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HIGHER EDUCATION SOLUTIONS NETWORK - QUARTERLY REPORT

Texas A&M University
Conflict and Development Lab
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Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
Part 1: Major Milestones and Events Completed.....	4
1.1. Milestones.....	4
1.2. Events.....	4
1.3. Publications.....	5
1.4. Communications.....	5
Part 2: Description of Key Activities.....	6
2.1. Quarter Objectives.....	6
2.2. Summary of Key Activities.....	6
Part 3: Intra-Development Lab/ University Engagement.....	7
3.1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration.....	7
3.2. Partner Engagement.....	8
3.3. Student Engagement.....	8
3.4. Lessons Learned/ Good Practices.....	9
Part 4: USAID Engagement.....	9
4.1. Interactions.....	10
4.2. Lessons Learned/ Good Practices.....	10
Part 5: Collaboration with Other Development Labs.....	11
5.1. Interactions.....	11
5.2. Lessons Learned/ Good Practices.....	11
Part 6: Monitoring & Evaluation.....	11
6.1. Preparation Activities.....	11
6.2. Ongoing Monitoring & Evaluation.....	11
Part 7: Looking Ahead.....	12
7.1. Calendar of Events.....	12
7.2. Description of Future Activities.....	13
7.2.1. Milestones.....	13
7.2.2. Events.....	13
7.2.3. Publications.....	13
7.2.4. Communications.....	14
Part 8: Appendix.....	14

Acronyms

APLU	Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
C&D	Conflict and Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict Affected States
HESN	Higher Education Solutions Network
IAS	Institution Assessment Survey
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SRPH	School of Rural Public Health
TAMU	Texas A&M University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

In the third quarter of FY 2013 covering May 1- July 31, 2013, the C&D Lab continues to build on its foundational structure, programmatic frameworks, and increasing student engagement. Outcomes from the C&D Strategy workshop have provided a solid framework that has focused the priorities and direction of the lab. The C&D Lab hired staff for three positions, submitted an M&E Plan and a Year Two Workplan, and created a student intern program. The C&D Lab team was completed with the hiring of an M&E and Academy coordinator, business administrator, and post-doctoral. TAMU and USAID engagement was bolstered by hosting visits from two highly regarded experts in the field of conflict and development, Ambassador Jendayi Frazer and Dr. Alex Dehgan. Drs. Frazer and Dehgan presented lectures on important C&D Lab themes to faculty and students and met with high-level TAMU administrators and faculty. Two members from the HESN USAID Office accompanied Dr. Dehgan and worked with C&D Lab staff and Academy students. Student involvement reached a major milestone as we initiated the C&D internship program. The internship program proved to be productive with students developing an assessment tool, innovative method for data collection, and writing significant portions of the M&E Plan and quarterly reports. We continued with our Student Media Grants Program by promoting the blog of our first student grant recipient and requesting new applications for the next call for grants. The C&D Lab improves communications with progress on the C&D website, dissemination of a C&D newsletter, and promotions via social media. In the upcoming quarter, the C&D lab will complete the DRC assessment trip, identify in-country partners, and further expand our initiatives for student programs.

Part I: Major Milestones and Events Completed

I.1. Milestones

The C&D Lab identifies two major milestones achieved this quarter that build on our overall goal to improve the efficiency, efficacy, and impact of development solutions for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

- **C&D Lab Internship Program established**

The C&D Lab created an internship program for students interested in working with conflict and development issues. We chose the Bush School of Government and Public Service, where internships are a graduation requirement, as our initial partner for the summer session. We offered opportunities in the areas of research, program management, and reporting procedures. The Bush School's Director of Career and Student Services organized activities within the graduate school by advertising summer opportunities and collating applications for the C&D Lab. The C&D Lab staff interviewed prospective applicants and selected the most qualified and motivated students for internships. During the internship, students were required to work on their projects, attend weekly meetings, and provide presentations on their projects to fellow interns and C&D Lab staff. Midway through the internship, we asked students to review their experiences and provide feedback to strengthen the program and their experiences. C&D Lab supervisors will provide a performance evaluation back to the Bush School at the end of the internship in August. The C&D Lab Internship Program has been very successful and is an important step in our efforts to actively engage students in C&D Lab activities.

