



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



EVALUATION REPORT

Final Performance Evaluation of OTI Sri Lanka Reintegration & Stabilization in the East & North (RISEN) Program

January 3, 2014

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by Social Impact, Inc.

FINAL EVALUATION OF OTI SRI LANKA REINTEGRATION & STABILIZATION IN THE EAST & NORTH (RISEN) PROGRAM

EVALUATION REPORT

January 3, 2014

DISCLAIMER

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

Photo: Batticaloa Lighthouse and Lagoon Park. Community infrastructure damaged by tsunami and civil war restored by OTI RISEN through the Batticaloa Municipal Council.

Source: Kelly Skeith, SI Team Member. November 2013

CONTENTS

- CONTENTS iii
- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v
- ACRONYMS..... vi
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY viii
 - Summary of Key Findings..... ix
 - Program Level*..... ix
 - Strategy Level*..... x
 - Key Conclusions xi
 - Recommendations xii
- 1 BACKGROUND 1
- 2 SRI LANKA REINTEGRATION AND STABILIZATION PROGRAM 1
 - 2.1 The Sri Lankan Context 1
 - 2.1.1 The Context of Conflict*..... 1
 - 2.1.2 Administrative Structures* 2
 - 2.2 RISEN Program and Activities 2
 - 2.2.1 Summary of Grant Statistics* 2
 - 2.2.2 RISEN Objectives and Activity Clusters* 4
- 3 METHODOLOGY 5
 - 3.1 Purpose of Evaluation 5
 - 3.2 Approach and Methodology..... 6
 - 3.2.1 Grant and Grantee Sampling Method* 7
 - 3.3 Data Limitations 7
- 4 FINDINGS: PROGRAM LEVEL..... 8
 - 4.1 Social Cohesion 8
 - 4.1.1 Interethnic Interactions*..... 9
 - 4.1.2 Economic Opportunities* 10
 - 4.1.3 Reducing Social Inequalities* 13
 - 4.2 Civic Engagement..... 15
 - 4.2.1 Community and Local Government Relationships* 15
 - 4.2.2 Advocacy Capacities* 18
 - 4.2.3 Civic Rights and Responsibilities*..... 21
 - 4.3 Accumulation of Grants 23
 - 4.4 Key Change Agents/Approaches 24
 - 4.4.1 Youth*..... 24
 - 4.4.2 Grantee and Beneficiary Networking* 25
 - 4.4.3 Individuals and Organizations* 25
 - 4.5 Gaps or Missed Opportunities 25

4.5.1	<i>Border Villages</i>	25
4.5.2	<i>Gaps in Skills Training</i>	26
4.5.3	<i>Formal Monitoring and Evaluation for Grantees</i>	26
4.5.4	<i>Dealing with Censorship, Harassment, and Threats</i>	26
4.5.5	<i>War Widows and Female-Headed Households</i>	26
4.6	Feedback Mechanisms	26
4.6.1	<i>Reviews, Assessment, and Strategy Sessions</i>	27
4.6.2	<i>Grant Activity Database</i>	27
4.6.3	<i>Evaluations</i>	27
4.7	Stakeholder Perceptions and Relationships	28
4.7.1	<i>OTI and RISEN Management</i>	28
4.7.2	<i>RISEN Program and Grantees</i>	28
5	FINDINGS: STRATEGIC LEVEL	28
5.1	<i>Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement</i>	29
5.2	<i>The Jaffna Strategy</i>	29
5.3	<i>Legacy Objective</i>	30
5.4	<i>Programming Patterns</i>	30
5.4.1	<i>Entry Grants</i>	30
5.4.2	<i>Parallel and Follow-On Grants</i>	30
5.4.3	<i>Bridge Grants</i>	30
5.4.4	<i>PACOM and SAFE Grants</i>	31
5.4.5	<i>Shramadana Theme</i>	31
5.4.6	<i>Exposure Visits</i>	31
6	ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS	32
6.1	<i>Notable Variations in North and East Programming</i>	32
6.2	<i>Future Directions for USAID/Sri Lanka Programming</i>	34
7	CONCLUSIONS	34
8	RECOMMENDATIONS	36
	ANNEX 1: SCOPE OF WORK	38
	ANNEX 2: KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	43
	ANNEX 3: Map of Evaluation Field Work	44
	ANNEX 4: PEOPLE INTERVIEWED	45
	ANNEX 5: GRANTEES AND BENEFICIARIES VISITED & INTERVIEWED	46
	ANNEX 6: HISTORICAL TIMELINE	51
	ANNEX 7: SRI LANKAN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE	53
	ANNEX 8: BIBLIOGRAPHY	54

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The evaluation team would like to thank OTI/Sri Lanka and OTI/Washington staff, as well as USAID/Sri Lanka for their support throughout the evaluation of the Reintegration and Stabilization of the East and North program.

Thanks are also extended to DAI Sri Lanka program staff and management, and their grantees and beneficiaries, including state government officials, youth, women, unions, cooperatives, societies, NGOs, and private organizations for their cooperation during the evaluation of the RISEN program.

Great gratitude is conveyed to Natalie Shemwell, Sakthivell Thangavel, and Jeyathevan Kaarththigeyan for their critical assistance during this evaluation, and to the translators and driver, for helping to make this evaluation possible.

We express our gratitude to all.

Martina Nicolls, RISEN Evaluation Team Leader

Kelly Skeith, Evaluator

Rachel Perera, Evaluator

ACRONYMS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner for Local Government
BCGR	Bureau of the Commissioner for General Rehabilitation
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DS	Divisional Secretary/Secretariat
ETF	Emergency Task Force
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FISD	Facilitation for Integrated and Sustainable Development
GA	Government Agent
GAD	Grant Activity Database
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
LGE	Local Government Elections
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MC	Municipal Council
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOSS	Ministry of Social Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPCE	Northern Provincial Council Elections
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PACOM	United States Pacific Command
PC	Provincial Council
PDO	Program Development Officer
PPR	Program Performance Review
PRDD	Provincial Rural Development Department
PS	Pradeshiya Sabha
PTF	Presidential Task Force
RDS	Rural Development Societies
RISE	Reintegration and Stabilization in the East
RISEN	Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North
SAFE	Sexual Assault Forensic Examination
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcast Company
SOW	Scope of Work
SPICE	Support for Professional and Institutional Capacity Enhancement
SRS	Strategy Review Session
SWIFT	Support Which Implements Fast Transition
TDY	Temporary Duty
UC	Urban Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

USAID
WRDS

United States Agency for International Development
Women's Rural Development Societies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID/OTI-funded Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN) program, implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) from August 2010 to August 2013 (and to January 2014 under a no-cost extension), with a budget of almost \$23 million, aimed to establish and manage a quick-response mechanism that would strengthen Sri Lankan confidence and capacity to address the consequences of conflict, violence, and instability. When the USAID Mission handed over programming of Reintegration and Stabilization in the East (RISE) to its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in 2010, after almost a year of programming, the implementing staff had to rapidly change location, objectives, and funding mechanism. RISE, commencing in Batticaloa in the East, became RISEN and offices were established in Colombo (the headquarters) and Vavuniya in the North. Its objectives moved away from reintegration and stabilization to social cohesion and civic engagement due to the shrinking political space and donor withdrawal, and its funding mechanism—which influenced its strategy—switched from a longer-term developmental focus (which USAID is noted for) to a rapid-response, shorter-term, catalytic change mechanism. OTI's expectations were that, in the East and North, the RISEN program would facilitate social cohesion through improved interethnic interactions, economic opportunities, and social equality, and enhance civic engagement through improved community and local government relationships, advocacy capacity, and civic rights.

This independent evaluation aims to assess the relative success of the RISEN program in achieving its intended results as defined by its stated objectives and cluster framework. Three evaluators traveled to Colombo, Jaffna, Vavuniya, and Batticaloa, with site visits to regional villages to interview grantees and beneficiaries. Of the program's 266 grants, the evaluators visited or interviewed stakeholders in relation to 98 of them (37%), covering six of the eight designated clusters. The evaluators did not examine the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM)-funded grants or the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) activities.

Since commencement of the program, Sri Lanka has conducted its first local and provincial elections in the North and East, and after 30 years of conflict, the areas were eager for democratic change. The conflict in the East concluded in 2007 and in the North in 2009, hence the two provinces were at different stages in their recovery and stabilization. Despite the size of the island, the differing histories presented challenges to programming, specifically strategic planning, which took about six months to effectively focus on the new concept of the RISEN program, especially in the East. However, the program appropriately adopted a localized and contextual approach, which remained consistent with OTI's community-level focus. Although grants included some engagement with government, activities under the specific objective of civic engagement (to improve relationship between government and communities) commenced briefly from February 2011 with flood relief, but predominantly from February 2012, with most undertaken in 2013. Hence, due to the heavily militarized zones in which the program operated, RISEN adopted a gradual approach, by first bringing some community-based organizations to the government and then working with a non-threatening government agency (tourism) before attempting more sophisticated grants.

The program also undertook a major shift from October 2012 to capitalize on the “window of opportunity” to expand into and operate solely within Jaffna in the North. However, this strategy came at the expense of the East (which closed its office in May 2013) and the North (the Vavuniya office moved to Jaffna). Furthermore, with a year to the program's closure, it was a highly debatable move. With the rush to implement grants in line with a rapid-response mechanism, Jaffna programming became less strategized, mainly because almost any activity would have resulted in social, political, and economic gains.

Summary of Key Findings

Program Level

USAID/OTI's short-term assistance, through the provision of grants to small indigenous organizations and local/district/provincial government in Sri Lanka, remained responsive to the country's changing context by shifting its original goal to assist the reintegration of former ex-combatants and reestablish economically viable and socially cohesive communities to the advancement of confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently. To reach its goal, the RISEN program tailored its approach with the aim to foster social cohesion and increase civic engagement.

The program contributed to democratic transition and firm democratic processes, largely due to its unique responsive-funding mechanism, which enabled it to deploy grants rapidly when opportunities opened up. This included support to local government elections (LGEs) and the Northern Provincial Council Elections (NPCEs). This political orientation, and culture of risk-taking, where other donors were reluctant to enter, remained true to OTI's philosophy of stabilizing transitional governments.

Throughout the program, it built confidence between the government and communities through community improvement grants, such as reactivating markets and improving the functionality of councils (through equipment and training). As a means of social cohesion through interethnic interactions, the program also succeeded in supporting resettlement communities. Most of the program's successful achievements toward its goal focused on working with youth of different backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities. The program brought together youth, who would not otherwise have had the means or desire to do so, through social, entertainment, sporting, advocacy, training, and other activities, with a central theme of addressing their community needs. Many festivals, events, elections, and otherwise "normal" activities were previously long-standing traditions that had not occurred for 30 years. However, the activities were not solely "to bring people together" but were held to engage citizens in meaningful dialogue sessions that facilitated greater understanding between multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-aged, and multi-social status groups.

However, whereas OTI generally does not conduct longer-term training, workshops, and conferences, the program tended towards these, particularly in the East. Hence, apart from its activities on civic rights, most activities were more traditional and development-driven, and not necessarily highly innovative or risk-taking. Nevertheless, the program employed an adaptive management style to achieve the following: (1) support for grassroots community grants that met the needs of community groups, (2) engagement of grassroots and nontraditional leadership, (3) movement into regional areas where other donors were limited, (4) contribution to democratic processes, (5) improvement of public perceptions of the democratic political transition, (6) support for activities between disparate and dissenting groups, (7) the launch of successful media programs on positive interethnic collaborations, (8) exploration of ways language and communication could advance advocacy and positive change, and (9) encouragement for networks, partnerships, and durable relationships between groups and individuals.

By engaging civic participation among disparate groups, supporting public campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence, organizing civil societies to form a cohesive functioning network, bringing communities and government together, promoting political and social tolerance, and encouraging intergroup contacts, the program met its goal of the advancement of confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently. Less effective was its inroad into freedom of expression as an overarching achievement, although individuals did make gains.

The program's strength was its resolve to form, from the outset, models for replication, such as (1) geographic (Vakarai and Pullumulai) and sector (youth) saturation, which were able to embed changes

into communities, (2) civil society empowerment and networking, (3) intercommunity dialogue, (4) responding to political and social sensitivities, and (5) tangible economic gains (markets and a contribution toward youth employment). The program's vulnerabilities were its (1) diluted definition of social cohesion, (2) limited explicit espousal of its goal to stakeholders, (3) limited advocacy on a cross-provincial level, and (4) the uncertainty of grantees', especially the government's, ability to maintain or capitalize on the momentum created by the increased capacity, improved confidence, and networks built. There were also a few gaps or missed opportunities in the program's implementation. These include missed opportunities to address border issues through encouraging freedom of movement and interethnic interaction by, for example, enhancing economic trade, joint agricultural research/marketing, and improved coordination between municipality and Pradeshiya Sabha (PS) offices; limited focus on marketing challenges, training on sales and marketing skills, or linkages to markets and limited practical (or practicum) trainings in relevant activities; lack of formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) conducted by grantees, which makes understanding true economic gains or implementation successes particularly difficult; limited assistance or training on how to deal with censorship, harassment, and threats, particularly in media and election activities; and a need for further assistance to war widows. While there was no specific gender plan for RISEN, the program appropriately targeted war widow and female-headed households for support. However, these groups represent a wider, more prolonged issue.

Grantees and beneficiaries were, on the whole, supported with capacity building, and for some this also meant a wider coverage, geographically and in terms of beneficiaries, that they were not otherwise exposed to. This extended coverage, they maintain, will enable them in the future to connect rapidly, and with a measure of trust, for potential sustained engagement. Beneficiaries expressed a positive interaction with grantees and provided evaluators with examples of gradual and swift behavior change, through exposure visits to other communities and activities, first-time events, training and mentoring, and empowerment to be actively involved in a society that had been closed and restricted for most or all of their lives. Youth interviewed typically responded that, above all else, they gained the momentum and motivation to transfer their knowledge, skills, and passion for their newfound "gains" to their community and/or other youth. In addition, they had an invigorated sense of self-worth and self-actualization.

Strategy Level

Throughout the program, RISEN never explicitly articulated or coalesced a grant rationale or strategy for social cohesion and civic engagement. However, within its broad strategic orientations, the program's actions were tactical, being responsive to emerging needs and taking advantage of critical openings. The program employed diverse and effective approaches to programming, including (1) entry grants to test the readiness of a specific community, stakeholder, or approach, (2) parallel and follow-on grants to provide simultaneous or one-after-the-other grants in a specific geographic location or region to intensify assistance, (3) bridge grants to connect communities to local government services, (4) PACOM funding for large infrastructure, and SAFE funding for vulnerable women, as entry points into a location or community, (5) the *shramadana* philosophy of community (collective) volunteerism (in an inclusive manner) for cleaning, painting, or working on rural roads, and (6) exposure visits to promote shared learning for the generation of ideas, links, and networks. The program also made tactical use of sequencing of grant activities for follow-on support.

The program appropriately identified youth as change agents, and consequently provided opportunities for active participation and leadership, as well as skills to facilitate sustained community development and advocacy.

Key Conclusions

The RISEN program in Sri Lanka made significant inroads into legitimate positive change through its interventions for social cohesion and civic engagement, particularly at the community level. RISEN sowed the seeds for peaceful solutions to community development, democratic processes, and participatory interethnic connections. Overall, communities that had never been in contact with each other before were united in achieving community development goals, all in conjunction with local government officials and agencies.

The more successful communities, in the North and East, generally had the following characteristics: (1) active engagement and contextual understanding by the program team, (2) motivational and well-respected change agents, (3) proactive community members, especially youth, (4) a sense of direction and purpose, (5) increased respect for other ethnic groups, (6) self-initiated proposals and projects, (7) and transparent management. This is important to consider in future OTI or USAID Mission programming when resources are limited and decisions need to be made about what communities to enter.

Effective leadership skills have been gained, with youth assuming decision-making roles in their communities—due, in part, to a sense of hope and the possibility of viable economic and social advancements. Exposure visits further generated a sense of hope, inspiring youth and local government officials to explore ideas for positive change. Economic empowerment through training in best practice business skills mobilized communities toward self-actualization. Bridge grants proved effective in connecting neighboring communities for mutual benefit, especially in relation to social services, trade, markets, and freedom of movement.

While program staff indicated that there was extensive discussion about terminology, social cohesion, and civic engagement, the program never explicitly articulated the definitions and therefore its strategy was weakened and didn't coalesce into a firm approach. Instead, there were variations on the objectives and regional difference between the North and East in their interpretation and type of programming. The approach in the East suffered slightly from a prolonged emphasis on capacity building with limited impetus on “hard” issues and nontraditional programming, particularly in their efforts to reduce social inequalities. The national anti-hate campaign was a good model for a more innovative approach to reducing social inequalities because it was prepared to test the environment in a number of districts, particularly in the North. Nevertheless, the common overarching strategy for the North and East was an understanding of the localized issues, the goal of self-actualization for communities, and greater citizen empowerment to move past passivity and subjugation.

The dynamic interpretations of the key objectives did not hamper programming as a whole, although there were differences of opinion regarding geographical locations. For example, the extended programming in Vakarai in the East and the entry into Jaffna in the North during last year of the program came at the expense of programming from the Batticaloa and Vavuniya offices. Jaffna activities, while its office presence was regarded highly by grantees and beneficiaries, could have been conducted from Vavuniya, given the short time frame to impact programming in Jaffna.

Without doubt, the RISEN program was successful. A critical factor for success was its capacity to implement projects in a rapid, timely, and flexible manner. Interventions were effective because stakeholders visibly demonstrated projects that looked different from the neglect—and abuse—to which the state had subjected those communities in the past. They provided assistance according to what communities identified as crucial to their advancement, when they needed it. Finally, the interventions were most effective because they helped changed the way people thought. For example, grants helped government officials recognize the importance of coordinating their actions to serve their citizens, and

helped citizens recognize the importance of working together to leverage the assistance they were receiving.

Since land issues are just beginning, it is difficult to determine what impact the program's efforts will have in the long term. In the short term, due to mandatory requirements to vote at local and provincial government elections, the program has contributed to people gaining national identity cards—and the ability to conduct “normal activities” such as driving, voting, marrying, obtaining passports, and employment. National identity cards are the first step toward the ability to access other legal services, such as land restitution. By demonstrating to citizens that they have a future, individuals and communities gained the motivation to contribute their labor and forge ahead with ideas, plans, and dreams.

Recommendations

Because OTI's Sri Lankan programs are closing in January 2014, the following recommendations apply to OTI programming in other transitional settings, based on lessons learned from its successful RISEN program in Sri Lanka.

- Many interviewees expressed concern about the cost of consolidation programs—and community development—and where resources would come from in the short term, especially due to the shrinking donor presence. Since increasing levels of security make it possible for large enterprises and, potentially, other large businesses, to operate in the East and North, the concern is for small businesses in the region to be competitive in the longer term. OTI should find ways to encourage private-sector enterprises to become funding partners and to actively and intensively focus on marketing challenges, sales and marketing, promotional strategies, encouraging linkages to markets, and monitoring for progress.
- War widows, mainly young women, constitute a large population in the East (estimated at 49,000) and North (40,000). They are in need of vocational and livelihood skills as well as support to establish small businesses. In many post-conflict and transitional settings, this is a recurring issue. Therefore, OTI could place greater emphasis on programs that address the needs of war widows and female-headed households. For the current situation in Sri Lanka, the USAID Mission should address the needs of this vulnerable population.
- A missed opportunity for OTI was extensive social cohesion activities linked to border villages to provide an innovative, nontraditional response to the soft borders between ethnic communities. These border villages in Sri Lanka remain vulnerable and should remain a focus for future USAID programming. Opportunities include encouraging freedom of movement and interethnic interaction by, for example, enhancing economic trade, joint agricultural research/marketing, and improved coordination between municipality and PS offices.
- While road rehabilitation projects were important in connecting communities, and producers to markets, thereby acting as an enabler for broader economic activities, other types of infrastructure projects can do the same while also helping communities become more self-reliant. Recommended options include the provision of safe spaces for youth, women, and community groups to meet, socialize, and connect—such as community centers, entertainment centers, and social clubs.
- Provision of funding for infrastructure and logistics support projects to increase the functionality of government ministries and departments should be maintained as a key objective for future OTI projects. This proved quite successful in connecting governments to communities, improving social services, and gaining trust and legitimacy for government offices.

