonnaruwa and Ampara in February 2012. The program was scheduled to end in December, but was extended until 15 January 2013 in order to allow time for printing advocacy handbooks.

During the quarter, the SuRG partner printed two advocacy handbooks. The first, “Local Governance Institutes and Complaint Redress Mechanisms” provides basic information and tools for the public about the services they should expect from their PS and proper mechanisms they can use to lodge complaints. The second handbook deals with community monitoring of constructions by PSs. The topic was chosen due to numerous concerns raised at PGF and other project meetings regarding poor road conditions resulting from substandard construction and maintenance. The handbook is intended to provide communities with basic knowledge and tools to monitor PS construction projects. It is hoped that this will promote more effective utilization of public funds by the PS as well as mitigate corruption on PS construction projects. Both handbooks were developed in Sinhala and Tamil. Handbooks will be disseminated at PGF meetings and PSs at both project locations. The SuRG partner will also use the manuals in its ongoing activities with LAs.

Following the completion of activities, SuRG conducted an end of grant review with the partner to assess project achievements, impact, and challenges. This review followed a series of review meetings between SuRG and the partner over the course of the project based on concerns about project progress, implementation and spending. At the end of the grant period, the SuRG partner had spent only 56 percent of its Rs. 3,969,228 budget. A detailed review of the work plan revealed a very difficult and prolonged start-up period. This was based primarily on internal management changes and issues at the SuRG partner organization and resulted in a lag of eight months, that is, two-thirds of the project period, before activities were underway as planned. In addition, political dynamics in the participating PSs as well as provincial council elections further complicated and delayed implementation. Most importantly though, was the SuRG partner’s lack of presence in the field—they did not recruit field coordinators until nine months into the 12-month program, greatly impeding coordination and communication between the SuRG partner and PS/PGFs.

Nonetheless, through the project, the SuRG partner did provide support and technical assistance to the PGFs and PSs which has underscored the importance of citizen engagement with the PS and raised awareness on

the negative impact of corruption. Both PSs have indicated they will continue working with the PGF after the project and have included PGF members in their standing committees. In addition, community monitoring mechanisms have been incorporated into the PGFs and community grievance redress systems were put in place at the PSs after project training and awareness-raising sessions.

I.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

SuRG continued to support aspiring journalists this quarter through its grant to a SuRG partner providing scholarships for 15 students pursuing their diploma in journalism at the Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLCJ) and its training program in print and radio for 12 women journalists from Trincomalee.

I.4.1 GRANTS

ARD070

Currently 15 students are pursuing their studies at the Sri Lanka College of Journalism with scholarships awarded under a grant to a SuRG partner in January 2012. At the time of that award, SuRG was scheduled to end in February of 2013. Therefore, although the grant provided tuition support for scholarship recipients for the full term of the diploma program ending in May 2013, it only provided stipends for scholarship recipients until the end of the grant period (January 2013). Since Tetra Tech ARD's contract with USAID for SuRG was subsequently extended, when the partner's grant ended this quarter a follow-on grant of Rs. 642,000 was awarded so the 15 SuRG 2012 scholarship recipients would continue to receive their monthly stipend through the end of their course.



A participant records a news story she wrote as part of the SuRG media training course held in Trincomalee.

I.4.2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

SuRG's training program for young women journalists in Trincomalee continued this quarter. The trainees made field visits to collect information and identify village-level issues for their print stories. Following the visit, the trainees completed 20 stories which were then edited and finalized for publication by the program resource person. The trainees also developed and recorded 18 radio stories which were then edited by the Project Coordinator and a local journalist and program resource person. Radio stories will be aired on Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) in April.

As a result of the training, participants are already beginning to obtain opportunities to apply their skills. Search for Common Ground, an international NGO, selected four SuRG trainees to participate in a media training program in which they collaborated with members of the Trincomalee media house to prepare a news package on community issues related to local fishermen, IDPs and language. The news package was presented and disseminated to stakeholders at a final ceremony in Colombo in late March. The event was telecast on Derana, a Sinhala TV channel.

Also of note is the regular publication of articles in local papers on social issues written by a by trainee, Ms. Sivakala. This quarter her stories appeared in *Sudar oli* and *Tamil Thanthi*. Another participant was recruited by *Sudar oli*.

In addition, six trainees have been working with and participating in a SuRG partner project to support women's political participation. This quarter, they contributed articles and poems about women's political participation to a magazine released by the project women's network in March.

I.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

The M&E team conducted data quality assessments and program file reviews of four SuRG partners this quarter. Overall, it was determined that all grantees visited maintain effective systems for accurate reporting and no discrepancies were observed in numbers reported. Grantees noted how SuRG support has helped them to understand the importance of accurate documentation and reporting and the need to maintain source documents that support numbers reported in a systematic way. Further, they also indicated that they are confident the lessons learned regarding data management and reporting from SuRG will be beneficial to them for their future work regardless of the donor.

This quarter, the M&E team trained a SuRG partner staff on basic M&E concepts, Logical Framework Approach (LFA), the development of data collection forms, and setting up a database for storage of baseline information and project monitoring data. This was the first time the partner had received this type of training.

The M&E team initiated verification of data received over the course of the project to-date to include in the SuRG final report. Data for the current 35 PMP indicators was cross-checked with source documents and data received from partners' legal support databases was verified. The M&E team also participated in end of grant reviews for seven SuRG partners.

2.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

During the quarter, Tetra Tech ARD initiated close-out activities. In February, the Ampara field office was closed and the bulk of furniture and equipment transferred to USAID's new SPICE project. All remaining activities managed out of the Ampara office will now be managed out of the Trincomalee office. Two staff from the Ampara team were retained as consultants to support ongoing work. Another staff member's contract was extended and he will join the Trincomalee office in order to support the Local Government team's effort to complete workshops for the Eastern Province and MLGPC.

In addition, in Colombo SuRG vacated one of the two floors it was previously occupying. The space was transferred to SPICE along with most of the furniture and equipment used on that floor.

The DCOP demobilized at the end of March. Project equipment used in his residence, including a large generator, will be transferred to SPICE upon approval from USAID.

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