- **Implementation of C&D Strategy Workshop outcomes**

We are using outcomes from the C&D Strategy Workshop to direct our research objectives and provide the framework for the C&D Lab vision. Based on discussions from the workshop, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burma, South Sudan, and Afghanistan were selected as the C&D Lab's focal countries. We have begun the process for creating a C&D Lab hub in DRC. Youth employment, natural resource management, institutions, and food security were identified as drivers of peace building. We are creating working groups and student activities based on research questions in these four areas. We authored a report synthesizing the outcomes of the workshop that will be published in the next year. The outcomes of the workshop have informed nearly all of our activities this quarter through focus, planning, and strategizing future activities.

I.2. Events

The C&D Lab had two major events this quarter with visits from an Ambassador, Dr. Jendayi Frazer, and the USAID HESN team of Dr. Alex Dehgan, Dr. Ticora Jones, and Ms. Michelle L'Archeveque.

- **Ambassador Jendayi Frazer of Carnegie Mellon University visit: June 16- 17, 2013**

The C&D Lab hosted Ambassador Jendayi Frazer of Carnegie Mellon University at Texas A&M University. She presented an open lecture, "A Roadmap to Sustainable Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo" to C&D Lab members and the broader TAMU community. Dr. Frazer also consulted with professors from multiple university departments and institutions, including the Borlaug Institute and the Political Science Department.

- **Dr. Alex Dehgan, Science and Technology Advisor to the Administrator and Director of USAID, Dr. Ticora Jones, USAID Senior Advisor, and Michelle L'Archeveque, Presidential Management Fellow visit: May 1-3, 2013**

The C&D Lab hosted Dr. Alex Dehgan, Dr. Ticora Jones, and Ms. Michelle L'Archeveque of USAID at Texas A&M University. Dr. Dehgan presented an open lecture “Transforming International Development through Science, Technology, and Innovation” attended by over 200 students and faculty. Dr. Dehgan met with the President of TAMU, Dr. Bowen Loftin; TAMU’s Provost, Dr. Karan Watson; and attended a meeting with the Deans. In addition, Dr. Dehgan, Dr. Ticora Jones, and Michelle L'Archeveque attended a presentation by the C&D Lab and Bush School of Government and Public Service’s student Capstone class.

I.3. Publications

- Kibriya, S, Price, E, and Boadu, F. 2013. “Food security, agricultural production and conflict of rural Liberia.” *HGBF Monograph*. Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.
- Kibriya, S, Price, E, and Ishdorj, A. F. 2013. “Food security and agricultural production of rural Senegal.” *HGBF Monograph*. Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.
- Kibriya, S and Price, E. 2013. “An analysis of Rural African food security.” *HGBF Monograph*. Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.

I.4. Communications

In this Quarter, the C&D Lab continued to build on the previous quarter’s efforts involving marketing materials, promotional initiatives, and boosting the presence of the Development Lab to the TAMU community and beyond.

C&D Lab Website:

- Received approval to create a website outside of the TAMU website management system but with TAMU branding.
- We are working with a local design firm to build the website.
- We are in the final stages of finishing the design of the home page, selecting colors, fonts, and general format.

Important Communications:

- Student Media Grants Program 2012 Winner, Chris Bielecki, began his work in Guatemala. Mr. Bielecki is using his grant to conduct a project in which community members document the foods they eat using disposable cameras with the purpose of tracking food security. Link: <http://goo.gl/3dOQZb>
- We released a Request for Proposals for the Student Media Grants Program 2013. Link: <http://goo.gl/EMQhiX>
- C&D Newsletter is released to 3500 subscribers. Link: <http://goo.gl/bC29Ef>

The C&D Lab continues to strengthen its social networking and web site presence through posting videos:

- ConDev Lecture Series: Alex Dehgan presentation posted on YouTube and shared on website and social media. Link: <http://goo.gl/4hcVaO>
- ConDev Lecture Series: Jendayi Frazer presentation posted YouTube and shared on website and social media. Link: <http://goo.gl/kUWz6O>
- Conflict & Development Strategy Workshop Outcomes posted on website. Link: <http://goo.gl/MPvilP>
- Continued engagement on social networks and website with followers has resulted in:
 - Twitter followers: 129
 - Facebook likes: 94
 - Website visits from May 1- July 29
 - Total visits: 1,186
 - Unique visits: 715
 - Pageviews: 3,803
 - Pages/visit: 3.21
 - Avg. Visit Duration: 2:09 minutes
 - % New Visits: 54.97%

Part 2: Description of Key Activities

2.1. Quarter Objectives

The C&D Lab focused on all three of our objectives this quarter:

C&D Lab Objective 1: Inform better solutions to development challenges facing fragile and conflict-affected countries through data collection, analysis, and integration.