I BACKGROUND

In June 15, 2009 DAI signed a contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement the Reintegration and Stabilization in the East (RISE) program in Sri Lanka under the Support Which Implements Fast Transitions (SWIFT) III indefinite quantity contract (IQC). In February 2010, administrative responsibilities were transferred from USAID/Sri Lanka to USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) with additional funds for its expansion into the North. Therefore the program was renamed Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN), to be implemented for three years from August 2010 to August 2013. Under a series of funding modifications, the Task Order obligation reached \$22,973,015. In December 2012, OTI approved a five-month, no-cost extension to January 31, 2014.

OTI's programming, relative to other USAID and international development work, aims to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeting key political transition and stabilization needs by seizing critical windows of opportunity that are responsive to fluid situations on the ground. OTI works with local change agents, including local and national government offices, civil society organizations (CSOs), indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), media groups, youth, and women's groups. OTI programs intend to promote community-led stabilization and strengthen local stakeholder capacity.

For such rapid, immediate responses, OTI's SWIFT III mechanism provides in-kind small grants for short-term assistance to local entities. Grant (project) proposals that meet program goals may be innovative and risk-taking. Small grant activities operate on a rolling basis, based on community engagement while linking communities to local government, private sector enterprises, other USAID programs, and other donor programs. Rather than a sustainable development focus (the predominant domain of USAID Mission programs), transitional OTI programming under SWIFT III aimed to lay the foundations and set the preconditions that will lead to longer-term development.¹

2 SRI LANKA REINTEGRATION AND STABILIZATION PROGRAM

2.1 The Sri Lankan Context

Sri Lanka's population constitutes 75% Sinhalese mainly concentrated in the southwest and central parts of the country; 11% Sri Lankan Tamils living predominantly in the northeast and who are considered the largest minority group; 9% Muslims; and 4% Indian Tamils in the hill country and southern parts of the island. Smaller minorities include Malays and Burghers (2012 census).² The country is categorized economically as "middle-income," and United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) 2012 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report³ showed continued development progress.

2.1.1 The Context of Conflict

The government security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fought a civil conflict for 26 years from 1983 to 2009. Civilians who managed to escape conflict-affected areas were detained

¹ OTI (2004) Special Tenth-Year Edition: A Decade of Transition, 1994–2004

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Sri_Lanka

³ http://hdr.undp.org/es/informes/nacional/asiapacifico/srilanka/Sri%20Lanka_2012.pdf

in overcrowded Menik Farm and public buildings in Vavuniya in the north. Due to international pressure the government, which was initially selective in allowing humanitarian aid agencies and local organizations entry to the region, allowed some to meet basic needs. The government established the Presidential Task Force (PTF) under the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to control all humanitarian and development activities in the North. The NGO Secretariat, which had been a unit under the Ministry of Social Services (MOSS), was also brought under MOD. With mounting international pressure, the government released nearly 180,000 individuals in 2009 and in April 2011 approximately 370,000 were allowed to return to their villages. Although over 1,000 land and property claims were filed in 2012, there are currently 6,300 acres of land still being held by security forces in Kankasanturai and Palaly High security zones.⁴ The Bureau of the Commissioner for General Rehabilitation (BCGR) reported⁵ at the end of the war that nearly 12,000 ex-combatants were facilitated to return to formal education, with adults provided vocational rehabilitation. Many war-affected families are still in the process of searching for family members, mainly male members who were taken into custody at the end of the war but whose whereabouts are unknown. In 2010, the Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs and Child Development announced a registered list of 89,000 war widows—49,000 in Eastern Province and 40,000 in Northern Province. Most of the widows were young and had no skills or expertise to work or fend for the family. There are little government efforts toward reconciliation. Freedom of speech and peaceful demonstrations are often suppressed.

2.1.2 Administrative Structures

Annex 7 figuratively demonstrates the administrative organization structure in Sri Lanka. There are two parallel administrative structures in Sri Lanka. One is the *civil service*, which is divided into 25 districts. Each district has 5 to 16 divisions called divisional secretariats headed by a divisional secretary (DS), called a Government Agent (GA), appointed by the Ministry of Public Administration. All villages under the DS have a *Grama Niladari* or *Grama Sevaka* (village officer) who occupies the lowest level of civil service. The other administrative structure is the *Provincial Councils* established in 1987 as a Constitutional means to devolve power to the regions. The levels include elected *Municipal Councils*, *Urban Councils*, and *Pradeshiya Sabhas* (village councils). In Sri Lanka there are 9 Provincial Councils (PCs), 18 Municipal Councils (MCs), 42 Urban Councils (UCs), and 270 Pradeshiya Sabhas (PS). Sharing land administration powers is a part of the devolution process enshrined in the Constitution.

2.2 RISEN Program and Activities

The RISEN program was implemented from August 2010 following modifications to the Reintegration and Stabilization in the East (RISE) program, which began in Batticaloa in the Eastern Province in June 2009. With the commencement of RISEN, the program opened an office in Vavuniya in the North and headquarters in Colombo. At the June 2012 Annual Strategy Review Session the program moved to Jaffna in the North for its final year. Subsequently, the Vavuniya office moved to Jaffna from October 2012 and the Batticaloa office closed in May 2013. From March 2013, all program activities were administered from Jaffna or Colombo while maintaining existing grants in the East. (Annex 6 provides a historical timeline).

2.2.1 Summary of Grant Statistics

RISEN generated 266 grants over the life of the program, averaging \$52,085 per grant (Table 1). The East produced 43% of grants with an average cost of \$53,778 and the North produced 47% of grants at a lower average cost of \$49,652.

⁴ <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/the-jaffna-air/>

⁵ <http://bcgr.gov.lk/child-intro.php>

Table 1: Summary of Grants (Number, \$, Average) by Office

Office	Grants				
	No.	%	\$	%	Average \$
Colombo	26	10%	\$1,463,541	11%	\$56,290
East					
Batticaloa	115	43%	\$6,184,512	45%	\$53,778
North					
Vavuniya	72	27%	\$3,961,634	28%	\$55,023
Jaffna	53	20%	\$2,244,921	16%	\$42,357
North subtotal	125	47%	\$6,206,555	45%	\$49,652
Total	266	100%	\$13,854,608	100%	\$52,085

Source: OTI RISEN Grants Activity Database, October 22, 2013

RISEN engaged with 148 different entities: 54% government (provincial, district, and local), 3% international NGOs, 24% local NGOs, 3% media, 12% CSOs, 12% CBOs, and 9% individual entities. Most grants (41%) were awarded to government agencies. International NGO grants averaged \$63,201 each, while grants to individuals averaged \$13,983 (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Grantees by Type

Grantee Type	Grants					
	% Org	No. Grants	% Grants	\$ Grants	% \$	Average \$
Government	54%	107	41%	\$5,961,040	43%	\$55,711
International NGO	3%	7	3%	\$442,407	3%	\$63,201
Local NGO	24%	82	31%	\$4,824,004	35%	\$58,829
Media	3%	8	3%	\$474,703	4%	\$59,338
CSO	12%	22	8%	\$822,123	6%	\$37,369
CBO	12%	24	9%	\$1,065,659	8%	\$44,403
Private entity individual	9%	13	5%	\$181,783	1%	\$13,983
Total	100%	263	100%	\$13,771,719	100%	\$52,364

Source: OTI RISEN Grants Activity Database, October 22, 2013

2.2.2 RISEN Objectives and Activity Clusters

The RISEN program’s original goal was “to assist with the reintegration of former combatants and provide transitional assistance to the reestablishment of economically viable and socially cohesive communities.” From the May 2011 OTI Program Performance Review and September 2011 Strategy Document two key objectives provided the program’s direction: (1) Foster social cohesion to increase participation, community reintegration, and economic viability in the Eastern and Northern Provinces; and (2) Increase civic engagement of conflict-affected communities with the rest of Sri Lankan society, including government institutions. From June 2012 the goal for the last year was “to advance confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently” with the objectives unchanged. To categorize grants under Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement, OTI generated eight activity clusters, finalized in June 2013 (Table 3).⁶

No.	Activity Clusters	Examples of Grants
Social Cohesion		
1	Provide opportunities for interethnic interaction to build new bonds, reduce tensions, and promote reconciliation	Rural roads, bus depot, exposure visits, psychosocial, etc.
2	Expand economic opportunities to give conflict-affected, marginalized populations a greater stake in a peaceful future	CBOs, livelihood, etc.
3	Reduce social inequalities, isolation, and other lingering conflict-produced challenges that have hindered the recovery and reintegration of communities affected by the war	Youth community service, education catch-up, sports equipment, youth networks, etc.
Civic Engagement		
4	Improve community and local government relationship through enhanced public service delivery, greater accountability, and new opportunities for public engagement with authorities	Trainings for PS, for Divisional Secretariat Offices, land registry, etc.
5	Strengthen advocacy capacities and foster new networks of individuals, communities, and organizations to enable them to better address issues nonviolently	Civil society roundtables, social media, radio, peace-building certificate network, etc.
6	Improve citizen understanding of civic rights and responsibilities, and enhance access to formal political and/or legal processes	Civic education, elections, human rights legal aid, ID documents, etc.

The program awarded 163 grants under the Social Cohesion objective and 102 under the Civic Engagement objective (Table 4). The majority of Social Cohesion grants were to provide opportunities for interethnic interactions (62) while the majority of Civic Engagement grants were to improve the

⁶ OTI, 25 June 2013, Revised RISEN Activity Clusters; Activity Cluster 7 is SAFE (Sexual Assault Forensic Examination) which is not covered in this evaluation, and Activity Cluster 8 is “Other”

relationship between communities and local government (48). In the East, the focus of grants was on expanding economic opportunities, improving interethnic interactions and reducing social inequalities, while in the North the focus was on interethnic interactions, economic opportunities, and linking communities with local government for improved services.

Table 4: Summary of Clusters by Office

Cluster	Grants					
	No.	Colombo	East Batticaloa	North		
Total North				Jaffna	Vavuniya	
Social Cohesion						
Interethnic Interactions	62	2	27	33	6	27
Economic Opportunities	57	1	30	26	3	23
Reducing Social Inequalities	44	1	24	19	8	11
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>61</i>
Civic Engagement						
Community & Government	48	1	21	26	13	13
Strengthening Advocacy	39	1	14	24	10	14
Civic Rights	15	0	4	11	2	9
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>36</i>
Total	265	6	120	139	42	97

Source: OTI RISEN Grants Activity Database, October 22, 2013

Note: This total, in the Grant Activity Database (GAD), includes nine RISE grants, and excludes SAFE and “Other” grants.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Purpose of Evaluation

The primary objective of the independent evaluation of OTI’s RISEN program (February 2010 to January 2014) was to assess the relative success of the RISEN program in achieving its intended results as defined by its stated objectives and cluster framework. The evaluation team, in collaboration with OTI, formulated two types of evaluation questions to guide its work in assessing the relative success: (1) Strategy Level and (2) Program Level.

Strategy Level

1. Were the program's causal hypotheses regarding the relationships between activity outcomes and strategic objectives valid?
 - a. To what extent did the program understand the problems and challenges in Sri Lanka as they related to post-civil conflict transition?
 - b. How were the program's objectives appropriate for the identified problems?
2. To what extent did the program effectively adapt to the changing dynamics and operational context in a timely manner?

Program Level

1. Did the program's activities achieve the desired outcomes?
 - a. What are the cumulative effects of grant activities (or clusters) and their current results in comparison to their intended objectives?
 - b. Are there types of activities that most effectively leveraged RISEN resources and capacity to achieve their outcomes?
2. How effective and relevant was the RISEN programming in achieving the intended strategic objectives?
 - a. Social Cohesion objective
 - i. Has the community-level approach assisted in bridging gaps between different communities to affect positive social cohesion?
 - ii. How did activities link groups together?
 - iii. Are there signs that social cohesion can take place in the longer term?
 - b. Civil Engagement Objective
 - i. Strength of linkages between communities and local governments (as applicable).
 - ii. How effective was the program in working with government to adopt a more cohesive approach to its priorities?
3. How effective was program implementation?
 - a. Were there gaps or missed opportunities in the program's implementation?
 - b. How effectively were key change agents identified? Gender issues?
 - c. How effective and relevant were the program's feedback mechanisms to adapt to learn throughout implementation?
 - d. How were changes in stakeholder perceptions measured to support the program's theory of change?

3.2 Approach and Methodology

The three-person team of two international evaluation specialists and a local evaluation specialist employed a non-experimental, qualitatively focused approach covering three levels: (1) macro-level (RISEN management, USAID and Embassy stakeholders, and national-level grantees based in Colombo); (2) meso-level (provincial grantees, government officials, and RISEN regional staff); and (3) micro-level (end beneficiaries of grant activities).

Data collection methods included an initial desk review of program documents provided by OTI, interviews and group discussions/focus group discussions (FGDs) at each level, site visits and observation of a sample of grants in program implementation locations (i.e., field work), and analysis of data obtained from the GAD. The fieldwork was conducted over four weeks from October 28 to November 22, 2013. It included a three-day introductory and planning period with OTI in Washington DC prior to departure for Sri Lanka, research in Colombo, and site visits in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka (Annex 3 provides a map of the team's field work and Annexes 4 and 5 show interview and site visit lists).

3.2.1 Grant and Grantee Sampling Method

The RISEN program had two major objectives: social cohesion and civic engagement. To organize the grants based on their relation to each objective, OTI grouped RISEN program activities into eight clusters or sub-objectives. The evaluation team used the GAD and information from RISEN project officers and OTI to select a sample of grantees and beneficiaries for interviews and FGDs, and a sample of grants for site visits. Then the evaluation team stratified the grantees based on: (1) the type of activity (to ensure a variety of activities), (2) time frame (to ensure a mix of projects throughout the 2010–2014 implementation period), and (3) funding amount.

The evaluation team met with grantees in Colombo, the North, and the East of Sri Lanka who had implemented projects from six of the eight clusters.⁷ Table 5 shows the sampling achieved by identifying the number of grants in the cluster that were covered by the team’s field research and the total number of grants in the cluster according to the GAD.

Table 5: Summary of Clusters (Number, \$, Average)

Cluster	Grants		
	Total	No. Visited	% Visited
Social Cohesion			
Interethnic Interactions	62	22	35%
Economic Opportunities	57	22	39%
Reducing Social Inequalities	44	14	32%
Civic Engagement			
Community and Government	48	12 ⁸	25%
Strengthening Advocacy	39	17	44%
Civic Rights	15	11	73%
TOTAL	265	98	37%

**Note: There were other grants covered by the team’s fieldwork that were not categorized under a cluster in the database. For example, flood service support, construction projects, PACOM support to a Divisional hospital, a peace campaign, and legacy teaching tools. These were still useful in the team’s analysis of RISEN’s overall outcomes and impacts.*

3.3 Data Limitations

The operating environment in Sri Lanka, characteristics of the project, and timing of fieldwork all affected the type, quality, and quantity of data available for the evaluation. These limitations form part of the context within which to interpret evaluation results. The primary limitations, and the team’s efforts to mitigate these, include the following:

- *Timing of the evaluation.* All of the grants reviewed during this evaluation had been closed out, the Batticaloa office had been closed for five months, and the North office was closing during the team’s visit to Jaffna and Vavuniya. This resulted in limited availability and decreased institutional memory for some staff and grantees. In addition, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) created scheduling conflicts and limited availability of government stakeholders, which is reflected in the lower number of grants

⁷ OTI, 25 June 2013, Revised RISEN Activity Clusters; Activity Cluster 7 is SAFE, which is not covered in this evaluation (SAFE activities were evaluated in October 2013), and Activity Cluster 8 is “Other”

⁸ See Data Limitations section 3.3 for details on this figure

visited in the Local Government–Community Relations cluster. The team dealt with this limitation by using key historical or project events as memory markers to facilitate interviewee recollection of the timing of projects activities. The team also worked with implementer staff to contact previous RISEN and OTI staff.

- *Reliance on current and former RISEN staff for logistical information and assistance.* The team’s in-country advisor, who also assisted with logistics, was a former RISEN officer in the East. OTI recommended him at the outset of the evaluation and he helped with project background, sampling of grants, and interview appointments. In the North, a current RISEN staff member helped to arrange meetings and introduce the team to interviewees. Finally, the evaluation team used a former RISEN driver and vehicle to travel to project sites. The benefits this provided in terms of locating and gaining the trust of interviewees was critical, but also caused threats to data validity. The team mitigated this by ensuring that former and present RISEN employees were not present during interviews. The team also advised grantees that the purpose of the evaluation was to holistically examine the RISEN program, rather than to assess individual grantees, which encouraged them to speak frankly.
- *Loss of data fidelity due to translation.* Most grantee and beneficiary interviews were conducted in Tamil. Translation limited a more natural conversation style, thereby resulting in the loss of subtleties, which may have affected the team member’s overall understanding of the data being shared. As a mitigation measure, evaluators regularly clarified and restated issues to aid their understanding. However, the team’s national evaluator, a native Tamil speaker, was able to cross-check translations.
- *The Hawthorne Effect.* A threat to the validity of qualitative data collection was the risk that interviewees might alter what would otherwise be their response in order to “please the interviewer” or give an answer they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. An added dimension in Sri Lanka was the militarization of locations in which the evaluation occurred whereby military intelligence and police were known to speak to some interviewees after the meetings. The evaluation team sought to mitigate this threat in two ways: (1) multiple data points for each evaluation question helped to triangulate information (e.g., cross-checking with the GAD and with relevant RISEN or OTI officers), and (2) the national team member followed up with interviewees known to have been contacted by military or government personnel after the meeting to ensure his/her safety.

4 FINDINGS: PROGRAM LEVEL

This section presents findings for the program-level evaluation questions described earlier. It describes the cumulative effects of grant activities and whether specific approaches more effectively leveraged RISEN resources and capacity to achieve their outcomes. It also examines the effectiveness of the program implementation including identification of key change agents, gaps or missed opportunities, feedback mechanisms, and stakeholder perceptions and relationships. The findings are presented first by the six clusters that the team assessed, then Subsection 4.3 discusses the cumulative effects from these cluster findings at the social cohesion and civic engagement objective level. Finally, the program implementation questions are examined.

4.1 Social Cohesion

From September 2011, the second of the program’s three objectives was “to foster social cohesion to increase participation, community reintegration, and economic viability in the Eastern and Northern

Provinces.” The evaluation team visited 58 grants in connection with this objective, which represented 36% of all social cohesion grants. The evaluation aimed to determine the effectiveness and relevancy of RISEN programming in achieving social cohesion by focusing on the following questions: (1) *How has the community-level approach assisted in bridging gaps between different communities to affect positive social cohesion?* (2) *How did activities link groups together?* and (3) *Are there signs that social cohesion can take place in the longer term?*

4.1.1 Interethnic Interactions

The evaluation team visited 22 out of the 62 program grants (35%) under the cluster or sub-objective to “provide opportunities for interethnic interaction to build new bonds, reduce tensions, and promote reconciliation.” Examples of grants include (1) rural roads, (2) bus depot, (3) exposure visits, (4) flood relief, and (5) psychosocial counseling. Although interethnic grants commenced from June 2011, they comprised the most number of activities (23%) and the highest amount of funding (27%).

Using a resettlement area as an entry point led to a series of connected activities for the provision of common services that resulted in positive interethnic interactions. From 2012 Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist residents commenced settling in Pullumalai in the East, with more families expected in 2014. The program’s entry into the region stemmed from simultaneous, but separate, community discussions before bringing communities together through common needs, such as road renovations⁹ to improve trade and social services. The program maintained a presence in the area from April 2012 to April 2013. Grantees and beneficiaries confirmed that women and youth from all communities shared their labor to ensure the opening of the rural road, which resulted in extensive and prolonged interethnic interactions that interviewed beneficiaries indicated would continue into the future.¹⁰ A secondary result was that the government connected the communities to the hospital (renovated with the program’s PACOM infrastructure funds) by a bus route, which, according to hospital staff and other area grantees, has increased utilization of the hospital by those without access to or unable to use three wheelers or bikes.