C&D Lab Objective 2: Identify, assess, and foster scaling of development solutions for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

C&D Lab Objective 3: Expand the community of problem solvers to create a global network addressing development challenges in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

2.2. Summary of Key Activities

This quarter the C&D Lab worked on rounding out the lab staff in its program management activities and beginning to ramp up program based activities.

This quarter, the C&D Lab completed the following program management activities:

- Hired key staff positions: Dr. Leslie Ruyle was hired for the Monitoring and Evaluation and Academic Coordinator Position; Jennifer Brazier was hired for the Business Administrative Position; and Benjamin Tkatch was hired for Postdoctoral Position, pending his graduation with a starting date of August 19th.

This quarter, the C&D Lab has the following activities that fall under **Objective 1:**

IR 2.1: Number of transformative innovations, technologies, or approaches that were identified with human, financial, or institutional resources contributed by the C&D Lab.

- A C&D Lab intern identified cellphones as a potential transformative technology/approach for FCAS research. She conducted a literature review and gave two presentations to C&L staff and interns. She has been invited to continue researching this approach in the next quarter.
- A tool for assisting field staff assess potential in-country lab partners called the, “Institutional Assessment Survey (IAS)” was created by a C&D intern. The tool is currently being tested in DRC and will be used in the upcoming C&D Lab recon trip.

In addition, the following activities were focused on for Objective 2:

IR 2.1: Identify development solutions for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

- With funding provided by the H.G. Buffett Foundation through the H.G. Buffett Chair on Conflict and Development, several personnel were sent to assist with an Agricultural Assessment in North Kivu, DRC. The assessment consists of three parts; a survey performed by local personnel, focus groups by Catholic Relief Services, and local agribusiness interviews by C&D Lab members.
- In conjunction with the H. G. Buffett Foundation, further research and analysis was completed for the “Three Country” comparative survey. The survey explores food security, especially in relation to production and technology, among three countries with differing levels of conflict.

Finally, the C&D Lab has engaged in the following activities for Objective 3:

IR 3.1: Engage students, faculty, and staff at Texas A&M and partner institutions in understanding and solving development challenges in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

- Worked with various departments across TAMU, started internship and student grant programs, met with USAID Washington and USAID missions to discuss upcoming programs, and met with the University of William and Mary. See sections 3, 4, and 5 for more details.

In 2: Number of hubs created with human, financial, or institutional resources contributed by the C&D Lab

- The C&D Lab has identified DRC as the first country where we will create a hub. The C&D Lab, USAID HESN team and the USAID DRC Mission to coordinate an institutional assessment visit in late August and to discuss potential research programs. Although the discussion is still ongoing, this initial contact was important in establishing what is expected of us by the USAID Mission for our visit, and to help us better plan our upcoming visit and potential programs. In preparation for this visit, an IAS (Institutional Assessment Survey) was written to help us better assess potential research partners within the country, and planning for the trip was begun. late August

Part 3: Intra-Development Lab/ University Engagement

3.1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The C&D Lab has continued to build collaborations with TAMU departments and colleges through the summer months.

- **C&D Co-hosted Ambassador Jendayi Frazer lecture with the Political Science Department: June 16-17, 2013**

The C&D Lab worked with the Political Science Department, part of the Liberal Arts College, to co-host Ambassador Jendayi Frazer's visit. The Political Science Department provided the lecture space while C&D provided refreshments.

- **Capstone Planning with SRPH and the Bush School: July 22, 2013**

The C&D Lab met with faculty members from the School of Rural Public Health and the Bush School to discuss a potential capstone project that would be conducted in the spring of 2014.

- **Bush School Career Services Visit to C&D Lab: July 26**

The Bush School Director of Career and Student Services, Dr. Matthew Upton, and Assistant Director, Michael Cochran, met with C&D Lab staff to discuss the summer internship and future opportunities to work collaboratively with C&D. The interns, all students at the Bush School, discussed their projects and experiences with working at the C&D Lab. C&D Lab staff discussed the importance of the interns' work to the C&D Lab and expressed a desire to the Bush School to continue the partnership.

- **Lecture Series Planning with the Scowcroft Institute**

The C&D Lab has been working with the Scowcroft Institute to plan a fall lecture series for the Academy.

3.2. Partner Engagement

We are working towards building a greater partner network, but have nothing to report this quarter.

3.3. Student Engagement

Describe how you have been engaging students on your campus and your partners' campuses (if applicable). For example, include any information on fellowships, internships, or new course offerings. If any activities were previously described in the "Description of Key Activities Section," please include them but reference the description in Part I.

- **Capstone Project Completed: May 2, 2013**

The Bush School graduate group working on the C&D Capstone project and presented their results to Dr. Ticora Jones and Ms. Michelle L'Archeveque on the USAID TAMU visit.

- **Academy Presence Recognized at Dr. Dehgan's Lecture: May 2, 2013**

The C&D Academy students, all members of the Corps of Cadets, attended Dr. Alex Dehgan's lecture and were recognized as being an integral part of the C&D Lab's mission.

- **Created C&D Internship Program: May 2013**

The C&D Lab created an internship program in May 2013. Internships offered opportunities to work with research, program management, and reporting experiences. The summer 2013 Intern Cohort consisted of five graduate students from the Bush School for Government and Public Service. Two interns were assigned quantitative research projects under Dr. Shahriar Kibriya. Three interns worked under the supervision of Mr. Jerry Kenney with a qualitative research project, a program management project, and a monitoring evaluation project, respectively. The interns have analyzed

data, presented literature reviews on emerging technologies, and contributed to the M&E Plan and current quarterly report. The interns have been actively engaged, preparing important documents for use within the institution as well as planning for future research trips. In early July, mid-summer evaluations were conducted with each of the five interns to discuss the progression of the internship. The C&D Lab also met with the Bush School's Career Services Director and Assistant Director to discuss the successes and challenges of the internship program and potential for continuing the internship.

- **Opened the 2013 Competition Student Media Grants Program**

The Student Media Grants Program (SMGP) is a photojournalism grant awarded to Texas A&M University students interested in using innovative methods to research and chronicle issues facing fragile and conflict-affected nations. The SMGP is awarded annually by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation Chair on Conflict & Development at TAMU. Applicants are expected to submit proposals that will describe their expected travel, research and photographic subjects. They should choose an international development area that reflects issues of food insecurity, health, education, land tenure, poverty, or other issues facing people in fragile and conflict-affected nations. The C&D Lab is requesting proposals for 2013 to undergraduate and graduate TAMU students. In the next quarter, the program will be opened up to students from any accredited university around the world.

- **Student employees represented TAMU and the C&D Lab at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Conference (APLU): July 13-18, 2013.**

Two graduate student employees attended the APLU Conference run by the Commission on International Initiatives about international engagement at American universities. At the conference, the APLU members discussed methods of improving international cooperation as well as how to increase participation of students abroad.

3.4. Lessons Learned/ Good Practices

Through the second quarter, the C&D Lab has identified the following lessons and/or good practices for USAID engagement:

- Faculty participation is vital and the C&D Lab needs to find more ways to encourage faculty cooperation.
- The C&D Lab should continue to leverage USAID and TAMU's influences to achieve its objectives. Dr. Dehgan's meetings with TAMU higher administration brought attention to the C&D Lab and will be useful for negotiations in university level decisions.
- Small scholarships were good incentives for increasing student participation.
- The APLU conference was a good venue for promoting the C&D Lab, but would probably be a better place for administration level C&D team members to make an impact.
- Students reported that they appreciated working with C&D Lab members and having meaningful projects. They cited lack of sufficient working areas as impeding their progress.

Part 4: USAID Engagement

4.1. Interactions

The C&D Lab and the primary USAID support team have continued to work closely together using weekly phone calls through the majority of the quarter. On July 10th, the decision was made to change from weekly to bi-weekly phone calls as we move on to the next phase in the project.