While media censorship endures, youth continued interethnic interactions and networked with media mentors and participants throughout the project. Through a series of five follow-on youth-related media trainings supporting the freedom of expression, many regional community issues were broadcast on national media—albeit with editing by media managers. However, interviewed beneficiaries confirmed that they were continuing to communicate and form bonds with course mentors and especially participants from diverse cultures and backgrounds, from July 2011 to March 2013.¹¹ The diverse group of participants included a Muslim female from the East, accompanied by her mother. The outcome was “a huge morale boost for youth to see their programs on mainstream national media” as well as gaining part-time or full-time employment, or consultancy work, from their regional base. The success of this interethnic approach was that, while in Colombo for three months, the youth “lived together, ate together, worked together” and worked as a team, which, as communicated by beneficiaries, led to them discarding long-held opinions of other ethnic groups.

Inclusive district sport and music events united multi-ethnic individuals and communities through common social interests and helped to gain the trust of the most vulnerable populations. The

⁹ Rural road technology to reintegrated communities (RSN022), Community reintegration through technology transfer (RSN125), Feasibility study and validation for common facilities in Pullumalai (RSN150), Promoting social cohesion through economic regeneration of Pullumalai (RSN188), and Community reintegration through improving transport facilities (RSN189)

¹⁰ A regional reporter under a separate program grant to support media (RSN161) uploaded a video on YouTube of the road construction: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvmYxlrBdnl> – Mangalagama to Pullumalai: Road and Bond Building

¹¹ Increasing and including community voices (RSN091), Changing ways—Kannagipura-Kannagipuram (RSN115), Supporting national reintegration through extension of Kannagipura-Kannagipuram (RSN140), Supporting regional representation in national media (RSN161), and Promoting reconciliation through media (RSN192)

program conducted a number of major social and celebratory events, resulting in interethnic interactions and relationships that dispelled preconceptions under the banner of a common cause, and in the form of entertainment that had been limited to youth in previous years.¹² The Esala Festival in Katharagama, in particular, operated at a national level to connect pilgrims from different religious and ethnic groups in a rare event that connected people from the North, South, and East. A grant involving the government within the District Sports Office in Batticaloa brought together isolated, conflict-affected communities, males and females, young and old in a district-wide tournament in August 2012. This included the revitalization of sport for the disabled (previously conducted through Blind Cricket), Muslim girls, and senior citizens in a genuinely inclusive event. It was also the first time that government officials had organized an event of this magnitude and inclusivity, and those involved in the event were proud of their accomplishment and increased capacity in this area. Thus by performing, competing, and forming teams with each other in a social context, these vulnerable populations gained confidence to interact with a broad range of groups, families, and government officials.

Psychosocial activities resulted in outcomes that were unexpected and profound. Due to the high levels of trauma in citizens from conflict-affected communities, the program supported access to psychosocial counseling.¹³ Interviewed beneficiaries expressed the view that the support was crucial for their individual recovery, as well as community stability through shared understanding of common traumas. From September 2010 to June 2011, the program provided professional support to traumatized youth and government officials in the East through the Mental Health Unit of Batticaloa and Valaichenai hospitals and the national youth secretariat. It not only provided interethnic individuals with the skills to relate to each other over four months, but also gave career guidance to war widows and females who head households. Grantees and beneficiaries said that not only individuals but communities more broadly benefited from shared experiences and an increased understanding of post-conflict trauma due to the psychosocial programming. Psychosocial counseling was in such demand that an unexpected 130 people applied for 35 places combined for Tamil and Muslim individuals in a related grant activity. This resulted in individuals inviting previous adversaries to intimate family events, such as weddings and funerals, which all beneficiaries described as previously unheard of.

4.1.2 Economic Opportunities

The evaluation team visited 22 of the 57 grants (39%) under economic opportunities. The largest portion of RISEN's grants were categorized under the cluster or sub-objective to "expand economic opportunities to give conflict-affected, marginalized populations a greater stake in a peaceful future." Activities included (1) livelihood projects (fisheries, cooking, paddy cultivation, farming, brick making, and flour grinding); (2) public market development; (3) vocational training; and (4) support to CBOs. While not a primary goal of OTI's work, expanding economic opportunities should eventually lead to increased job opportunities and overall income levels.

Network building by RISEN, aimed at bringing marginalized populations increased economic opportunities, was strongest and most useful with the government and most sustainable with large NGOs and development organizations. The evaluation team found that three types of network building have taken place: (1) connections with NGOs or other development organizations, (2) connections with the government, and (3) connections among the target populations themselves. The strongest connections made have been with the government and are also deemed the most useful and necessary by the grantees and beneficiaries. One grantee explained that "we are always in contact with

¹² Integration of Muslims & Tamils through sports field renovation (RSN078), Reunify the relationship through Katirkamam / Kataragama celebration (RSN084), Creating space for youth interaction through cross cultural celebration (RSN122), Improving social cohesion through support to district sports (RSN152), Multi-ethnic understanding through forum theatre (RSN175)

¹³ Supporting psychosocial needs through community reintegration (RSN023)

the GA, DS, and PS. Through them we organize meetings [and] identify organizations, groups, and beneficiaries to work with.” This was described as contact during the grant and at present when the grantee works on other activities. The ease of continuing communication with the government was described by grantees as a direct result of the relationship gained during their participation in RISEN.¹⁴ Others echoed this sentiment, saying that the grant required them to work with the government either directly or through gaining permissions to conduct their work, which, while sometimes tedious initially, resulted in both a good relationship with government representatives and offices and continuing communication with them at present as needed for further work in the communities.

The connections creating the most sustainable outcomes seemed to be with larger provincial, national, or international organizations rather than with local grassroots organizations or connections among the target populations themselves. This is not surprising, as these organizations are more powerful and have more resources than local grassroots organizations. For example, the program worked to create a market space for vulnerable women (war widows and women-headed households) to sell their products and increase their income potential.¹⁵ The program linked the organization and beneficiaries to the network Women Action for Independent Development. Access to this network enabled the grantee’s participation at International Women’s Day, including selling their products at the event. In addition, the network alerted the grantee of opportunities to expand their market. While a connection with the government is more urgent and critical to conduct work, as described above, connecting with these larger organizations provided additional opportunities, particularly economic, that was not seen through government or smaller organization networks.

Despite the increased exposure and opportunities provided by connections with larger organizations, among the target populations themselves the networks are less formal but are being maintained and are creating benefits in the form of support and financial gains. This was most notable in the grants that strengthened farmer cooperatives. They are now expanding their activities and using modest income gains for social welfare activities. A group of farmer beneficiaries in the North said, “We were struggling to make our society a unit. Everyone had individual farms. This grant helped us get together and support each other.”

Economic expansion was seen at the individual level rather than at a broader community or industry level. Even though the RISEN program sought to advance the tourism sector beyond individual trainees, the economic impact has yet to be actualized.¹⁶ The grantee received support to develop this sector and create a website, but indicated that they are still at the initial stages of establishing a database and networks of hotels and other tourism information. The website¹⁷ is operational, but it is not clear what impact this has had on the tourism sector. Other income-generation projects, such as vocational training for women,¹⁸ have provided income to participants, but only as a supplement to their primary work in farming and harvesting. When asked if they were planning to start their own businesses, the explanation was that this is currently a small side business for individuals. In the East, paddy farming is a large industry and the program worked to cultivate paddy land and support community reintegration through enhanced economic opportunities.¹⁹ According to the grantee, who is also the beneficiary, the cultivation has not yet provided income. For the grantee to generate income, they need assistance with land-leveling their paddies, which requires expensive machinery. The grantee explained that in other

¹⁴ RSN105, RSN107, and RSN145

¹⁵ Strengthening Support Services for Female Victims of GBV (RSN156)

¹⁶ Extending Eastern Provincial Council Services to rural communities (RSN105), Promoting equitable economic growth through World Tourism Day (RSN107), and Facilitating equitable growth through tourism sector opportunity mapping (RSN145)

¹⁷ www.easterntourism.org

¹⁸ Linking war-affected women through technology (RSN117)

¹⁹ Supporting reintegration through seed paddy production in Batticaloa District (RSN033)

parts of Sri Lanka that receive more government support, the paddy land is level. In the East the paddy land was LTTE-controlled and machinery wasn't allowed. Hence they are starting from a different baseline than other farmers in the rest of Sri Lanka.

Individual gains do have the potential to lead to attitude changes and the mobilization of others, and outcomes to this effect have been seen. The evaluation team found that almost all grantees and beneficiaries interviewed were highly motivated to spread their newfound skills and knowledge, and were continuing to work on projects post-RISEN. All grantees and beneficiaries expressed an understanding of the opportunity provided by the grant they received or were involved in and felt the need to share their experiences with others. Typical responses included the following: “We are trying to get a small amount of money from other donors and use our resources and materials from USAID to do more training.” Even more importantly, this motivation is in action in many cases. The paddy training in the East trained 12 farmers; however, the grantee reported that these farmers have done trainings with other farmers in the area, and now more people are approaching them to gain knowledge, too. “Earlier the farmers only knew sowing, but now they are doing preparation, including spacing. This means we can do weeding by machine now, too. Other farmers will try to come and see what our farmers are doing.” The group has started demonstrations for farmers outside the trained group to see and learn the new techniques. In the North, grantees involved in fishery projects reported observing attitude changes among the local population regarding inland fisheries. They say that more people are becoming interested in inland fisheries and now see it “like a home garden setup, and they want to get involved.”

Critical elements in creating successful incentives for peaceful reintegration, particularly economic, between communities are a tangible connector or resource, government support or involvement, and a slow introduction to reintegration. The market in Mullaitivu²⁰ is a good example of multi-ethnic communities (Sinhala, Muslim, and Tamil villages) being connected to local government through the PS distribution of shops. The grantee reported that this distribution was conducted fairly and transparently with the government circulating criteria for how to obtain a shop in the market. Reintegration was not forced on the community, but occurred organically through the business of the market: “Sinhala, Muslim, and Tamil people are shopping and selling. When they are doing the business they are naturally making the linkages. We have seen this through the wares available as well. Vegetables are coming from different areas outside the main communities. That is not our planning, it is happening naturally.” This government participation reportedly also increased the sustainability of the market.

Another example is the rural road project.²¹ A road is an obvious example of a tangible connector between communities, but the way in which the project was implemented and the results that have followed demonstrate the key elements of a successful reintegration incentive. The grantee describes the initial hesitation of the community to the project and the need for government involvement. “The Tamil population thought this road would allow Sinhala people to come and get our land. Land issues were the main concerns. We had conversations with the people and had the GS and DS involved.” As the road development began, the grantee gradually took people from each village to meet and work together. “In Sinhala areas the Buddhist monk is the main person to discuss these projects with. We have a Sinhala mobilizer in the community, which helps us to link these two parties. Now we’ve started our own relationships. The community has started [its] own projects.” Most notably, after the RISEN portion of the road was completed, the community developed an additional three kilometers of the road with assistance from the government. Sinhala people were getting fish from Tamil areas and

²⁰ Validation of common infrastructure for cohesion (RSN085), Establishment of temporary market in Maritimpeattu/Mullaitivu (RN153), and Providing economic opportunity through market renovation (RSN155)

²¹ Community reintegration through technology transfer (RSN125), Strengthening social cohesion through technology transfer (RSN126), Feasibility study and validation for common facilities in Pullumalai (RSN150), Promoting social cohesion through economic regeneration of Pullumalai (RSN188), and Community reintegration through improving transport facilities (RSN189)

farmers were able to transport livestock more easily, as well as people using the road as a shortcut to get to the hospital.

Economic revitalization work built confidence among grantees and beneficiaries. In Sri Lanka, communities have been isolated for so long that hope alone is a new and welcome advance. While this evaluation cannot determine direct attribution, it is clear that the RISEN program was directly seen as inspiring hope through livelihood projects in areas that no donor was yet working. Farmers working in a cooperative added that the RISEN grant was a “precious gift,” as it gave them hope that resettlement may last if farmers all work together.

Increased capacity of grantees involved in livelihood development. Interviewed grantees described receiving strong guidance and assistance from the RISEN program and an increased understanding of how to develop proposals to apply for donor funding. The evaluation team was not able to determine whether or not this increased understanding had led to additional funding or other successes outside the RISEN program. However, grantee confidence and its ability to lead to future successes should not be underestimated.

Positive unintended consequences

Many of the skills enhancement and training courses led to changes in behavior at home. For instance, the bakery and cooking classes for women in the East also helped teach the women to cook in a more hygienic and nutritional way. The beneficiaries claimed a reduction of gastric illnesses in their communities. On a larger scale, the rural road development project in Pullumalai was one of the first to approach and work with the Sinhala community in the East.

Appropriate income-generation activities, target populations, and timing, aligned with government priorities for sustained work. RISEN used economic activities in key sectors, such as tourism, fisheries, paddy production, and markets, as a tool to gain access to the most vulnerable populations of war widows and youth. Grantees agreed that the sectors targeted by RISEN programs would be most likely to provide opportunities to marginalized populations and assist with greater community development, as they are either traditional sectors or new sectors that complement the native environment (e.g., inland fisheries in the North and tourism in the East) and are in line with government priorities for the regions. In addition, all grantees and beneficiaries agreed that the economic expansion projects came at critical times for the communities.

4.1.3 Reducing Social Inequalities

The evaluation team visited 14 of the 44 grants (32%) awarded to “reduce social inequalities, isolation, and other lingering conflict-produced challenges that have hindered the recovery and reintegration of communities affected by war” through youth community service, youth networks, and education catch-up grants. While this category is inextricably linked to interethnic interactions, the subtle difference is that the activities encourage (1) anti-hate speech, (2) communication through learning the language of another ethnic group, (3) youth leadership, and (4) career guidance (including exposure to a technology seminar). In summary, they are more focused on an individual’s ability to connect to other communities through improved confidence via language, leadership, or pathways to learning. The majority of social equality grants were implemented in the North in 2013, the final year of the program, with some exceptions in the East: (1) reducing a sense of isolation for Vakara youth from January 2011²² and (2) career guidance from July 2011.²³

Activities that link and network isolated youth through common interests and goals showed potential to lead to greater interethnic understanding and concept of fairness that may reduce

²² Improving communication through transport (RSN055)

²³ Enhancing equitable access to employment opportunities (RSN094), Restoring resiliency through education (RSN104), and Enhancing IT knowledge through “Future of Technology” seminar (RSN176)

inequalities. The evaluation team found that youth from disparate and remote regions retained networks and contact with each other when they were engaged in an activity leading to common goals, with more impact if the common goal was employment-related. For example, on-the-job training in bus repair/mechanic skills for remote youths, in parallel with life skills and English and Sinhalese language training, provided a level playing field for learning in which all participants felt “equal” outside of their usual sphere of living. Another example is a group of disparate youth brought together for an IT seminar and subsequent training in the North,²⁴ who continue to network because “we all have equal skills in IT and we can still learn from each other without being in a training course.”

Individual gains by youth show promise to extend to community level benefits. Career guidance, skills training, and language lessons are primarily individualized. However, youth exposed to media, technology, skills, and business activities have indicated that they were inspired to take their learning to the next level. Their goal in the future (and there is evidence that some youth have commenced the next step) is to transfer their skills to their own communities, through youth clubs or to individual members. One IT group’s goal is to “computerize Mannar,” and while a small community may be seen to be ineffectual, for the youth it demonstrates an extension of their confidence to empower others. Through a recognition that the technology skills they gained can lead to employment and hope for the future, a sense of sharing and technology transfer has been gained. As one beneficiary said, “I don’t know why I was chosen to do the training because I was from a rural place with no hope and no skills, but they said I was the sort of person they were looking for and this gave me a feeling of hope. Now I want to give hope to others through practical skills so that they can be as equal as others.”

Language activities are a promising mechanism for reducing social inequalities and a connector between diverse people. The evaluators assessed two language grants: a national campaign from June to September 2013 against hate speech, and a northern grant during the same period to promote daily language training to encourage dialogue with another ethnic group.²⁵ The anti-hate speech campaign aimed to support moderate and progressive faith leaders to bring together multi-faith leaders from five districts targeted by extremists. The program held five district consultations to 247 faith leaders, including 106 Buddhist clergy. Subsequently, six selected faith leaders traveled in a peace caravan (with a loudspeaker) for a week to distribute messages of peace and promote social equality. Some locations didn’t host the caravan because the faith leaders were afraid of being targeted by extreme religious groups. However, it proved to be a bold initiative for the program that other donors would not fund. It resulted in a move toward tolerance and social cohesion through the establishment of an emergency task force (ETF) on religious intolerance, at the group’s initiative, in which the ETF promulgated messages of peaceful coexistence by word of mouth, daily role modeling, and in brochures for events. The Northern daily language training was less bold, but its reach was wider and it was institutionalized. Working with the Provincial Director of Education in the Northern Province, in 12 education zones to 100 schools,²⁶ schoolchildren up to grade 5 studied a word daily in another language. The benefits also encompassed teachers and parents. In 2014 the program will continue from the provincial budget to extend the program to grade 7. Therefore there are distinct signs that social cohesion through language will continue in the longer term.

Youth-focused programming may lead to reduced systemic social inequalities in the conflict-affected and closed communities in the North and East. Grants in the North focused heavily on the youth and proved to reap rewards in reducing social inequalities in the region. This was particularly evident in the grant in March 2011 to enhance information communication technology (ICT) education

²⁴ Enhance IT knowledge through “Future of Technology” seminar (RSN176)

²⁵ Anti-hate speech campaign (RSN256) and Language promotion through daily training (RSN265)

²⁶ The grant covered 100 schools out of the 1,026 schools in the North’s five districts.

for rural and urban youth.²⁷ In an area where suicide rates were high, youth committed suicide in pairs or groups, employment was low, frustration and anger were seething, and all hope had faded, the “massive response” by youth who were keen to be involved was evident of the need. The school system had approximately one computer for 100 students, mostly in the south of the country; the situation in the North was considerably worse. The grant was not only the entry point to youth programming, bridging the gap between youth in the North and South, but was also regarded by grantees and beneficiaries as “the turning point” for them by helping in dissolving isolation, mental barriers, and despair. Beneficiaries described an improved sense of hope that isolation, passivity, and disconnectedness with the wider Sri Lanka were in the past, and that they were confident of opportunities for improved social equality in the future.

4.2 Civic Engagement

From September 2011, one of the program’s three objectives was “to increase civic engagement of conflict-affected communities with the rest of Sri Lankan society, including government institutions.” The evaluation team visited 40 grants in connection with this objective, which represented 39% of all civic engagement grants. The evaluation aimed to determine the effectiveness and relevancy of RISEN programming in achieving civic engagement by focusing on the following questions: (1) *What was the strength of the linkages between communities and local government?* and (2) *How effective was the program in working with government to adopt a more cohesive approach to its priorities?*

4.2.1 Community and Local Government Relationships

The evaluation team visited 12 of the 48 activities (25%) under the sub-objective of civic engagement “to improve the relationship between community and local government through enhanced public service delivery, greater accountability, and new opportunities for public engagement with authorities” through activities such as land registration, capacity building for village-level administration (PS), and capacity building for Divisional Secretariats (DS). Although grants under other clusters included some engagement with local government, activities under this specific cluster commenced briefly from February 2011 with flood relief, but predominantly from February 2012, with most undertaken in 2013.

RISEN successfully identified the need for entry-level confidence-building grants²⁸ as a critical component in connecting the communities to their local government, and confidence is seen to be increasing among the communities. Confidence of the community to connect with government services was reported by both beneficiaries and grantees to be a critical step toward improving the relationship between the communities and the relevant authorities. The most oft-cited successful entry-level confidence-building activity by RISEN was the translation of signs, information booklets, and other legal documentation into Tamil. As one grantee explained, “To even enter the building (government), they [Tamils] needed translation.” Another explained that after resettlement there were no street

Positive unintended consequences

Skills training and language learning led to changes in behavior domestically. For example, parents of schoolchildren learning another language were also beginning to practice a word a day. Teachers were also encouraged to learn three languages to open up their skills and future professional development. At the group level, an IT career guidance session for rural youth who had not completed secondary education due to forced displacement and were not considering employment or business options led to an entrepreneurial, youth-led technology business operating in computer hardware repairs, graphic design, and training—none of which was previously available to district consumers: “We were not thinking about a business; we had no dream for a career. We were displaced in the 1990s and we had never been to training before.” On a larger scale, youth from isolated villages expanded their employment goal beyond the local community to the capital and other countries.

²⁷ Enhancing ICT education for stability (RSN040)

²⁸ Discussed in more detail in section 5.4.1.

names or accurate numbers to houses or other facilities in the communities. In Vaharai, OTI sponsored 33 street name boards in the three languages. The grantee added, “The public and government have a very positive reaction to the project. After our project, the government and private sector were able to understand the area and the beneficiaries, and the locations and other important information are accurate.”