- Close communication via phone calls allow the C&D Lab and USAID to update one another on organizational decisions, upcoming events, reporting and logistics, program updates, and other priority areas.
- Phone calls also provide an opportunity for the C&D Lab and USAID to clarify questions about project details.
- In addition to phone calls, the C&D Lab remained in close communication with USAID contacts through emails.
- The C&D Lab shared the Institutional Assessment Survey with USAID and received constructive feedback on how to make the tool more effective.

The C&D Lab has interacted with USAID staff through several visits and interactions during the this quarter:

- **USAID Visit to TAMU: May 1-3, 2013**

USAID HESN members Dr. Alex Dehgan, Dr. Ticora Jones, and Ms. Michelle L'Archeveque visited TAMU. This visit provided C&D and USAID an opportunity to discuss upcoming events and research opportunities, brainstorm about fundraising opportunities, and consider future internal C&D Lab activities.

- **C&D Attendance at CMM Partner Day: June 20, 2013**

The C&D Lab's Assistant Director, Dr. Shahriar Kibriya, and Network Coordinator, Jerry Kenney, attended the USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation Partner's Day. Dr. Kibriya and Mr. Kenney attended sessions focused on integrating evaluation into programmatic planning in conflict environments and the status of the New Deal for engagement in fragile states. During and between sessions there were opportunities to network with practitioners, scholars, and policymakers who are involved with development initiatives in FCASs from the public, private, and civil society sectors.

- **DRC Phone Call Meeting Between C&D and USAID: July 8, 2013**

The C&D Lab had a phone call meeting with members from USAID HESN and the DRC USAID Mission to discuss an upcoming visit from the C&D Lab. During the meeting, we discussed an upcoming C&D trip to the DRC to find a location and partner institutions to set up a Field Lab. It was decided that the Mission would provide a list of potential NGO partners and would meet with the C&D team when they arrive in DRC in late August. The Mission showed interest in receiving institutional assessments completed by the C&D team from their visit. We will use the assessment tool being developed by a C&D intern.

4.2. Lessons Learned/ Good Practices

Through the second quarter, the C&D Lab has identified the following lessons and/or good practices for USAID engagement:

- Attending partner days and other meetings in DC is useful for C&D Lab members to network with new potential partners.

- The C&D Lab has focused on completing timely and thorough reports while maintaining open communications with USAID and feel this has been positive in a good working relationship.
- USAID Missions are vital partners when setting up partnerships in FCASs. It also takes longer than we have expected to gain buy in from USAID Washington, Field Missions, and within the university. Sufficient time should be allotted to planning and confirmation of plans.

Part 5: Collaboration with Other Development Labs

5.1. Interactions

We interact

- **C&D Meeting with HESN Lab Partner, The College of William & Mary: June 19, 2013**

The C&D Assistant Director, Dr. Shahriar Kibriya, and Network Coordinator, Jerry Kenney, visited the College of William and Mary. Kibriya and Kenney gave a presentation about the C&D Lab to students and faculty. The C&D Lab and William and Mary are planning to work together to provide more geo-coded data on FCASs.

5.2. Lessons Learned/ Good Practices

Through the second quarter the C&D Lab has identified the following lessons and/or good practices for collaboration with other development labs:

- The C&D Lab understands the need for collaboration with other Labs to solve distinct development challenges. We need to proactively seek out collaborations with other HESN partners and capitalizing on each Lab's strengths to enhance our problem solving capabilities.
- Collaborations must be approached with a clear plan in mind for what is expected on each side of the partnership.

Part 6: Monitoring & Evaluation

6.1. Preparation Activities

This quarter the C&D Lab staff and an intern worked closely with USAID on the M&E Plan, going through several rounds of feedback. The C&D Lab hired Dr. Leslie Ruyle to manage M&E activities for the lab and she started working on July 8th. The M&E Plan was submitted to USAID for approval on the 18th of July.

6.2. Ongoing Monitoring & Evaluation

Instructions in this section will be provided for future Quarterly Reports. This section will be used to notate your progress toward Lab-level and Network-level indicators and support annual roll-up for tracking.