In addition, the grantee said that when Sinhalese come to the area, the signboards allow them to identify and visit local places of interest, which has assisted with cross-cultural communication. The goal is that this will eventually help with increased interaction and commerce, but this had not been observed to date other than anecdotally. The second most oft-cited confidence-building activity was the provision of equipment and capacity development to kick-start local government productivity and improve public confidence in government services. Grantees described increased capacity in budgeting and management and that the provision of equipment and furniture to government offices was essential to increasing their ability to provide services to their communities.²⁹ As one government official explained, “It makes our work easier. We can share progress immediately and have access to updated information.” Another said, “We also installed an intercom system for all local authorities. We feel the quality of the institution has gone up.”

The evaluation team found that across both the North and the East, in general there was an increase in confidence in the community to seek out and receive government services. One community member in the East described his experience of going into a government office, reading the signage in his local language, and then getting all the documentation he needed to apply for a land deed. “Once we give our ID card or name or address, all the documents will come up,” he said with amazement. He added that he has described his experience to others in the community and the evaluation found a snowball effect in terms of others in the community recounting their friends’ or family members’ positive experiences with the government. Out of the 12 activities visited under this cluster, the evaluation team found only one case in which a grantee/beneficiary described an experience that did not result in increased confidence in government services. This was related to a project working with Community Development Organizations (CDOs) to increase their capacity to work with the local authorities on a common development goal. The grantee and CDO members said that the local government authorities were difficult to work with because they thought the project should have been run through them instead of the CDOs. The grantee explained that the government’s entire support was needed for the program to work.

While confidence was found to be increasing, the ability for the government, particularly in the North, to maintain its increased capacity and services is low. All government officials or grantees working on these activities in the North expressed concern about being able to continue services. While the NCPEs took place as planned and the elected officials are currently being recognized by the national government, the local PS chairman said that the governor and national government “change laws here on a daily basis,” and the volatility of their ability to control resources or conduct their work affects the long-term outlook of these initial positive confidence gains.

Another government grantee in the North said, “[The RISEN grant] is very helpful because we can’t get that kind of support from our own government.” This sentiment was echoed by all recipients of equipment and other tangible goods and services. While it is good to know that the support was helpful, this does reflect a cause for concern, as more and more donors are leaving Sri Lanka and there are no signs that the government is able or willing to continue support to the local governments, particularly in the North. While the fear of losing their gains in capacity- and confidence-building within the

²⁹ Improving access to services through support to local authorities (RSN 149), Improving access to services through support to local authorities—part 2 (RSN171), and Building local authority models through efficient budgeting and training (RSN191)

communities was most explicit in the North, officials and grantees in both areas noted that there is no provision for continuity or follow-up to many of the confidence-building activities, and that increased capacity “has generated a lot of ideas in their head, but to practically implement them is an issue,” one grantee noted. Finally, the quantity and variety of continuing needs in both the North and the East, and the government’s lack of resources to work on them, may ultimately affect the gains in confidence seen. As one grantee in the North said, “There are some areas without electricity and toilets. They are trying to get people to move out of camps, but they are still moved into temporary housing with no real structural base or roof. And areas chosen for resettlement have not been considered for access to education or health.” Another PS added that people are now demanding libraries and other services that they cannot see how they could afford.

The provision of equipment and training was an important factor and provided an integral basis for grant activities in improving the productivity of government offices, but authorities with a motivational personality and leadership skills are the prime factors for change within the government. This was evident in the Divisional Secretariat of Chenkalady, Eravur Pattu,³⁰ where the efficient and effective operations, spearheaded by the DS, were clearly visible during the evaluators’ visit. The busy office had signs, message boards, and functioning services for the public, with strategic missions, progress charts, organizational charts, and productive offices for the DS staff. The DS stated proudly, “My staff can find a file in 6 to 10 seconds. Work is so easy now, anyone can do it.” In addition, staff showed a complete attitudinal change, demonstrating less absenteeism, punctuality, and commitment to work. While the evaluators were in attendance, a mobile clinic working for the Department of Registration, Police, and Justice was in service, with chairs for the waiting public under shelter; an organized process, it was an efficient system for handling the large crowd.

Government capacity to successfully resolve land issues has been increased. The East, and specifically Batticaloa, has many land disputes, mainly owing to the repeated displacement because of conflict, temporary or permanent abandonment of land and property due to internal or external migration, land grabbing by interested parties, and government takeover of lands. The lack of government knowledge and capacity has led to delays in dealing with land issues. Civil servants from village-level to district-level public administration were educated on the latest land laws and systems, and the evaluation team observed that the result was an increase in the government’s capacity to resolve or work to resolve issues. One grantee undertook a field survey³¹ to identify knowledge gaps, after which 14 workshops were held for 685 staff across 14 divisions. Subsequently, the land commissioner prepared a module that explained “how to obtain deeds to land” and “what documents should be submitted.” As a result, many people had their land deeds resolved. The manual was popular and has been disseminated to rural development societies. Software, purchased under the grant, was able to link the Land Reforms Commission and the Survey Department, and 70% of the deeds were digitized by the end of the grant.

Relationship of the divisional secretariat and the resettling communities strengthened in the process of addressing the water crisis. The resettling families in Kandawalai in Kilinochchi faced a water crisis. This was addressed by renovating five minor tanks in the area through “cash for work” programs (with 369 beneficiaries, including 157 women, over 105 days) implemented by the DS office.³² Through the renovation of five tanks (ponds), water supply was enhanced to cover the needs of the resettled families and their livestock, the relationship between the local DS office and community was strengthened, and short-term employment provided immediate economic relief to community members.

³⁰ Equitable service delivery through Chenkalady DS Office capacity building (RSN179)

³¹ Conflict mitigation through land documentation (RSN185)

³² Managing and responding to water crisis for resettled communities and livestock (RSN027)

Professional capacities of government and CBOs involved in RISEN programming were improved. In the process of strengthening social accountability, ten Women's Rural Development Societies (WRDSs) from three divisions of three districts (Vavuniya, Mannar, and Kilinochchi), a local NGO,³³ 33 Rural Development Officers from the DS, and 33 Community Development Officers (CDOs) from the Assistant Commissioner for Local Government (ACLG) offices were trained on social accountability tools. An Advisory Committee consisting of both was formed, enabling the two structures to work together. It happened only for a limited duration, but individually both institutions say they benefited from the capacity building and continue to use the knowledge gained in their current work. The CBO members of Manthai West who underwent capacity-building training are now able to write letters and some of them have received houses from the Indian Housing Scheme. All the members whom the team spoke with say that they are now proactively addressing common problems such as arranging bus transportation and garbage clearing in their area. The team also found enhanced capacity of the Provincial Rural Development Department (PRDD) and CBO membership. The PRDD, which, according to interviewees, had no prior capacity, was strengthened to meet the needs of resettling communities. Finally, opportunities for exposure visits were found to be powerful motivators for government officials. Grantees and beneficiaries said they helped the DS offices to achieve specified standards of work and learn from other governments facing the same issues.

4.2.2 Advocacy Capacities

The evaluation team visited 17 of the 39 activities (44%) under the sub-objective of civic engagement “to strengthen advocacy capacities and foster new networks of individuals, communities, and organizations to enable them to better address issues nonviolently” through activities such as social media, media, theater, and civil society capacity building.

Beneficiaries of media-related grants remained actively involved in the media with an aim to bring local issues to national attention. Every media-related grantee and beneficiary whom the evaluation team interviewed was still actively engaged in the field (either professionally or informally) and working to bring their communities into mainstream media. Some grantees joined networks and moved to Colombo, and some were independent, and for many it was a secondary income. A youth-related media grantee indicated that some beneficiaries were absorbed into the government at the DS level. Despite “some traditional leadership kicking youth out of their organizations because they became so vibrant and [are] thinking critically,” they continued to play an active role in their communities.

Youth beneficiaries were emboldened by the advocacy-related activities. Across the spectrum of grants under this cluster, the evaluators noted an increase in youth's understanding, attention to, and boldness in acting on local issues. Advocacy activities were seen as giving youth the skills to help their communities in a constructive way. A media grantee said that at a media conference in Colombo as part of the project, youth trainees reflected everything truthfully: “They fearlessly expressed themselves even though there were recordings there. They felt they had no other forum.” Youth involved in the street theater grant³⁴ explained that most of them came from remote villages and “felt like a dot.” The theater program enabled them to learn about and discuss issues in a “safe” group, gaining confidence and skills to help the community at large open up about its struggles. Youth in Vakara, a key target community of the East office, started a newspaper in their community after they were trained in photography, media, and radio in March 2010 under RISE, and one youth continues working to secure resources to keep the paper operational. Other youth involved in capacity-building trainings³⁵ said they were taught how to

³³ Improving government services for rural development (RSN158) and Strengthening social accountability and civic engagement together (RSN147)

³⁴ Promoting youth civic engagement through forum theater (RSN214) and Bridging youth activists from North and East through theater (RSN268)

³⁵ Building capacity of grassroots organizations (RSN093)

mobilize and connect government services with their communities. One explained, “We are going to start a central body in the community and later we will register that body with government authority. We are now trying to mobilize our public and explain that citizens are first.”

There is a possibility that this outcome is due to a self-selection bias—youth who are already emboldened are more likely to be a part of these initiatives. Interviewed grantees and beneficiaries admitted that some youth were already emboldened, but the RISEN advocacy activities “took them to next level.” It provided youth with skills and resources to engage the rest of their community in their cause and take up issues in a constructive manner, essentially harnessing their passion for addressing issues nonviolently. Support provided by a national television³⁶ reporters also helped increase youth engagement: “When they knew they had people at the national level like us take up their issues, the youth became bolder.” A youth beneficiary said, “USAID is like our counselors. They come to us, talk to us, and help us,” indicating that when an international donor supported them they were further emboldened.

Emboldening communities to take collective action was a slower process, especially in the North, that was yet to show a large impact. Although RISEN media grants created discussion among the wider community, communities did not adopt certain issues after the broadcasts. However, according to media beneficiaries, sometimes an issue such as land ownership, censorship, or violence was adopted by larger NGO groups. The adoption of issues by national groups often led local government to being more receptive to them and following up on issues at the local level. “It is important that locals feel their issues are seen and heard by others. I think we have achieved a lot in that aspect,” said one beneficiary. For the street theater, grantees and beneficiaries were not able to describe outcomes from their performances beyond community members expressing appreciation for the relevant and entertaining drama. Grantees added that if they had the financial ability and, more importantly, freedom to perform in more public areas and more regularly, community and larger-level impacts might occur. Grantees interviewed from this cluster described differences in the Northern and Eastern communities: “In Batti, they expressed their views emotionally, but in Jaffna they don’t talk as transparently and openly. We call Jaffna a closed society. They think twice about whatever they do.”

Advocacy networks had difficulty producing large, sustaining impacts in Sri Lanka’s current political climate, but RISEN’s attempts proved to be a positive outcome in its own right. Underlying the work of RISEN to foster networks and advocacy capacities is the shrinking political space. All grantees reported issues with their ability to implement the projects as planned and ongoing fears that these networks and CSOs’ advocacy capacity will ultimately be squashed. “After 2008 we were threatened and stopped at army points. It’s still the same. We can’t do performances in public places. We can’t book performance spaces because the owners of the hall

Advocacy trainings

- *Realistic strategies for applying information from trainings.* Beneficiaries identified strategies for the transfer and application of information as the most useful element of advocacy-related trainings. For example, context-based strategies for peaceful dialogue and problem solving were described as the most useful part of the non-violent communication training.
- *Opportunities for mixed-group training.* Training designs that use mixed-group work proved to be beneficial for discussions and shared opinions, because many beneficiaries were not able to hold meetings in the home environment due to the suspicions of community members.
- *Trusted trainers.* Trainers from the trainees’ communities were regarded as the most trustful by participants. Said one trainer, “The people (trainees) did speak frankly to us because we belong to their community.” The RISEN program encouraged local trainers as a criterion in grant designs.

³⁶ Supporting national reintegration through extension of Kannagipura-Kannagipuram (RSN140)

don't want to criticize the government. If we do street performances then all the intelligence is there watching us," said a street theater grantee. Border villages are seen as the most vulnerable to these issues. One CSO grantee said, "There is still fear in the border village people. Government administrators for each area are from the ethnic group of that area. Muslim authorities, Tamil and Sinhala—there are biases toward their group." Media and theater grantees and beneficiaries also described constant censorship and an inability to explicitly, and, at times, accurately, portray events or issues. This is most overtly the situation with radio broadcasting. The Sri Lanka Broadcast Company (SLBC) approves all radio program scripts, and, according to grantees and beneficiaries, regularly censors their work. One youth participant said, "We feel struggles to reveal our true situation with this radio drama. The real situation is that in this area the youth are trying to settle but get harassed. Our group tried to give exposure to this matter, but we couldn't." Many times broadcasts were simply canceled even after being censored. The youth working on community newspapers reported similar experiences. "We have the capacity to publish a paper, but we are targeted. Fifty percent of our problems are threats and the other fifty percent are resource issues. For example, most of our livelihood is fishing, but people from outside are coming with high-tech systems and disturbing our livelihoods. We encountered problems in publishing that."

Grantees made attempts to circumvent censorship issues. A street theater grantee explained, "We chose a different style in the drama. At the surface level you may not know what we are saying or doing, but those that are affected know." Other youth said that they are exploring ways to independently publish their work, including a documentary on post-war experiences in the North. Beneficiaries added that they were grateful for the program's willingness to tackle advocacy activities when most donors and large NGOs wouldn't. Said one grantee, "This was the first time we were supported to do our drama our way. Most donors won't give us autonomy because they don't really understand it."

Mentoring and networking provided by the national grantees were key factors in the success of advocacy activities. Informal networking with fellow trainees was described as a positive factor in activities, although it was the connections facilitated at the national level that had the most visible and significant effects, including media linkages and networks with national-level outlets. Beneficiaries also stated that they are regularly informed of high-level media conferences. A grantee also referred the BBC in 2012 to a beneficiary reporter during the floods in the East. The national television grantee was also conducting national media projects and identified participants for work based on the local (East and North) trainings undertaken through RISEN. One of these participants said, "Producers are helping me and all the time they are calling me. If they want to document anything here (in the East), I am the first person getting a call from them. They include me in their team and they pay for my services."

The revitalization of community spaces for advocacy and civil society activities helped to engage community members and sustain the impact. A grant to support the renovation of multi-purpose halls for community meetings included reactivating rural development societies and women's rural development societies.³⁷ The halls were critical to the success of the grants because villagers had a safe place to meet and continue their engagement. In addition, the community rents the halls for additional income or enables organizations to use the meeting rooms free of charge. Beneficiaries who did not receive tangible resources commented that they would have been useful. "We are trying to put up a permanent structure to meet and gather everyone. After this training we wanted to put a radio station or media center and we approached agencies and the DS, but we found there are political issues in setting up these types of things," a beneficiary said.

³⁷ Support to grassroots-level development (RSN032) and Building capacity of grassroots organizations (RSN093)

4.2.3 Civic Rights and Responsibilities

The evaluation team visited 11 of the 15 activities (73%) under the sub-objective of civic engagement “to improve citizen understanding of civic rights and responsibilities and enhance access to formal political and/or legal processes” through activities such as civic education, elections, human rights legal aid, and identification documentation. All activities under this cluster commenced from February 2011 in response to LGEs announced by the Department of Elections for the first time in 30 years. Hence, most potential voters were unaware of the electoral process and the mandatory requirement to have valid identification cards. Local elections were held in the East in March 2011 in only three seats (all in Muslim areas), with the remaining seats scheduled for July, but Batticaloa was not included. Therefore the program’s first electoral response was support for the LGE in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, and Mullaitivu in July 2011.³⁸ The second round of electoral responses was support for the NPCEs proclaimed for July 2013, but occurring in September. Presidential elections are also expected to be held before mid-2014.

Where donors were reluctant to support voter education, USAID seized a critical opportunity that was flexible and responsive to the country’s democratic processes. Anticipating conflict, donors and CSOs were reluctant to provide electoral support to the government. Grantees and government officials expressed to the evaluators the valued presence of USAID as the only donor responsive to voter education support. All stakeholders perceived voter education as visible, transparent, and impartial. Although funding for civil rights and responsibilities totaled only 6% of the RISEN budget, it was an appropriate investment in raising the credibility and profile of the project and USAID. “OTI really understood what was needed; they understood the significance of election support and the need to work quickly,” said a grantee. The USAID/OTI mechanism enabled flexibility of funding and a rapid response to ensure comprehensive coverage of communities that would otherwise not have received information on the voting process.³⁹ The Department of Persons Registration identified approximately 110,000 individuals on the voter registry in the North lacking mandatory national identity documents, with more than 85,000 of those individuals lacking any form of identification (such as birth certificates).⁴⁰ The program recognized the immediate need to rapidly support registration for the right of citizens to vote.

Programming related to national identity documents empowered people to vote, bringing normalcy to their lives. Having been unregistered for 30 years, without official identification, birth, death, marriage, and divorce papers, all beneficiaries said that the process of national registration brought normalcy to their lives because they “[felt] equal in importance for the first time.”⁴¹ “Being someone is a liberating experience,” said a beneficiary who provided evidence that he not only knew the election procedures. (He previously didn’t because he knew he wasn’t allowed to vote.) He was also confident that it was safe to access the polling booths because he knew of the presence and responsibilities of election monitors. The grantee added that the process “was intense, but we saw results in a short time. An official piece of paper can make a big difference.”

The formulation of civil society networks was an important investment that mobilized citizens to vote. Civil societies in Sri Lanka during the period of the civil conflict were inactive, disempowered, and fragmented. The program activated civil societies, particularly in the North, and formulated a civil society network,⁴² which had never existed before. A networked approach to CSOs provided a

³⁸ Monitoring Local Government Elections and Voter Education Program in North and East (RSN062) and Encouraging participation in free and fair elections (RSN086)

³⁹ The grantee conducting voter education activities indicated that staff covered 99% of villages in the targeted districts in the North and East.

⁴⁰ DAI (October 2013) RISEN Annual Report, October 2012 – September 2013, p. 14

⁴¹ Democracy & election education through Reader Circles (RSN265)

⁴² Strengthening civic participation in the North and East (RSN106) and Democracy & election education through Reader Circles (RSN265) and Networking civil society in support of voter education and democracy (RSN267)

common platform, standardized voting messages, and coordination in disseminating voter information across a wide geographic area, thereby facilitating participatory democracy processes. Youth, originally from sports clubs, were mobilized to encourage people to vote. One youth said, “We were just a sports club before, and now we are a community development club.” In addition, it brought Tamil and Muslim youth together without a militarized presence for the first time in their lives to participate in positive democratic change.

Enabling people “freedom of expression” was an important element in gaining trust. Grantees gained the trust of citizens through credible information dissemination and giving them a chance to speak and to gain knowledge. This was particularly critical for youth under 30 who had never been exposed to freedom of speech and the election process. As one grantee said, “When they started to speak about the lack of voter information in their language and their councils’ inability to disseminate policy decisions, they vomited their concerns.” This resulted in the grantee making 500 copies of the Pradeshiya Sabha Act in Tamil to disseminate in the North through 81% of councils, which “gave oxygen to the councils.”⁴³

Enabling youth to work as part of the election process empowered them. Grantees employed youth as election monitors and as election education disseminators. All relevant grantees and beneficiaries said that this empowered them, not only as participants but also as key members of a historical event. “We were making decisions, and working independently, because we had been well trained and well supported,” said an election monitor.

RISEN demonstrated an essential understanding of the local context, which contributed to the success of civic engagement programming. Program managers had an “on-the-ground” understanding of the local context and the differences among the target districts. While this is a prerequisite for staffing, stakeholders commented that an understanding of the local context was not evident in non-USAID donors across sectors, making USAID’s presence more credible, high-profile, and valued.

Flexibility of funding and working was critical to the election education process. Flexible funding arrangements enabled grantees to respond rapidly to the changing environment and the needs of the local government and its constituents. Without this flexibility, the program would not have reached a wide geographic coverage, nor would it have been able to effectively address election monitoring and observation issues and complaints in a timely manner to guarantee citizen safety during elections.