Part 7: Looking Ahead

7.1. Calendar of Events

AUGUST 2013				
DATES	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	USAID Leadership/ Involvement	Development Lab Collaboration
Aug. 20- Sept. 12	C&D Lab Institutional Assessment and Partnership Visit to DRC	C&D Lab staff and partners will assess the capacity of potential institutions in DRC to serve as partners and hosts for a field hub. These assessments will inform partnership selection for future applied research and development programs in DRC. Proposed sites are Kinshasa, Kisangani, Bukavu, Butembo, and Goma. A team of 3 core staff and	The USAID HESN support team should continue to facilitate communications between the C&D Lab and the USAID Mission in DRC.	
SEPTEMBER 2013				
DATES	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	USAID Leadership/ Involvement	Development Lab Collaboration
Sept. 17-22	C&D Lab Advance	C&D Team will hold a 3-5 day conference to brainstorm ideas for advancing C&D Lab objectives and operations.	To be determined	
OCTOBER 2013				
DATES	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	USAID Leadership/ Involvement	Development Lab Collaboration
		No plans as of yet		

7.2. Description of Future Activities

Briefly describe your plans for future activities (outlined above) that will be performed in subsequent months. Rather than duplicating information contained in the workplans, include details that will assist your AOR and Activity Managers with preparation for supporting your activities. Areas of USAID input or collaboration opportunities should be identified.

7.2.1. Milestones

The upcoming quarter will focus on Academy and student oriented projects and setting up foundational partnerships in DRC. We don't anticipate any major milestones.

7.2.2. Events

The upcoming quarter is the beginning of the fall semester on campus so the C&D Lab will focus on promoting the lab and encouraging student and faculty involvement in the program's activities. We will kick off the semester with several events hoping to build momentum and buzz about the C&D Lab.

- **Academy Information Session**

The Academy, essentially the student wing of the C&D Lab, will host an information session to disseminate knowledge about what the purpose of the lab, the activities of the lab, and how to get involved. We will recruit students to participate in our certificate program and apply to be interns.

- **Academy Kick off Lecture and Social Event**

The Academy will hold a kick-off lecture and social event to recruit students and faculty to participate in C&D Lab events. The lecture will be from an exciting in-house speaker and followed by a catered social event to create a buzz, facilitate networking opportunities, and share more about the C&D Lab's vision.

- **Workshop**

The Academy will host a workshop for students in the first two weeks of September to keep building excitement about the program for students and encourage their participation.

- **C&D Lab Advance**

The C&D Lab will hold a brainstorming and team-building event in late September for C&D Lab members. By late September, the team roster should be complete and we will use this "advance" type workshop to gel as a team and work on ways to foster creativity.

7.2.3. Publications

Our list of anticipated publications for next quarter:

- Kibriya, S., Zhang, Y., Bessler, D., and Price, E. 2013. "Development and Peace: Cause, Consequences and Effects". Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.
- Kibriya, S., Zhang, Y., Bessler, D., and Price, E. 2013. "Development and Peace: Cause, Consequences and Effects". Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.

- Ghimire, N., Kibriya, S., and Price, E. 2013. “War-Induced Displacement Spell and Food Security Nexus in Liberia”. Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.
- Kibriya, S., Chen, J., and Bessler, D. 2013. “The effect of conflict on commodity prices in Sudan”. Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.
- Kibriya, S. and Price, E. 2013. “Food security, agricultural production and conflict of rural DR Congo.” Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.
- Kibriya, S. and Price, E. “Food security and agricultural production of rural Ghana.” Conflict and Development Laboratory, Texas A&M University, USA.

7.2.4. Communications

The following is a list of our anticipated major press releases, articles, editorials, etc. featuring the work of your Development Lab during the next quarter:

- Student Media Grants Program 2013 Opens To Students At Accredited Universities Worldwide
- Announcements on Upcoming ConDev Lectures (2)
- Major C&D Academy recruiting announcements (1)
- Results of Three Country Study (Pending approval from Howard G. Buffett Foundation)
- C&D HESN Visit to DR Congo

Part 8: Appendix

Please use the Appendix to attach any documents, figures, etc. that help to illustrate your progress or key activities. There is no page limit to this section, but please be selective with the materials you include and reference them in your narrative.