The accumulation of voter education and civic education efforts contributed to record voter turnout. The series of grants supporting the preparation, education, information dissemination,

Positive unintended consequences

Originally the civic education grant was intended to be a “Public Walk to Democracy” for 750 youth from the North and the East. However, when the military refused permission in accordance with the Election Commissioner’s circular to curtail all processions to avoid violations to the electoral rules, the program rapidly made alternative arrangements. It mobilized 500 youth (35% female) in 12 buses to the hills region of Hattan to join an existing democracy-training grant for youth clubs. Military stopped the buses at a checkpoint but let them proceed, probably due to a coincidence of timing with a UNHCR visit in the region. The quick response to the situation leveraged the impact of a youth procession to that of focused democracy training, which not only gave them the “space” to express themselves, but also led to future leaders pledging to sustain pro-democracy messages. For example, each of 38 youth clubs and individual youth pledged to conduct a participatory democracy program in their villages. All beneficiaries interviewed indicated to evaluators that they honored their pledge, which they maintain contributed to a high voter turnout through a cascading effect that they were proud of.

⁴³ The grantee indicated that there were 335 Pradeshiya Sabhas in the Northern Province, of which they had access to 271 (81%) and strengthened 108 of them (32%).

registration, and monitoring of the local and provincial elections, particularly the NPCEs, contributed to unprecedented voter participation in Mannar, Kilinochchi, and Mullaitivu. At the 2011 local elections in Jaffna, 168,277 citizens voted. The 2013 provincial election drew more than 273,821 Jaffna citizens to the polling booth, which represents a 63% increase in voter numbers. The overall voter turnout for the NPCE was estimated at over 68%.⁴⁴

4.3 Accumulation of Grants

The cluster framework and its associated findings discussed above are useful for understanding the specific approaches that the program took to achieve social cohesion and civic engagement. The cumulative effects or impact at the two objective levels is more difficult to determine, especially when the way in which the program defined social cohesion and civic engagement was broad and never given explicitly.⁴⁵ However, the accumulation of findings does show that some higher-level effects and impact have taken hold.

USAID/OTI's short-term assistance, through the provision of grants to small indigenous organizations and local/district/provincial government in Sri Lanka, remained responsive to the country's changing context by shifting its original goal to assist the reintegration of former ex-combatants and reestablish economically viable and socially cohesive communities to the advancement of confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently. To reach its goal, the RISEN program tailored its approach with the aims of fostering social cohesion and increasing civic engagement.

The program contributed to democratic transition and firm democratic processes, largely due to its unique responsive-funding mechanism, which enabled it to deploy grants rapidly when opportunities opened up. This included support to LGEs and the NPCEs. This political orientation and culture of risk-taking, where other donors were reluctant to enter, remained true to OTI's philosophy of stabilizing transitional governments and is noted as a particular achievement of OTI in Sri Lanka.

Throughout its duration, the program built confidence between the government and communities through community improvement grants, such as reactivating markets and improving the functionality of councils (through equipment and training). As a means of social cohesion through interethnic interactions, the program also succeeded in supporting resettlement communities. Most of the program's successful achievements toward its goal focused on working with youth of different backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities. The program brought youth together, who would not otherwise have had the means or desire to do so, through social, entertainment, sporting, advocacy, training, and other activities, with a central theme of addressing their community needs. Many festivals, events, elections, and otherwise "normal" activities were previously long-standing traditions that had not occurred for 30 years. However, the activities were not solely "to bring people together" but were held to engage citizens in meaningful dialogue sessions that facilitated greater understanding between multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-aged, and multi-social status groups.

However, whereas OTI generally does not conduct longer-term training, workshops, and conferences, the program tended towards these, particularly in the East. Hence, apart from their activities on civic rights, most activities were more traditional and development-driven, and not necessarily highly innovative or risk-taking. Nevertheless, the program employed an adaptive management style to achieve the following: (1) support for grassroots community grants that met the needs of community groups; (2) engagement of grassroots and nontraditional leadership; (3) movement into regional areas where other donors were limited; (4) contribution to democratic processes; (5) improvement of public perceptions of the democratic political transition; (6) support for activities between disparate and dissenting groups;

⁴⁴ DAI (October 2013) RISEN Annual Report, October 2012 – September 2013, p.14

⁴⁵ See section 5 for more details on this.

(7) the launch of successful media programs on positive interethnic collaborations; (8) exploration of the ways that language and communication could advance advocacy and positive change; and (9) encouragement for networks, partnerships, and durable relationships between groups and individuals.

By engaging civic participation among disparate groups, supporting public campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence, organizing civil societies to form a cohesive functioning network, bringing communities and government together, promoting political and social tolerance, and encouraging intergroup contacts, the program met its goal of the advancement of confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently. Less effective was its inroad into freedom of expression as an overarching achievement, although individuals did make gains.

The program's strengths were its resolve to form, from the outset, models for replication, such as (1) geographic (Vakarai and Pullumulai) and sector (youth) saturation, which were able to embed changes into communities, (2) civil society empowerment and networking, (3) intercommunity dialogue, (4) responding to political and social sensitivities, and (5) tangible economic gains (markets and a contribution toward youth employment). The program's vulnerabilities were its (1) diluted definition of social cohesion, (2) limited explicit espousal of its goal to stakeholders, (3) limited advocacy on a cross-provincial level, and (4) the uncertainty of grantees', especially the government's, ability to maintain or capitalize on the momentum created by the increased capacity, improved confidence, and networks built.

Grantees and beneficiaries were, on the whole, supported with capacity building, and for some this also meant a wider coverage, geographically and in terms of beneficiaries, that they were not otherwise exposed to. This extended coverage, they maintain, will enable them in the future to connect rapidly, and with a measure of trust, for potential sustained engagement. Beneficiaries expressed a positive interaction with grantees, and provided evaluators with examples of gradual and swift behavior change, through exposure visits to other communities and activities, first-time events, training and mentoring, and empowerment to be actively involved in a society that had been closed and restricted for most or all of their lives. Youth interviewed typically responded that, above all else, they gained the momentum and motivation to transfer their knowledge, skills, and passion for their newfound "gains" to their community and/or other youth. In addition, they had an invigorated sense of self-worth and self-actualization.

4.4 Key Change Agents/Approaches

This section examines the program's identification of change agents to advance social cohesion and civic engagement in a more sustained manner.

4.4.1 Youth

Although behavioral and attitudinal studies were not undertaken, the program conducted a number of evaluations, such as the Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Focused Activities on Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement in July 2013 (assessing 21 youth-related activities from 2010 to 2012). The report concluded that "activities helped individuals transform themselves into more proactive and assertive individuals that could take on leadership and mitigate problems nonviolently. They are more willing to step forward and volunteer to help build their community [...] irrespective of differences in religion and race."⁴⁶ The report added that fear had not yet been "completely eradicated." The evaluators confirmed the findings, noting that youth were forming ideas to highlight community issues, form networks, and actively seek further training or employment. Above all, they were beginning to find their voice.

⁴⁶ TNS (July 2013), Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Focused Activities on Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement: Report on Research Findings, p. 4

4.4.2 Grantee and Beneficiary Networking

The program actively and strategically sought to encourage and build networks, stemming from grant activities, particularly from May 2011 following the Program Performance Review and the Strategy Document of September 2011. Several grantees interviewed expressed the importance of networking with other grant participants, and also with grantee organizations, especially related to media, election, and community activities. The prime example of networking is the paired grants on licensing, training and networks in 2013 in the East.⁴⁷ As part of the legacy objective, the program aimed to actively put in practice its models for peaceful community reintegration, training a contingent of potential leaders and reforming 12 targeted partners for a series of networking activities, including an exposure visit to Colombo to link with national partners, specifically to train as change agents.

The multi-talented 12 leaders, from government, NGOs, and private organizations—from the village level to the provincial level—formed a network called Facilitation for Integrated and Sustainable Development (FISD) to seek funding for community development projects. Already with an active website⁴⁸ and contacts, its 2014 work plan includes registration as a national organization, securing the use of a common space for meetings, and conducting a Training of Facilitators for 35 participants. Their strategy includes connecting North and East citizens, connecting government and community participants, adopting the best practices from the RISEN program (such as follow-on and parallel activities, inclusivity, and youth and women as change agents). Some of the team had tried in the past to establish a group, but failed because people were “too individualistic.” Reasons for their potential longevity include (1) collective motivation, (2) common goals, (3) timing (as NGOs are withdrawing from Sri Lanka), (4) team composition of government and community leaders in existing employment or study, and (5) the desire to break with the past for a “more visible presence.”

4.4.3 Individuals and Organizations

The program worked with, and built the capacity of, grantee partner organizations and administrative offices. While these change agents are mainly dependent upon personalities, as well as their motivation, drive, energy, and skills to mobilize others, the program contributed to projecting some individuals and organizations to the forefront of critical or historic events (such as election education and psychosocial work) and motivating them to continue to work in their communities post-RISEN as described in the sections above.

4.5 Gaps or Missed Opportunities

This section determines whether there were gaps or missed opportunities in the program’s implementation.

4.5.1 Border Villages

Border villages—those that border different ethnic communities—require more support, despite RISEN support in areas such as Vakarai. In border villages, administrations are split politically and ethnically, often with continued military involvement and civil volunteer forces (home guards). Tension, specifically around land issues, continues, and some people are squatting along the road in makeshift homes. Land and water resource issues remain critical and are not easily addressed in the short term. The government has no clear policies on landmarks, boundaries, and zoning, particularly land claimed by the military. RISEN assisted the community of Kudiyiruppu near Vavuniya to reclaim the children’s community park after ten years of military occupation as an initial method of addressing the land issue. Coupled with limited government capacity, donor reluctance, and its long-term requirement to

⁴⁷ Maximizing reintegration impacts through licensing, training and networks (RSN231) and II (RSN270)

⁴⁸ www.FISDinternational.org

adequately address sensitive issues, citizens of border villages remain vulnerable and marginalized. Therefore the program missed opportunities to address border issues through encouraging freedom of movement and interethnic interaction by, for example, enhancing economic trade, joint agricultural research/marketing, and improved coordination between municipality and PS offices.

4.5.2 Gaps in Skills Training

Many of the grants focused on either individual or group skills development or increasing production through additional resources or equipment. There was less focus on marketing challenges, training on sales and marketing skills, or linkages to markets. Increasing production capacity is one step, but if there is not a large enough market for the product then results may be stalled. The evaluators noted limited practical (or practicum) trainings. Explained a beneficiary of the nonviolent communication training, “I learned and experienced a small amount during training, but I learned a lot in the field officer position I am in now because I am doing social work with others. When we practically do it we really know how it is applied.” The evaluators had concerns regarding the limited skills training for Muslim youth. Youth were selected for skills training based on their literacy levels. Although the demand in Muslim communities was high, and the purpose of the training for isolated youth was to provide opportunities for reducing existing social inequalities, they did not have the relevant prerequisites for skills training. The computer business in Mannar also sought, extensively, Muslim youth to participate in the business, but could not find suitable candidates for consideration.

4.5.3 Formal Monitoring and Evaluation for Grantees

The evaluators had concerns regarding the lack of formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) conducted by grantees, which makes understanding true economic gains, or implementation successes, particularly difficult. The evaluators noted that few grantees could provide basic data to substantiate claims of increased production, marketing, the number of visitors (for tourism activities), or outcomes of training (such as further education or employment). Typical responses included “We don’t have any sort of formal system or numbers recorded” or “We can’t say the numbers but it has increased.”

4.5.4 Dealing with Censorship, Harassment, and Threats

There was limited assistance or training on how to deal with censorship, harassment, and threats, particularly in media and election activities. All relevant beneficiaries said that they had not received training on how to deal with issues such as censorship and harassment or how to determine the trustworthiness of a connection or source. This is a regular occurrence and a critical issue impacting these activities and the well-being of beneficiaries.

4.5.5 War Widows and Female-Headed Households

In 2010, the Deputy Minister for Women’s Affairs and Child Development announced a registered list of 89,000 war widows—49,000 in Eastern Province and 40,000 in Northern Province. Most of the widows were young and had no skills or expertise to work or fend for the family. While there was no specific gender plan for RISEN, the program appropriately targeted war widow and female-headed households for support. However, these groups represent a wider, more prolonged issue that needs to be addressed through specific sustained programming.

4.6 Feedback Mechanisms

In this section, the evaluators examined the effectiveness and relevancy of the program’s feedback mechanisms to learn throughout implementation.

4.6.1 Reviews, Assessment, and Strategy Sessions

OTI has an intense management model at three levels: (1) strategic, (2) program, and (3) grassroots. The first two levels are primarily OTI-facilitated, while the third level is the program's regional presence in country to gain firsthand knowledge and information on the progress of individual grants. At the first two levels, OTI used a combination of Rolling Assessments (2009); annual Strategic Review Sessions (June 2010, June 2011, June 2012, and May 2013); Strategy Documents (September 2011 and March 2013); Management Reviews (March 2011 and March 2013); and Program Performance Reviews (May 2011 and May 2012). This mechanism is designed to "manage forward." Therefore OTI acknowledges its critical and unique role in identifying and responding to emerging country-specific strategic priorities. The Strategy Review Sessions (SRSs) are inclusive with all staff attending, from the Country Director to the drivers, and, according to staff, helped to bring the two offices together to discuss their challenges and learn from one another. In addition, it helped to provide guidance on the developing strategy. However, staff expressed that having so many different reviews and strategy sessions, with a variety of "outsiders" or those not directly involved in RISEN giving input, sometimes confused their programming rather than provided clarity. Many of the staff involved in RISEN implementation said that they received varying and sometimes contradictory feedback related to strategic planning and programming.

4.6.2 Grant Activity Database

OTI developed a Grant Activity Database (GAD) that served to track and monitor grants, provide information for handover to new staff, assist decision-making, and facilitate reporting. It was an effective management tool that recorded grantee profiles, key dates and decisions, categories and themes, objectives, beneficiaries, deliverables, justification notes, funding details, and specific grant evaluation reports. The dynamic nature of the GAD lent itself to quick manipulation and instant referencing for program information. This assisted program staff, specifically Regional Program Managers and Program Development Officers (PDOs), to learn throughout the program's implementation and therefore "manage by assessing the backend."

As part of grant closeouts, grantees provided an end-of-activity report. PDOs also added an evaluation of each grant, which was uploaded to the GAD. The standardized format included outcome indicators, outputs, partner performance, linkages to other grants and non-USAID projects, outcomes, unanticipated consequences (positive and negative), lessons learned, and recommendations for follow-on activities. At the commencement of the program, PDO reports were detailed with extensive narrative, but over time they were reduced to bullet points due to time constraints. Rarely did the program document consolidated gains, except during commissioned evaluations. Rolling assessments, for example, detailed the success of the program with limited information on how or why these successes were gained. Nor did the program's quarterly and annual reports to OTI maximize the GAD to present a consolidated statistical snapshot of the program's overall results. Therefore the database is highly proficient as a monitoring and management tool; it was not designed to be an evaluation tool.

4.6.3 Evaluations

A number of external evaluations were undertaken throughout the program, highlighting lessons learned in key issues, such as festivals, job fairs, campaigns, locations, and community-based activities. These include an evaluation of the Katharagama Esala Festival in December 2011; Pullumalai facilities; Job Fair; the Tell Us campaign; and activism promotion (all from September to December 2012).⁴⁹ In 2013 the

⁴⁹ Leveraging impact of Katharagama Festival through documentation (RSN089), Feasibility study and validation for common facilities in Pullumalai (RSN150), Enhance impact through external assessment of job fair (RSN165), Analysis of the "Be the Bridge—Tell Us" campaign (RSN166), and Leverage the impact of 16 days of activism through promotion (RSN204)

program focused on its legacy by producing video documentaries and booklets of best practices,⁵⁰ as well as an evaluation of the Pullumalai cluster.⁵¹ Three major external evaluations included the Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Focused Activities on Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement in July 2013, the Community Impact Analysis in August 2013,⁵² and the SAFE Program Report in October 2013. It is commendable that these evaluations were taken on and reflect an understanding by the program management that additional tools were needed, beyond the GAD, to monitor and evaluate OTI's work. However, the team found the evaluations to be of mixed quality, and, while some were valued by the staff,⁵³ the evaluators could not find evidence that the relevant/useful evaluation findings and recommendations had been used to make programming decisions.

4.7 Stakeholder Perceptions and Relationships

4.7.1 OTI and RISEN Management

Nine OTI temporary duty (TDY) staff were involved before an ongoing Sri Lanka country representative was appointed at the commencement of the program. As such, RISEN initially struggled to articulate a consolidated and consistent strategy, and therefore focused specifically on a predominantly geographic strategy. This was also partly due to the transition from USAID Mission "development-focused" programming to OTI transitional programming with a different funding mechanism and goals. Initially the program management, particularly in the East where RISE activities had commenced, needed to refocus on short-term, rapid response; diversification of activities; and the self-actualization of communities. By the end of 2010, with the deployment of OTI staff who understood transitional programming and could provide direction, the program developed a multi-ethnic, localized team to gain traction.

4.7.2 RISEN Program and Grantees

The overwhelming response from grantees was that USAID/OTI was the "only donor" in Sri Lanka in non-safe zones, particularly in the North, and the only donor "tackling difficult and sensitive issues" (such as land issues, election education, and connecting different ethnic groups). More specifically, they remarked that the program "understood" the political context, addressed "our needs," were non-prescriptive in focusing on single issues or sectors (such as education or health), provided flexibility of activities (funding was available to a wider range of stakeholders than other donor funding),⁵⁴ built capacity (by "handholding" in some cases), and were present on the ground with visible, accessible offices. In many interviews, grantees indicated that program officers "were like family." As several grantees said, "They don't tell us what to do; they ask us what we need."

5 FINDINGS: STRATEGIC LEVEL

This section examines the degree to which the RISEN program operated strategically in Sri Lanka. Operating strategically implies having a formal or informal framework within which programming is implemented and monitored. This section aims to answer the following questions: (1) *Were causal hypotheses valid regarding the relationships between activity outcomes and strategic objectives (the extent to which the program understood the challenges of post-conflict transition, and the extent to which the program's*

⁵⁰ Disseminating best practices through a legacy teaching tool (RSN234) and Promoting RISEN's legacy by documenting an innovative conflict mitigation tool (RSN241)

⁵¹ External Evaluation of Activity Cluster in Karadiyanaru-Pullumalai (RSN211) Feb 2013

⁵² Sri Lanka Community Impact Analysis TDY (RSN251)

⁵³ The Youth Evaluation was mentioned by many staff as being "very interesting."

⁵⁴ Grantees were not required to be registered businesses.

objectives were appropriate for the identified problems)? and (2) To what extent did the program effectively adapt to the changing dynamics and operational context in a timely manner?

5.1 Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement

In response to the 2011 objectives of social cohesion and civic engagement, community-based grants shifted to place more emphasis on building government-to-community relations while simultaneously focusing on ethnic reconciliation, broad-based benefits, and inclusion of disadvantaged groups. The extreme distrust of the government and the lack of experience of communities in dealing with local government made this reorientation highly desirable.

While the overarching strategy shifted from reintegration and stabilization to social cohesion and civic engagement, and RISEN officers emphasized their relevance and appropriateness, grant proposals could effortlessly fit within either of these complementary and interlinking objectives. Staff and stakeholders had difficulty in specifying a clear strategy for each objective, except a continued focus on geographic locations and an identification of community needs.

In February 2013, RISEN produced a “results framework” that outlined the two objectives, but no performance indicators, targets, and data collection methods and responsibilities. It was primarily an outcomes document, with four “RISEN impact areas: (1) wartime disparities that separated communities or cause conflict addressed; (2) increased tolerance and interaction between divided communities; (3) communication, information exchange, and interaction strengthened between government and citizens; and (4) CSO resiliency strengthened through linkages with other organizations or ideas”⁵⁵ with an accompanying document on M&E recommendations. There is no indication, however, of any follow-up to the exercise for reporting, as a management tool, or to articulate strategies.

5.2 The Jaffna Strategy

The May/June 2012 OTI Program Performance Review (PPR) recommended a no-cost extension of “no more than 6 months” for RISEN, from July 2013 to January 2014 to focus “exclusively on the North.” From September 2012, the Vavuniya office shifted to Jaffna, and the Batticaloa office in the East prepared for its closure. For the first time, in November 2012, with 14 months to closure, the program documented a more clearly articulated strategy.⁵⁶ While it still didn’t define “social cohesion” or “civic engagement”—rather, it rationalized them—it did provide a more focused directive: to reestablish CBOs and build their capacity, and provide media, legal aid, community infrastructure, and bridge grants (to connect previous and future partners). It also specified key dates: (1) closure of the East office in May 2013, (2) completion of all North activities by August, (3) closure of the North office in November, and (4) closure of the Colombo office in January 2014.

The advantage of entering Jaffna was that USAID became highly visible as a donor, with stakeholders and beneficiaries indicating that RISEN was accessible (through grants and through its presence), flexible, non-prescriptive, and tackling the “hard issues.” However, with 30 years of disconnectedness and conflict, any activity—strategic or otherwise—would have immediate benefits. The disadvantage was that an office opened late in the program and closed within 13 months, thus raising expectations of partners and beneficiaries—even though a legacy objective was in place and the USAID Mission had commenced programming. Another disadvantage was that it necessitated the closure of the East office. The entry into Jaffna was extensively debated for about a year before the move. Nevertheless, the closure of the Batticaloa office was a surprise to staff not involved in management decisions. It was felt by both grantees and RISEN staff that the engagement with partners was affected negatively—over the

⁵⁵ RISEN Results Framework, February 2013, p. 1

⁵⁶ Jaffna Strategy, November 2012

period of a grant proposal, staff had to notify potential grantees that funding was no longer available, and existing grants had to be “rushed” to completion. The program was, in effect, “ramping up” grants in Jaffna while simultaneously “ramping down” grants in the East. Then it “ramped down” grants in Jaffna with three months to closure in November 2013, leaving about 10 months of programming in Jaffna.

5.3 Legacy Objective

From March 2013, the program established a legacy objective “to prepare communities, partners, and change agents to continue their work beyond the program’s departure.” This objective aimed to focus the program, during its final year, on the resilience of its partner grantees and communities for a more sustained approach to transitional programming as OTI prepares to leave Sri Lanka and the USAID Mission continues its development programming. While this is not a major focus for the evaluation, comments have been provided in Section 6.2 on Future Directions.

5.4 Programming Patterns

Although not extensively documented, the evaluators found that the RISEN program created distinct approaches to the administration of grants, such as entry grants, parallel and follow-on (or series) grants, and bridge grants. In addition, the program was able to optimize grant activities through associated USAID Mission-controlled sources of funding, such as PACOM and SAFE, implemented under OTI’s RISEN program.

5.4.1 Entry Grants

From the beginning, to adapt to the changing dynamics and operational context of the targeted locations, the program generated entry grants by which the “readiness” and “willingness” of stakeholders and communities could be tested before committing extensive support. Once the operating environment was open, the program could move into the location and collaborate with specific partners for further engagement. A more sophisticated level of engagement and grant activity was implemented once trust had been gained. This three-phase approach (entry to mid-level to sophisticated activities) into sensitive and potentially volatile locations, in which communities are suspicious and distrustful, has proved to be tactical, relevant, and viable.

5.4.2 Parallel and Follow-On Grants

An approach, commenced from the beginning in the East, was to target a location or community and saturate it with grants operation in parallel or following one after the other to reinforce engagement and connections. Multiple activities with multiple groups and grantees rapidly solidified trust, active community and/or local government engagement and ownership, and visible demonstration of commitment to the community. This approach was well thought-out and strategic, although not promulgated as such. In effect, this would be a model approach if set within strategic guidelines and parameters establishing when to reduce engagement for complete handover of activities to the government, community, or other entity.

5.4.3 Bridge Grants

In October 2012, the program created bridge grants in which PDOs actively generated grants to ensure networks between previous and current grantees and/or beneficiaries are sustained. Formal or informal networking to share information, continue elements of grant activities, widen the reach of beneficiaries, and formulate new ideas, businesses, groups, or societies enables greater ownership of grant activities.

5.4.4 PACOM and SAFE Grants

RISEN received additional funds from the US Department of Defense Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) appropriation through the US Pacific Command (PACOM) to support the return of displaced persons to Eastern Province communities through the rehabilitation of schools and health facilities. These large infrastructure projects provided entry points for RISEN's social cohesion and civic engagement focus because they were visible, tangible, permanent projects that contributed to restoring stability and confidence. Communities viewed infrastructure projects, particularly for health, education and government buildings, as demonstrations of USAID's commitment to, and longer-term engagement in, the region. An example is the rehabilitation of the Karadiyanaru Hospital, completed in November 2011, in an area of previous paramilitary activity and violence. Community engagement was high during the construction period, and community confidence in the government to provide services enabled RISEN to enter the community to support a range of activities. Another benefit of PACOM funding was the requisite that qualified engineers were on staff, which enabled RISEN to optimize its expertise on other grants, such as the construction of children's parks.

In October 2011, an OTI Rolling Assessment determined the roll-out of the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) funding (from the Department of Defense Section 1207 funds originally identified for police infrastructure activities), which aimed to respond to sexual and gender-based violence in the North and East. Activities under SAFE included community-based initiatives focused on protection, prevention, and empowerment of women through, for example, public awareness campaigns. As a result, all RISEN officers received training on gender-based violence. The advantage of these funds provided entry into communities with high proportions of conflict-affected and vulnerable women and youth.⁵⁷

5.4.5 Shramadana Theme

A complementary intervention in 25 grants⁵⁸ included *Shramadana* events. *Shramadana* is community volunteer labor, which includes cleaning, repairing, painting, and preparing venues for activities. It stems from rural community development in which people participate in a medium of constructive social change that brings them together for practical action in a cooperative and collaborative way. The concept aims to encourage active grassroots action that is a personal and community revolution against subjugation and passivity through peaceful, meaningful, structured social mobilization. The *Shramadana* Movement in Sri Lanka has a threefold approach that moves the community toward longer-term development: (1) education, (2) development, and (3) participation.⁵⁹

The *Shramadana* approach was employed in the East in 15 grants by 14 different grantees and in the North in 10 grants by 7 different grantees. Its philosophy mirrors that of OTI's grassroots engagement for positive peaceful social change. However, the intervention was not mentioned by program officers or grantees but by beneficiaries when describing their participation. It appears to be overlooked as a "soft" and secondary "theme" by the program, if it was regarded at all, rather than a documented successful intervention for community stabilization and a legitimate strategy for social cohesion.

5.4.6 Exposure Visits

Exposure visits—visits for grantees and beneficiaries to visit other organizations, locations, businesses, and communities—were overwhelmingly the most discussed feature of the program by grantees and beneficiaries. The benefit of exposure visits to different regions to interact with and learn from citizens

⁵⁷ OTI Sri Lanka SAFE Program Roll-Out, October 2011

⁵⁸ The Grant Activity Database indicated 20, but the evaluators identified 25 grants

⁵⁹ <http://www.sarvodaya.org/about/philosophy/collected-works-vol-2/role-of-shramadana-in-rural-development>

connected by a common issue is that it enables people to view practical demonstrations of successful reintegration, approaches, and methodologies. Generally, the grantees and beneficiaries were visiting other regions for the first time in their lives. Suspicion and long-held negative or misguided views were broken down due to integral sensitization of new concepts and experiences. Without exception, grantees felt “inspired and motivated” due to “ideas never thought of before.” Exposure visits should not be underestimated as a powerful tool for disconnected communities, as they evoke a sense of purpose, a sense that different approaches are viable and possible.

6 ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

This section provides additional observations noted by the evaluation team.

6.1 Notable Variations in North and East Programming

Due to the distinctly different histories of the East and North, the program responded to the variations in its approach to programming. The Batticaloa office in the East opened first and benefited from an experienced manager who transitioned to the Chief of Party and moved to Colombo when RISE transformed into RISEN. Two Regional Program Managers headed the East and North offices.

At commencement of programming in the East in 2007, the conflict had finished, there was a significantly decreased military presence, more freedom of movement than in the North, and the program was operating in one district. Programming focused on community-level engagement, capacity development of institutions, and access to reliable information, originally under USAID’s RISE program from June 2009. RISE awarded nine grants from the Batticaloa office, focusing its immediate strategy on (1) geographical location (Vakarai), and (2) sectoral intervention (vocational and marketable skills, and media). RISE became RISEN by May 2010 and the revised program goal was to assist with the reintegration of former combatants and provide transitional assistance in the establishment of economically viable and socially cohesive communities. Operationally, from August 2010, two new RISEN offices opened in Colombo and Vavuniya. Programmatically, RISEN had to change its strategy from a USAID development program focused on longer-term sustainable approaches to an OTI transitional, short-term, rapid-response program with less focus on infrastructure and capacity building and more emphasis on community engagement and a “return to normalcy.” The East had difficulty in shifting strategies. Stakeholders’ focus in the East on skills training, economic viability, and capacity building stemmed from their beginnings in the RISE program, which was more development-driven and therefore more focused on “soft” approaches with a low profile. Management-level interviewees indicated that the East’s programming may not have been “nimble” enough for transitional programming. For example, the approach to social cohesion, specifically social inequalities, remained rather traditional in the East, with longer-term education activities, without necessarily attempting to “push the envelope” to fund projects that other donors rejected on the grounds that they are too difficult, too controversial, or too risky.

The East’s strategy continued to focus on the geographical location of Vakarai, as well as Batticaloa city and resettlement areas of Kiran, Valaichenai, and Chenkalady, where land issues were prevalent and the East worked with the government’s North East Housing Reconstruction Program and the donor-supported Indian Housing Project. There was also the concern, from OTI, that program staff may have been engaged for too long in Vakarai, even though it was referred to as a model approach. Traditionally, OTI programming does not linger in one location, but East officers steered away from “pop-up” grants in favor of grants that were implemented in parallel or followed on from one activity to the next. Also, economic activities and skills training were regarded in the East as “carrots” for interethnic cohesion.

However, the valid argument remains that transitional program should jump-start economies rather than provide vocational skills over a long period of time. Nevertheless, the East did respond rapidly to the January 2011 floods as an entry point into Muslim and Tamil communities, providing hygiene kits, boats, and essential materials.

An approach in the East, not used in the North, was that of community (village) observers, with the permission of local authorities, to monitor its strategy, with information (including photographic evidence) collected by four research assistants. The grant was created under RISE⁶⁰ (from November 2009) to identify positive and negative behavioral and attitudinal changes in communities, and continued for 18 months. The information was used to assist programming and to gauge whether they could progress from entry-level grants to more sophisticated activities.

The North was a more closed region in which its citizens had limited exposure to foreign donors and southern communities and cultures, because it was highly militarized and restrictive. Its government services and buildings were derelict and district offices had low capacity to connect with its constituents. Opening the Vavuniya office in the North was therefore timely. The Vanni region—Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna, and Trincomalee—comprised a high concentration of vulnerable communities: multiple displaced persons, war-affected youth, war widows, and female-headed households. The North focused its strategy on (1) geographical location, such as the four North districts of Vavuniya, Mannar, Kilinochchi, and Mullaitivu through DS offices, and (2) conflict-affected youth. As in the East, the first grants in the North focused on education (ICT and skills development for youth, and equipping schools) and economic stability (cash for work, farmer cooperative support, and inland fisheries) with no clearly defined transitional objectives by which PDOs could hone their efforts. The Vavuniya office was initially hampered by MOD's requirement to apply for permission to access areas. In September 2010, it received its first three-month approval, which enabled the office to clear its first RISEN grant. Both the North and East's programming were consistent with the initial RISEN overarching goal of economic viability and with OTI's mandate of community-based engagement, but the North program team focused more on high-profile grants and celebratory events because they wanted rapid impact to establish a presence, especially in Jaffna. Additionally, there was more urgency to return to a semblance of normalcy.

It was not until the beginning of 2011, according to trends in the GAD, that programming in the East and North demonstrated more diversity, imagination, and with a more effective focus on transitional programming that seeks to improve two-way communications and relationships between communities and local government.⁶¹ In May 2011, the OTI PPR indicated a need “to articulate an overarching goal that [...] provides guidance to North and East strategic and tactical choices [...] and establishes the connection between OTI-RISEN strategy and the Mission's key strategic document, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy.”⁶² The PPR team recommended the inclusion of two objectives: (1) increased social cohesion and economic viability, and (2) increased civic engagement with the rest of Sri Lankan society, including government institutions.

When the Vavuniya office moved to Jaffna in early 2013, it limited its programming to a corridor—which crossed three districts—due to its geographic spread. Hence, to raise the level of hope and normalcy, exposure visits of youth and government officials to locations they had never visited before proved to be a highly used approach to get them “out.” By contrast, the Batticaloa office aimed to get people “in” to the region to raise economic activity and tourism, and therefore program officers were more focused

⁶⁰ Gauging Success of Social Reintegration (RISE003)

⁶¹ OTI staffing also shifted from short-term temporary officers to an ongoing country representative.

⁶² OTI (May/June 2011), OTI Sri Lanka RISEN Program Performance Review, p. 8

on connecting the East with Colombo (the South), as well as on finalizing legacy activities. (See Table 6 for opening and closure dates for RISEN offices.)

Table 6: RISEN Offices

Office	Opening	Closure
Batticaloa – East	June 2009 (under RISE)	May 2013 (closed to focus on Jaffna)
Colombo – Headquarters	August 2010	January 2014 (at end of no-cost extension)
Vavuniya – North	August 2010	October 2012 (moved to Jaffna)
Jaffna – North	October 2012	November 2013

6.2 Future Directions for USAID/Sri Lanka Programming

OTI transitional programming is typically in country for three to four years, and consequently withdraws from Sri Lanka in January 2014. USAID Mission programming will continue, supporting humanitarian assistance and a range of development programs in economic growth as well as democracy and governance. These include Biz+ (2011–2015), Development Grants Program (2013–2016), Civil Society Initiative to Promote the Rule of Law (2013–2015), and Support for Professional and Institutional Capacity Enhancement—SPICE (2012–2015).

A key focus for the USAID Mission, where possible, is to continue community-driven development, while simultaneously expanding work with central and provincial governments. The North remains a critical area for development, and border village activities remain vital for economic, democratic, and social development. Land and water resource issues remain critical and are not easily addressed in short-term transitional programming, and therefore are more suited to longer-term engagement. As the government has limited capacity and no clear policies on landmarks, boundaries, and zoning, USAID programming could facilitate greater legitimacy of the government in connecting with its constituents around this critical issue. The East has commenced substantial activities in economic growth to improve livelihoods—in areas such as tourism, fisheries, and farming cooperatives, and encouraging youth-related businesses. Therefore the Mission’s economic growth assistance to build upon these efforts would continue to maintain stability and resiliency.

War widows and female-headed households were targeted in many OTI grants, and, along with youth, make up some of the most vulnerable populations in Sri Lanka. Specifically, they are in need of vocational and livelihood skills, as well as support to establish small businesses. Direct and sustained programming for this population would have a greater impact, not only on the women, but the areas in which they live due to the large proportion in both the East (est. 49,000) and the North (40,000).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The RISEN program in Sri Lanka made significant inroads into legitimate positive change through its interventions for social cohesion and civic engagement, particularly at the community level. RISEN sowed the seeds for peaceful solutions to community development, democratic processes, and

participatory interethnic connections. Overall, communities that had never been in contact with each other before were united in achieving community development goals, all in conjunction with local government officials and agencies.

The more successful communities, in the North and East, generally had the following characteristics: (1) active engagement and contextual understanding by the program team, (2) motivational and well-respected change agents, (3) proactive community members, especially youth, (4) a sense of direction and purpose, (5) increased respect for other ethnic groups, (6) self-initiated proposals and projects, (7) and transparent management. This is important to consider in future OTI or USAID Mission programming when resources are limited and decisions need to be made about what communities to enter.

Effective leadership skills have been gained, with youth assuming decision-making roles in their communities—due, in part, to a sense of hope and the possibility of viable economic and social advancements. Exposure visits further generated a sense of hope, inspiring youth and local government officials to explore ideas for positive change. Economic empowerment through training in best practice business skills mobilized communities toward self-actualization. Bridge grants proved effective in connecting neighboring communities for mutual benefit, especially in relation to social services, trade, markets, and freedom of movement.

While program staff indicated that there was extensive discussion about the terminology, social cohesion, and civic engagement, the program never explicitly articulated the definitions and therefore its strategy was weakened somewhat and didn't coalesce into a firm approach. Instead, there were variations on the objectives and regional differences between the North and East in their interpretation and type of programming. The approach in the East suffered slightly from a prolonged emphasis on capacity building with limited impetus on “hard” issues and nontraditional programming, particularly in their efforts to reduce social inequalities. The national anti-hate campaign was a good model for a more innovative approach to reducing social inequalities because it was prepared to test the environment in a number of districts, particularly in the North. Nevertheless, the common overarching strategy for the North and East was an understanding of the localized issues, the goal of self-actualization for communities, and greater citizen empowerment to move past passivity and subjugation.

The dynamic interpretations of the key objectives did not hamper programming as a whole, although there were differences of opinion regarding geographical locations. For example, the extended programming in Vakarai in the East and the entry into Jaffna in the North during the last year of the program came at the expense of programming from the Batticaloa and Vavuniya offices. Jaffna activities, while its office presence was regarded highly by grantees and beneficiaries, could have been conducted from Vavuniya, given the short time frame to impact programming in Jaffna.

Without doubt, the RISEN program was successful. A critical factor for success was its capacity to implement projects in a rapid, timely, and flexible manner. Interventions were effective because they visibly demonstrated projects that looked different from the neglect—and abuse—to which the state had subjected those communities in the past. They provided assistance according to what communities identified as crucial to their advancement, when they needed it. Finally, the interventions were most effective because they helped changed the way people thought. For example, grants helped government officials recognize the importance of coordinating their actions to serve their citizens, and helped citizens recognize the importance of working together to leverage the assistance they were receiving.

Since land issues are just beginning it is difficult to determine what impact the program's efforts will have in the longer term. In the shorter term, due to mandatory requirements to vote at local and provincial government elections, the program has contributed to people obtaining national identity cards—and the

ability to conduct “normal activities” such as driving, voting, marrying, gaining passports, and employment. National Identity Cards are the first step toward the ability to access other legal services, such as land restitution. By demonstrating to citizens that they have a future, individuals and communities gained the motivation to contribute their labor and forge ahead with ideas, plans, and dreams.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Because OTI’s Sri Lankan programs are closing in January 2014, the following recommendations apply to OTI programming in other transitional settings, based on lessons learned from its successful RISEN program in Sri Lanka.

- Many interviewees expressed concern about the cost of consolidation programs—and community development—and where resources would come from in the short term, especially due to the shrinking donor presence. Since increasing levels of security make it possible for large enterprises and, potentially, other large businesses, to operate in the East and North, the concern is for small businesses in the region to be competitive in the longer term. OTI should find ways to encourage private-sector enterprises to become funding partners, and to actively and intensively focus on marketing challenges, sales and marketing, promotional strategies, encouraging linkages to markets, and monitoring for progress.
- War widows, mainly young women, constitute a large population in the East (estimated at 49,000) and North (40,000). They are in need of vocational and livelihood skills, and support to establish small businesses. In many post-conflict and transitional settings, this is a recurring issue. Therefore OTI could place greater emphasis on programs that address the needs of war widows and female-headed households. For the current situation in Sri Lanka, the USAID Mission should address the needs of this vulnerable population.
- A missed opportunity for OTI was extensive social cohesion activities linked to border villages to provide an innovative, nontraditional response to the soft borders between ethnic communities. These border villages in Sri Lanka remain vulnerable and should remain a focus for future USAID programming. Opportunities include encouraging freedom of movement and interethnic interaction by, for example, enhancing economic trade, joint agricultural research/marketing, and improved coordination between municipality and PS offices.
- While road rehabilitation projects were important in connecting communities, and producers to markets, thereby acting as an enabler for broader economic activities, other types of infrastructure projects can do the same while also helping communities become more self-reliant. Recommended options include the provision of safe spaces for youth, women, and community groups to meet, socialize, and connect—such as community centers, entertainment centers, and social clubs.
- Provision of funding for infrastructure and logistics support projects to increase the functionality of government ministries and departments should be maintained as a key objective for future OTI projects. This proved quite successful in connecting governments to communities, improving social services, and gaining trust and legitimacy for government offices.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: SCOPE OF WORK

OTI Sri Lanka – RISEN Program: Final Evaluation

Period of Performance: September 9, 2013 – December 31, 2013

PURPOSE of EVALUATION

The purpose of this task order is to conduct an independent program performance evaluation of the OTI program implemented in Sri Lanka between February 2010 and January 2014 – the Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN) program. The evaluation should maximize the learning opportunities of RISEN in the review of program achievements and challenges in order to inform future OTI programming elsewhere or USAID programming in Sri Lanka. The primary objective of the evaluation is to assess the relative success of the RISEN program in achieving intended results as defined by the program’s stated objectives and cluster framework.

BACKGROUND

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) was created within USAID’s Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) bureau in 1994. OTI’s Mission is to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance in order to take advantage of windows of opportunity to build democracy and peace. OTI strives to be consistent with and support US foreign policy objectives in countries in which it operates. OTI lays the foundations for long-term development by promoting reconciliation, jumpstarting economies, and helping stable democracy take hold.

RISEN was initiated in 2010 on the foundation of the Mission-run RISE program, which itself was based off of OTI’s previous Sri Lanka Transition Initiative (SLTI) program. In keeping with OTI’s commitment to staying relevant to the political context, the goal and strategy of the program have evolved over its lifespan. The original goal, as stated in the Task Order, was “To assist with the reintegration of former combatants and provide transitional assistance to the reestablishment of economically viable and socially cohesive communities.”

The strategic focus of the program evolved with the changing context as working assumptions about the environment were revised. Reintegration of combatants was less important than originally anticipated in creating conditions for positive post-war change and, as such, the program realigned its objectives. The current program goal as developed following a June 2012 Strategy Review Session (SRS), is the advancement of confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently. The program provides assistance tailored to the specific needs and context of target communities in order to:

- Increase civic engagement of conflict-affected communities with the rest of Sri Lankan society, including government institutions; and
Foster social cohesion to increase participation, community reintegration, and economic viability in the Eastern and Northern Provinces.

Following a Program Performance Review (PPR) in the summer of 2012, the RISEN program was extended for an additional six months, through January 2014, during which programming would be focused solely on the North. In order to maximize impact in this target area, RISEN opened a new office in the historic city of Jaffna. The primary rationale for this shift was grounded in the assumption that, as stated in the PPR, “as the reputed intellectual, cultural, and political center of gravity for the Tamils, developments [in Jaffna] can have a ripple effect throughout the north.” Related to this shift, the program planned to close the office in the East, which occurred in the spring of 2013. In January 2013, RISEN held a Rolling Assessment to develop its strategy for its remaining year. This led to a Strategy Paper in March 2013, which introduced a new “Legacy Objective”:

- To prepare communities, partners, and change agents to continue their work beyond RISEN’s departure.

This new objective builds directly on the original two, focusing explicitly on locking in the gains accomplished in both areas and promoting their sustainment post-RISEN. From March onwards, all activities have been administered from Jaffna or Colombo, though they may involve events or previous grantees in the East as well.

EVALUATION STRUCTURE

The primary objective of the evaluation is to assess the relative success of the RISEN program in achieving intended results as defined by the program's stated objectives and cluster framework. The evaluation should include three levels of analysis (activity, program, strategic), with the preponderance of effort spent on the program level.

At the **activity level**, evaluate the effectiveness of a representative sample of activities against the activities' intended objectives. Evaluate how features of activity design and implementation contributed to the intended objectives, as stated in the activity database. The team should also explore how the program was actively learning from the relative success of activities and adapting accordingly. Key questions: What additional tools might have aided in doing so? Are there examples of specific achievements or activities that should be replicated in the Mission's future work in Sri Lanka?

The **program level** analysis will examine the cumulative effects of activities and relative impact on the intended intermediate and strategic objectives. Evaluate the extent to which the aggregated effects of activities influenced the program's target areas (as identified through clusters, intermediate results, program initiatives, or particular funding streams – OTI will provide additional guidance to the team on how to use these categories) and intended beneficiaries (youth, Tamils, residents of Northern and Eastern provinces). Key questions: Did the RISEN program effectively adapt to the changing dynamics in the environment, and did the program have effective feedback mechanisms in place to adapt to the changes in the environment or lessons learned through implementation? Also consider if programming streams were effectively selected to achieve the desired strategic objectives and any gaps or missed opportunities.

Finally, the team is welcome to comment on program's overall understanding of the environment at the **strategic level**, though this should not be a primary focus area and as such minimal effort should be put forth to address the following questions: To what extent did OTI understand the problems in Sri Lanka as they related to its post-civil war transition? Were the objectives appropriate for the identified problems? Did the program effectively adapt to the changing dynamics in a timely manner?

Note that the evaluation should not focus on questions that often concern more traditional development programs. For example, as a small grants program that modifies its direction depending on the situation in country, long-term sustainability should not be a primary area of focus, whereas, for OTI, responding to the shifting political dynamics and addressing emergent challenges is a primary focus. Examples include, incremental progress in stability, democratic trends taking hold, community involvement, and an abeyance of recent violence are targeted to buy time for longer-term development initiatives to gain a footing. Key differences between short-term stabilization programming and long-term development programming need to be acknowledged by the evaluators and incorporated into the evaluation's design and analysis.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation will be non-experimental and largely qualitative in nature, but mixed methods may be appropriate. The proposed methodology and work plan must be submitted to and approved by OTI before travel commences. While some monitoring and evaluation work has been done over the program's history, and the program database is a rich source of information on individual projects, there are no existing, comprehensive baselines that the program has followed upon which the evaluators can rely. This is typical for an OTI program that is launched based on overall political analysis, but without protracted pre-program gathering of baseline data. Thus, a certain degree of reconstruction will be necessary. Where possible, it may be appropriate to gather third-party baseline data, comparison group data, or other data, but this may not be possible or appropriate in many cases.

During the evaluation, the team should comment on whether the program took appropriate steps to incorporate gender considerations into the program and should disaggregate data by gender, where possible. Some of the topics addressed by RISEN are sensitive, and there may be questions of safety of interviewees or beneficiaries. Therefore, where appropriate, the evaluators should utilize conflict-sensitive methods in sampling and data collection. The OTI/Sri Lanka team will advise the evaluation team as to which areas are the most sensitive.

Appropriate methods for the evaluation include, but are not limited to:

Facilitated workshop with key program staff to introduce evaluators to OTI, to the RISEN program, and to key staff, and to reflect on program implementation, challenges, and successes;

Field visits to the implementation areas;

Structured and unstructured interviews with key program stakeholders, including U.S. Embassy and USAID staff, community leaders, government officials and beneficiaries;

Focus group discussions and interviews with beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries (e.g. other community members, indirect beneficiaries, or local government officials), and grantees;

Direct observation;

Surveys of beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and other stakeholders; and

Documentation review, e.g. quarterly and annual reports, SRS and PPR reports, existing data and review of RISEN's activity database.

Evaluators should propose to OTI their preferred methods for gathering and analyzing relevant data. A final decision on evaluation methods will be jointly agreed upon between OTI and the evaluation team.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The final evaluation report shall be structured in accordance with the following guidelines and not exceed 30 pages in overall length, excluding the cover page, list of acronyms, table of contents, and any annexes.

Cover Page with photo

List of Acronyms

Table of Contents that includes electronically linked page numbers for the major content areas of the report.

Executive Summary (3-4 pages) should be clear and concise and able to serve as a stand-alone document that gives readers the essential contents of the evaluation report, previewing the main points and sections in order to enable readers to build a mental framework for organizing and understanding the detailed information within the report.

Methodology to include (1) a detailed discussion of data collection methods (including sampling method if relevant), strengths and weaknesses of methods, rough schedule of activities, a description of any statistical analysis undertaken; and (2) constraints and limitations of the evaluation process and rigor. Data sets themselves can be included as annexes at the end of the report. Data should be disaggregated by gender and age (youth vs. non-youth) where possible.

Results: The results section should be organized around the three levels of analysis described in the Evaluation Structure and the evaluation questions found therein.

Synthesis, Recommendations and Lessons Learned: This is space for the evaluation team to reflect on the data and results, make concrete recommendations, and highlight lessons learned and best practices to inform future OTI engagements elsewhere. Everything presented in this section must be directly linked back to the information presented in the Results section of the report. Recommendations that are not directly tied to results can be included in an Evaluator Comments section for the report.

Annexes: examples will likely include data collection instruments in English and translation; list of stakeholders interviewed with number, type and date of interactions; SOW, qualitative protocols developed and used, data sets in electronic format, any relevant photos, participant profiles or other special documentation needed.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The required team composition is defined below. The three positions are considered key personnel and are subject to approval by OTI. Candidates for all positions shall possess fluent written and spoken English to prepare the written evaluation and present briefings.

One **senior lead evaluator** with experience designing, implementing, and evaluating activities in political transition/post-conflict programs and with specific knowledge of OTI-type programming. The senior lead evaluator will serve as the team leader and will be responsible for the field review, interviews, the draft and final evaluation reports, debriefs in Sri Lanka for the USAID/Sri Lanka mission leadership and for various audiences in Washington, DC, including any public events to share lessons learned from the Sri Lanka program (as determined by OTI). Experience in the region is advantageous.

One **mid-level evaluator** with research and/or evaluation experience on post-conflict/fragile states. Knowledge of OTI-type programming is preferred. The mid-level evaluator will support the team leader and participate in the

field review, interviews, the draft and final evaluation reports, and debriefs in the field and in Washington, DC. The senior evaluator may also participate in any public events to share lessons learned from the RISEN program.

One **mid-level evaluator** with in-depth country knowledge, fluent in at least one, and ideally both Sinhalese and Tamil. Candidate must have research and/or evaluation experience in Sri Lanka.

LOGISTICS

The Offeror will be responsible for all logistics and arrangements. Subject to availability and at OTI's request, DAI may be able to provide some limited logistical support in Sri Lanka. USAID/OTI will facilitate access to the U.S. Embassy in Colombo for meetings with other USAID and Embassy officials, and arrange conference rooms in the Embassy for those meetings.

Offeror will arrange and schedule all interviews, though OTI staff in DC and Sri Lanka will be available to facilitate contacts.

Offeror shall arrange and purchase all international and U.S. travel. COR approval is required for all international travel;

Offeror shall provide per diem (lodging and M&IE) for the evaluation team both in the U.S. and in Sri Lanka;

Offeror shall fund in-country air travel and ground transportation; and

Offeror will submit required documentation for country clearances, visas, etc.

OTI POINT of CONTACT

The OTI COR and Sri Lanka Program Manager will be the primary points of contact for all approvals and any changes to the SOW.

PERIOD of PERFORMANCE and NOTIONAL TIMELINE

The Task Order period of performance is **September 9, 2013 through December 31, 2014.**

Pre-assessment	ASAP after award	Kick-off meeting, pre-reading, interviews, and planning	7 days
	One week before departure	Proposed methodology and in-country work plan submitted to OTI for approval	Due date
Field Assessment	Travel	Travel to Sri Lanka	2 days
	Day 1, Week 1	Kick-off meeting with OTI in Colombo to review work plan and methodology. This can include DAI staff at OTI's discretion	Due date
	Week 1-4	In-country evaluation – schedule for this period will be submitted as part of the work plan and approved by OTI. In-country work assumes a 6-day work week.	24 days
	Day 5, Week 4	Outbrief for OTI staff in Colombo. This can include DAI staff at OTI's discretion	Due date
	Travel	Travel from Sri Lanka	2 days
Post Assessment	Week 5-6	Drafting report, responding to OTI comments, presentations to OTI Washington	5 days
	Week 5, Day 3	First draft submitted to OTI	Due date
	Week 6, Day 1	Comments from OTI on first draft due to evaluation team	Due date

	Week 6, Day 3	Final draft due to OTI	Due date
	Week 6, Day 5	Final brief to OTI DC including SLT	Due date
Total Maximum LOE per evaluator			40 days

A six-day work week is approved for weeks in Sri Lanka only.

DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team, under the direction of the Team Leader, is responsible for the following deliverables for submission per the above schedule and subject to approval by OTI:

Proposed work plan;

Proposed methodology;

Proposed interviewee list (so OTI can provide contact information and facilitate as needed);

Out-briefing to OTI/Sri Lanka and USAID/Sri Lanka staff;

Draft and Final report as described in the Report Structure section above;

Out brief to OTI/Washington staff; and

Potential public events to share lessons learned from the Sri Lanka program.

Note: The evaluation report structure and key evaluation questions were revised, along with OTI, and approved in the evaluation team's work plan submitted in October 2013.

ANNEX 2: KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation team used the following key evaluation questions, determined in collaboration with USAID/OTI, to guide their work:

Strategy Level

1. Were the program's causal hypotheses regarding the relationships between activity outcomes and strategic objectives valid?
 - a. To what extent did the program understand the problems and challenges in Sri Lanka as they related to post-civil-conflict transition?
 - b. How were the program's objectives appropriate for the identified problems?
2. To what extent did the program effectively adapt to the changing dynamics and operational context in a timely manner?

Program Level

1. Did the program's activities achieve the desired outcomes?
 - a. What are the cumulative effects of grant activities (or clusters) and their current results in comparison to their intended objectives?
 - b. Are there types of activities that most effectively leveraged RISEN resources and capacity to achieve their outcomes?
2. How effective and relevant was the RISEN programming in achieving the intended strategic objectives?
 - a. Social Cohesion objective
 - i. Has the community-level approach assisted in bridging gaps between different communities to affect positive social cohesion?
 - ii. How did activities link groups together?
 - iii. Are there signs that social cohesion can take place in the longer term?
 - b. Civil Engagement Objective
 - i. Strength of linkages between communities and local governments (as applicable).
 - ii. How effective was the program in working with government to adopt a more cohesive approach to their priorities?
3. How effective was program implementation?
 - a. Were there gaps or missed opportunities in the program's implementation?
 - b. How effectively were key change agents identified? Gender issues?
 - c. How effective and relevant were the program's feedback mechanisms to adapt to learn throughout implementation?
 - d. How were changes in stakeholder perceptions measured to support the program's theory of change?

ANNEX 3: Map of Evaluation Field Work



ANNEX 4: PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

INFORMANT	POSITION	ORGANIZATION
USG		
Ms. Sherry Carlin	Mission Director	US Embassy, Sri Lanka
Mr. William Weinstein	Deputy Chief of Mission	US Embassy, Sri Lanka
Dr. Michael A. Ervin	Political Officer	US Embassy, Sri Lanka
Mr. Trevor Hublin	Director, Office of Governance and Vulnerable Populations	USAID, Sri Lanka
Mr. Allan Reed	Program Office	USAID, Sri Lanka
Mr. Shane Perkinson	OTI Program Manager	OTI, Washington
Ms. Hilary Dittmore	OTI Program Manager	OTI, Washington
Ms. Katie Prud'homme	OTI Team Leader	OTI, Washington
Mr. Nathaniel Myers	Acting Country Representative	OTI, Sri Lanka
Ms. Tammie Harris	Former OTI Country Representative	by Skype
Ms. Cheryl Williams	Director	Office of South & Central Asia Affairs, USAID
Mr. Jason Aplon	Regional Advisor, OTI Bangkok	by Skype
DAI		
Mr. John Ames	Chief of Party	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Ms. Dawn Hayden	Regional Program Manager, Vavuniya/Jaffna	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Ms. Asha Harrison	Regional Program Manager, East Office	By Skype
Mr. Tino Clark	Senior Grants Manager, Colombo	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Mr. Muhammed Sanoon	Grants Manager, Jaffna	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Mr. Jaikanth Sirasamy	Procurement & Logistics Specialist, Jaffna	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Ms. Jegatheeswary Gunasingham	Program Development Officer, Batticaloa	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Mr. Jeyathevan Kaarththigeyan	Former Program Development Officer, Vavuniya/Jaffna	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Mr. Sakthivell Thangavel	Former Program Development Officer, Batticaloa	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Mr. Jaikanth Balasundaram	Procurement Specialist, Batticaloa	DAI, RISEN, Sri Lanka
Ms. Clare McConnachie	Former Chief of Party	by Skype
OTHER		
Ms. Lauren Sweeney	Independent Evaluator, RISEN (RSN251)	Channel Research – by Skype

ANNEX 5: GRANTEES AND BENEFICIARIES VISITED & INTERVIEWED

GRANTEE/BENEFICIARY	ID	PERIOD	GRANT TITLE	OBJECTIVE/CLUSTER
COLOMBO				
Young Asia TV (YATV) Chief Executive Officer	RSN091	July-Nov 2011	Increasing & including community voices	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN115	Jan-Mar 2012	Changing ways - Kannagipura-Kannagipuram	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN140	Mar-June 2012	Supporting national reintegration through extension of Kannagipura-Kannagipuram	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
	RSN161	July-Nov 2012	Supporting regional representation in national media	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN192	Oct 2010-Mar 2013	Promoting reconciliation through media	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
Center for Free & Fair Elections (CAFFE) / Center for Human Rights Chief Executive Officer	RSN062	Feb-Mar 2012	Monitoring local government elections and voter education program in North and East	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN086 RSN133	June-July 2012	Encouraging participation in free and fair elections	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN106	June-July 2012	Strengthening civic participation in the North and East	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN170 RSN266	July-Sep 2012	Voter education & monitoring Eastern Provincial Council Election	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN182	Sep 2012	Promote exposure on democracy through Provincial Council Election study tour	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
Youth Environment Forum Chief Organizer	RSN019	Sep 2010-Sep 2011	South - East links through tourism	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) Chief Executive Officer	RSN167 RSN249	June12-Jan13; June-Sep 13	Reconnecting citizens and local authorities in North	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
	RSN255	July-Sep 2013	Reconnecting citizens and local authorities in North through support materials	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Home for Human Rights (HHR) Executive Director	RSN242	Apr-Sep 2013	Protecting Constitutional rights in the North	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN259	July-Sep 2013	Voter education in the northern province	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN265	Aug-Sep 2013	Democracy & election education through Reader Circles	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
Viluthu Center for Human Resource Development Executive Director	RSN256	June-Sep 2013	Anti-hate speech campaign	Social Cohesion – Social Equality
Channel Research Evaluator	RSN251	June-Aug 2013	Sri Lanka Community Impact Analysis TDY	Direct Distribution of Goods & Services
Center for Human Rights (CHR) Chief Executive Officer	RSN162 RSN257	July 2012-Jan 2013; July-Sep 2013	Encouraging citizens through national identity document provision	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN228	Feb-May 2013	Civil society building for a vibrant opinion makers network	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN250	June-Sep 2013	Networking CSOs through national contact directory and website	Civic Engagement – Advocacy

GRANTEE/BENEFICIARY	ID	PERIOD	GRANT TITLE	OBJECTIVE/CLUSTER
	RSN267	Aug-Sep 2013	Networking civil society in support of voter education and democracy	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
NORTH				
Consortium of Organizations for Rural Empowerment (CORE), Jaffna 17 Beneficiaries (9F, 8M)	RSN194	Oct2012-Feb2013	Creating cooperative communities through CBOs	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
	RSN243	May-Aug 2013	Supporting community consortium through cement brick production	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
	RSN252	June-Aug 2013	Bridging youth community leaders from Jaffna & Batticaloa	Social Cohesion – Social Equality
	RSN261	July-Aug 2013	Building youth & community driven project leaders	Social Cohesion – Social Equalities
CORE, Jaffna 16 Female Beneficiaries	RSN243	May-Aug 2013	Supporting community consortium through cement brick production, Thellipalai (near Jaffna)	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
Kaarunya Foundation, Jaffna Executive Director	RSN262	July-Sep 2013	Community empowerment through youth forum	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
District Federation of Youth Club (DFYC), Karachchi 9 Male Beneficiaries	RSN220	Jan-May 2013	Engagement of youth through entrepreneurship development Karachchi	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
National Youth Services Council (NYSC), Northern Province Executive Director	RSN084	June-July 2011	Reunify the relationship through Katirkamam/Kataragama celebration	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
NYSC, Kilinochchi 9 Beneficiaries (6F, 3M)	RSN061 RSN114	Dec 2011-Mar 2012	Enhancing the bridges of trust together through emergency cyclone response	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN122	Jan-May 2012	Creating space for youth interaction through cross cultural celebration	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN230	Feb-Mar 2013	Building a youth media network through Jaffna Music Festival	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
Center for Human Rights (CHR), Kilinochchi 18 Beneficiaries (7F, 11M) District Coordinator District G.A. (retired)	RSN228	Feb-May 2013	Civil society building for a vibrant opinion makers network	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN250	June-Sep 2013	Networking CSOs through national contact directory and website	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
	RSN267	Aug-Sep 2013	Networking civil society in support of voter education and democracy	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
Government Agent, Kilinochchi	RSN217	Dec 2012-May 2013	Building trust and hope through the establishment of a children's park	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
Sri Lanka Development Journalists' Forum (SDJF) 7 Beneficiaries (4F, 3M)	RSN248	June-Aug 2013	Engaging youth on radio for social advocacy	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) Regional Chairperson	RSN167 RSN249	June12-Jan13; June-Sep 13	Reconnecting citizens and local authorities in North	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
CAFFE, Jaffna 6 Election Monitors (3F, 5M)	RSN062	Feb-Mar 2012	Monitoring local government elections & voter education N & E	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN086 RSN133	June-July 2012	Encouraging participation in free and fair elections	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
	RSN170 RSN266	July-Sep 2012	Voter education & monitoring the Eastern Provincial Council Election	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
Active Theater Movement (ATM)	RSN214	Dec 2012-Apr 2013	Promoting youth civic engagement through forum theater	Civic Engagement – Advocacy

GRANTEE/BENEFICIARY	ID	PERIOD	GRANT TITLE	OBJECTIVE/CLUSTER
10 Staff (5F, 5M)	RSN268	Aug-Sep 2013	Bridging youth activists from North and East through theater	Civic Engagement - Advocacy
Provincial Director of Department of Rural Development, Northern Province Ass/t Director of Planning	RSN147	Apr-Sep 2012	Strengthening social accountability and civic engagement together	Civic Engagement - Community & LG
	RSN158	June-Oct 2012	Improving government services for rural development	Civic Engagement - Community & LG
	RSN193	Oct 2012-Jan 2013	Rebuilding stable organizations	Civic Engagement - Advocacy
Ministry of Economic Development (MOED) Ass/t Commissioner to Local Government	RSN174 RSN195	Aug 2012-Apr 2013	Women's Rural Development Society grants	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
Kanukerny West Women's Rural Development Society (WRDS) President & Vice-President	RSN174	Aug-Dec 2012	Enhance women's economic stability through cement brick making	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
Mulliyawalai East WRDS 5 Beneficiaries (5F)	RSN195	Dec 2012-Apr 2013	Improve economic stability for women's groups through enterprise development	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
Provincial Director of Education, Northern Province Director of Education	RSN104	Aug-Dec 2011	Restoring resiliency through education	Social Cohesion - Social Equality
	RSN264	July-Sep 2013	Language promotion through daily training	Social Cohesion - Social Equality
Federation of Social Development Organizations (FOSDO), Mullaitivu Program Manager 4 Staff (4M)	RSN032	Oct 2010-June 2011	Support to grassroots level development	Civic Engagement - Advocacy
	RSN085 RSN153 RSN155	June 2011-Aug 2013	Establishment of temporary market in Maritimpattu, Mullaitivu & providing economic opportunity through market renovation	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
Mullaitivu Government Agent (MGA) Site Visit	RSN227	Feb-June 2013	Building trust and hope through the establishment of a community park	Social Cohesion - Interethnic Interaction
National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA) District Agriculture Extension Officer, Ministry of Fisheries	RSN039	Nov 2010-June 2011	Revitalize inland fisheries for economic stability	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
Vengalcheddikulam Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Ltd (VGMPCS), Cheddikulam General Manager	RSN044 RSN050	Dec 2010-Feb 2012; Jan-June 2011	Enhance the stability through equipping rice mill & provision of equipment and training to restart pappadam factory	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
HHR, Vavuniya 5 Staff & 8 Beneficiaries (5F, 3M)	RSN259 RSN265	July-Sep 2013; Aug-Sep 2013	Voter education in the northern province; Democracy & election education through Reader Circles	Civic Engagement - Civic Rights
IT Platform, Mannar 8 Staff (2F, 6M)	RSN176	Aug 2012	Enhance IT knowledge through "Future of Technology" seminar	Social Cohesion - Social Equality
Alliance Development Trust (ADT), Mannar Executive Director Chair, Urban Council	RSN163	July 2012-Jan 2013	Enhance good governance through children's park renovation	Social Cohesion - Interethnic Interaction
Integrated Model Farmers Thrift & Credit Co-op Society, Nedunkerny 9 Members (2F, 7M)	RSN031	Oct 2010-Sep 2011	Enhance the economic stability in Vavuniya North	Social Cohesion - Economic Opportunities
EAST				

GRANTEE/BENEFICIARY	ID	PERIOD	GRANT TITLE	OBJECTIVE/CLUSTER
Vakarai Welfare Society (VWS) 6 Staff (4F, 2M)	RISE003	Nov 2009-May 2011	Gauging success of social reintegration	Social Cohesion – Other
	RSN063	Feb-Mar 2011	Building confidence in government through flood support	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Sri Lanka Transport Board, Vakarai Depot Depot Manager	RSN055	Jan-Oct 2011	Improving communication through transport	Social Cohesion – Social Equality
Fishermen's Social Welfare Organization (FSWO), Vakarai 6 Members (1F, 5M)	RISE006	Feb-Sep 2010	Turning on the power for ice	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
	RSN012	July 2010-Jan 2011	Solar power fishing	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
Divisional Secretariat, Koralaipattu North 5 Beneficiaries (3F, 2M) # Lunch at Goodwin Bakery, Vakarai	RISE005	Jan-Nov 2010	Marketable training for 'at risk' youth in Vakarai (bakery, heavy vehicle driving)	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
Community Resource Development Organization (CRDO), Kathiravelly 3 Beneficiaries (3M)	RSN116	Dec 2011-July 2012	Reintegration through fine arts in Vakarai	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
The Changers Foundation, Kallady Program Director	RISE009	Apr-Dec 2010	Language as a Connector for Reintegration	Other
	RSN056	Jan-Feb 2011	Youth Solidarity and Disaster Response	Other
Institute of Professional Psycho-Social Work (IPPSW), Batticaloa Director General & Resource Person	RSN023	Sep 2010—June 2011	Supporting psychosocial needs through community reintegration	Other
	RSN096	Aug-Dec 2011	Support psychosocial counselling clinic & community outreach	Other
	RSN175	Aug 2012-Jan 2013	Multi-ethnic understanding through forum theatre	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN186	Oct 2012-Feb 2013	Outreach of government services to youth through career guidance	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Sarvodaya, Batticaloa Principal Officer	RSN022 RSN125 RSN189	Oct 2010-Apr 2013	Rural road technology to reintegrated communities & community reintegration through improving transport facilities	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction & Social Cohesion – Social Equality
District Sports Office, Batticaloa District Sports Officer	RSN152	May-Aug 2012	Improving social cohesion through support to district sports	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
Social Organizations Networking for Development (SOND), Batticaloa Chief Coordinator	RSN078	June 2011-Jan 2012	Integration of Muslims & Tamils through sports field renovation	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN185	Oct 2012-Jan 2013	Conflict mitigation through land documentation	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
STA Solidarity Foundation, Batticaloa 4 Staff (2F, 2M)	RSN093	Aug 2011-Jan 2012	Building capacity of grassroots organizations	Civic Engagement - Advocacy
Assistant Commissioner of Local Government, Batticaloa Assistant Commissioner	RSN171	Aug 2012-Jan 2013	Improving access to services through support to Local Authorities	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Rural Development Society, Periya Pullumalai 3 Members (3M)	RSN150	Apr-Sep 2012	Feasibility study and validation for common facilities in Pullumalai, Chenkalady	Other
Provincial Director of Health Services (PDHS) Assistant Resident Doctor	RSN036	Oct 2011-Nov 2011	Reconstruction of Karadiyanaru Hospital, Batticaloa	Other (PACOM)
STA Solidarity Foundation	RSN093	Aug 2011-Jan	Building capacity of grassroots	Civic Engagement -

GRANTEE/BENEFICIARY	ID	PERIOD	GRANT TITLE	OBJECTIVE/CLUSTER
1 Beneficiary (1F)		2012	organizations	Advocacy
Eluwan Agro Producers Organization, Batticaloa Executive Director	RSN033	Aug 2011-Jan 2012	Supporting reintegration through seed paddy production in Batticaloa District	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
Miani Technical Institute (MTI), Batticaloa Reverend Father/Director	RSN094	July-Oct 2011	Enhancing equitable access to employment opportunities	Social Cohesion – Social Equality
Divisional Secretariat, Chenkalady, Eravur Pattu D.S	RSN179	Aug2012-Feb 2013	Equitable service delivery through Chenkalady DS Office capacity building	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Rural Development Planning Organization (RDPO), Batticaloa Program Manager	RSN011	July 2010-Apr 2011	Agricultural machinery training for at risk youth	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
	RSN020	Oct 2010-Aug 2011	Construction machinery operator training for youth	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
STA Solidarity Foundation 1 Beneficiary (1M)	RSN093	Aug 2011-Jan 2012	Building capacity of grassroots organizations	Civic Engagement - Advocacy
Organizations Council for Peace and Coexistence 2 Staff (1F, 1M)	RSN187	Oct 2012-Mar 2013	Supporting good governance through facilitating civil society engagement	Civic Engagement – Civic Rights
Working Women Development Foundation (WWDF), Batticaloa 3 Staff (3F)	RSN117	Dec 2011-May 2012	Linking war affected women through technology	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
North East Community Development Organization (NECDO), Batticaloa Director	RSN128	Feb-May 2012	Building lobbying and advocacy capacity through participation in national event	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Eastern Social Development Foundation (ESDF), Batticaloa 4 Staff (3F, 1M)	RSN156	May-Oct 2012	Strengthening support services for female victims of gender based violence	Social Cohesion – Economic Opportunities
Chief Ministers Secretariat, Eastern Province Council, Tourism Officer	RSN145	May-Oct 2012	Facilitating equitable growth through tourism sector opportunity mapping	Civic Engagement – Community & LG
Young Asia TV (YATV) 1 Beneficiary (1M)	RSN091	July-Nov 2011	Increasing & including community voices	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN115	Jan-Mar 2012	Changing ways - Kannagipura-Kannagipuram	Social Cohesion – Interethnic Interaction
	RSN140	Mar-June 2012	Supporting national reintegration through extension	Civic Engagement – Advocacy
Sarvodaya 6 FISH grantees (2F, 4M) – Facilitation for Integrated & Sustainable Development	RSN231	Feb-Apr 2013	Maximizing reintegration impacts through licensing, training and networks	Civic Engagement - Advocacy
Batticaloa Municipal Council (BMC) Visit to Playground	RSN207 6 RSN124	Mar-Nov 11; Jan-Jun 2012	Upgrades to Batticaloa Lighthouse; playground construction	Other; Social Cohesion – Social Equality
GA Batticaloa Visit Lighthouse & Eco Park	RSN197 RSN198	Dec 2012-Feb 2013	Repair of Batticaloa lighthouse & solar lights to Eco Park	Other

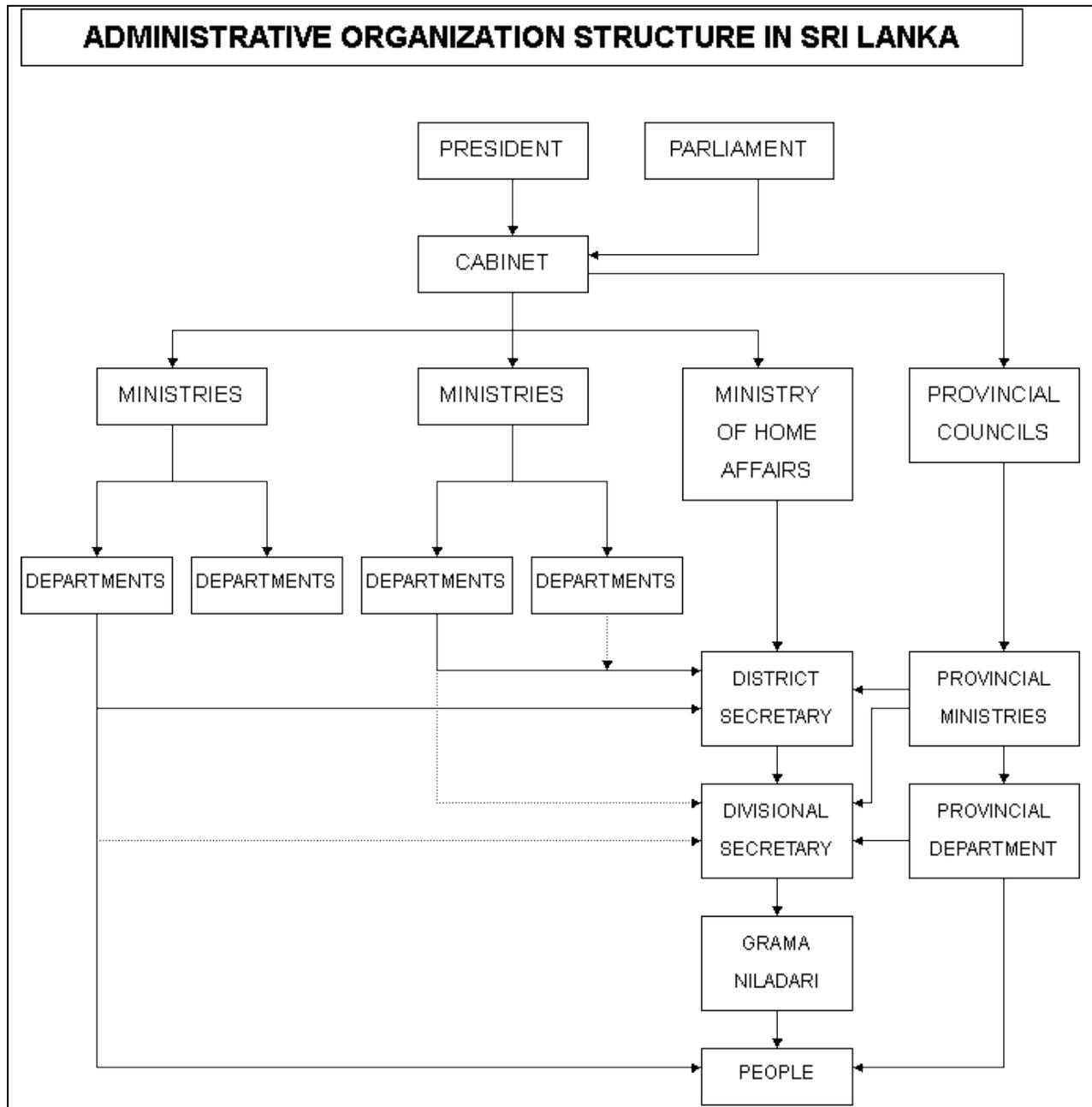
ANNEX 6: HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Provided by OTI on 24 October 2013:

	Political Event	PPMP	Program Development
Jul-07	GOSL declares military victory in East		
May-08	First Eastern Provincial Council elections		
May-09	GOSL declares defeat of LTTE in North		
Jun-09			USAID awards RISE to DAI to "promote stability in Eastern Sri Lanka by improving human and economic security in targeted communities, providing support and opportunities for at-risk youth, and building public confidence that core conflict issues are being addressed." Three tasks (1): Improved public confidence and community-level perceptions of security; (2) Improved institutional capability to engage the full range of rehabilitation needs for at-risk youth (with particular attention to the reintegration of ex-combatants); (3) Improved access to more reliable news and information on issues of local importance
Jul-09		Assessment	Team determines unclear if an opportunity exists
Dec-09		Assessment	Releases of IDPs and relaxing GOSL policies present an opportunity for engagement: recommends OTI support "community recovery and confidence building"
Jan-10	Mahinda Rajapaksa wins re-election		Go decision approved for OTI Sri Lanka
Feb-10	Chief presidential election rival, Gen. Fonseka, jailed for corruption; Pres. Rajapaksa dissolves parliament		OTI assumes technical direction of RISE; PACOM and SAFE funds obligated; adds task 5 "High Impact Community Activities for the East"
Apr-10	Pres. Rajapaksa's party wins landslide parliamentary election victory		
May-10			Contract SOW rewritten and adds North – RISE becomes RISEN; New program goal "To assist with the reintegration of former combatants and provide transitional assistance in the reestablishment of economically viable and socially cohesive communities."
Jun-10		First SRS	
Aug-10			CR Harris to post. Vavuniya office opens
Oct-10			DCR Wyrod to post
Mar-11		MR	Recommendations on use of sectors, themes, and clusters in database
May-11		PPR	PPR Team recommends new objectives in line with program goal: 1. Increased social cohesion and economic viability; and 2. Increased civic engagement with the rest of Sri Lankan society including government institutions.
Jun-11		SRS	

	Political Event	PPMP	Program Development
Sep-11		Strategy	New strategy document sets goal to "Increase social cohesion, economic security, and community resiliency in the North and East Provinces" with 2 objectives, "(1) To increase civic engagement of conflict-affected communities with the rest of Sri Lankan society, including government institutions; (2) To assist community reintegration for increased participation, social cohesion and economic viability."
Apr-12	Dambulla mosque vandalized - a notable example of similar incidences		
May-12		PPR	PPR recommends extension of no more than 6 months with a focus exclusively on the North
Jun-12		SRS	Program goal re-articulated "the advancement of confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently;" objectives unchanged
Sep-12	2nd Eastern Provincial Council elections		RISEN north office moves from Vavuniya to Jaffna
Jan-13	Chief Justice Bandaranayake removed		
Mar-13	UNHCR passes resolution critical of GOSL's record at reconciliation	Strategy Document	Legacy objective introduced "To solidify the program's gains by preparing communities, partners, and change agents to continue their work to build confident, resilient communities able to address issues nonviolently beyond RISEN's departure"
May-13		SRS	
Aug-13			Cluster recoding complete - reoriented towards results
Sep-13	1st Northern Provincial Council elections		
Nov-13		Evaluation	

ANNEX 7: SRI LANKAN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



Source: <http://www.adrc.asia/management/LKA/AdministrativeOrganization.files/image001.gif>

ANNEX 8: BIBLIOGRAPHY

DAI (November 2013), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and the North (RISEN): Annual Report (October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013)

DAI (October 2013), Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Program Evaluation: Final Report

DAI (July 2013), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN): Quarterly Report, April 1, 2013 – June 20, 2013

DAI (April 2013), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN): Quarterly Report, January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013

DAI (February 2013), M and E Draft Recommendations

DAI (February 2013), RISEN Results Framework

DAI (October 2012), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and the North (RISEN): Annual Report, October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012

DAI (July 2012), RISEN Organizational Chart

DAI (June 2011), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and the North (RISEN): Annual Report, June 2010-May 2011

DAI (July 2010), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and the North (RISEN): Annual Report, June 2009-June 2010

DAI (June 2012), Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN): RISEN Field Staffing Plan

International Crisis Group (February 2013), Sri Lanka's Authoritarian Turn: The Need for International Action: Asia Report No. 243 – 20 February 2013

International Crisis Group (November 2012), Sri Lanka: Tamil Politics and the Quest for a Political Solution: Asia Report No. 239 – 20 November 2012

International Crisis Group (January 2012), Sri Lanka's North II: Rebuilding under the Military: Asia Report No. 220 – 16 March 2012

M. Ravi & Associates (January 2013), Final Evaluation Report, OTI/RISEN Program (Karadiaynaru, Pullumalai and Magalagama)

OTI (October 2013), OTI Sri Lanka Program Closure Memo

OTI (May 2013), Strategic Review Session Report, Sri Lanka RISEN, May 15-16, 2013

OTI (March 2013), USAID/OTI Sri Lanka, RISEN's Legacy Strategy

OTI (January 2013), RISEN Rolling Assessment Report, Negombo, Sri Lanka, January 23-25, 2013 (Draft)

OTI (November 2012), OTI Sri Lanka – Jaffna Strategy (Draft)

OTI (June 2012), OTI/RISEN Sri Lanka Strategy

OTI (June 2012), OTI/Sri Lanka – RISEN Program, Program Performance Review, May 22-June 12, 2012

OTI (May 2012), USAID/DCHA/OTI Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North, Strategy Review Session, Damulla, Sri Lanka, 26-28 June 2012, Facilitator's Report

Social Indicator-CPA (June 2012), Independent Evaluation of Alankulum Activity Cluster conducted by Social Indicator – Center for Policy Alternatives on behalf of USAID/OTI RISEN Program

TNS/DAI (July 2013), Evaluation of Impact of Youth Focused Activities on Social Cohesion and Civic Engagement: Report on Research Findings