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CÔTE D'IVOIRE TRANSITION INITIATIVE (CITI)

FINAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2011 – JANUARY 2015

April 2015

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Disclaimer:

This report was prepared by the AECOM International Development Program Team. The authors' views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIP	<i>Agence Ivoirienne de Presse</i> , Ivoirian Press Agency
CDVR	<i>Commission de Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation</i> or Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission
CGCAB	<i>Coordination Générale des Comités d'Assainissement de Bouaké</i>
CITI	Côte d'Ivoire Transition Initiative
CNE	<i>Commission Nationale d'Enquête</i> , National Commission of Inquiry
COP	Chief of Party
CSE	<i>Cellule Spéciale d'Enquête</i> , Special Investigative Cell
DDGS	Direct Distribution of Goods and Services
DGAT	<i>Direction General de l'Administration Territoriale</i> , Directorate General of Territorial Administration
DRENET	Ministry of Education Regional Offices
FPI	<i>Front Populaire Ivoirien</i> , Ivoirian Popular Front
FN	<i>Forces Nouvelles</i> , New Forces
FRCI	<i>Force Républicaines de Cote d'Ivoire</i> or Republican Forces of Cote d'Ivoire
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICC	International Criminal Court
LTTA	Long-Term Technical Assistance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	<i>Mouvement des Forces de l'Avenir</i> or Movement of the Forces of the Future
MP	Member of Parliament
OM	Operations Manager
ONUCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PDCI	<i>Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire</i> or Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire
PDO	Program Development Officer
PPR	Program Performance Review
RDR	<i>Rassemblement des Républicains</i> or Rally of the Republicans
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RPM	Regional Program Manager
RTI	<i>Radio Télévision Ivoirienne</i> , Ivoirian Radio Television
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SRS	Strategic Review Session
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SWIFT	Support Which Implements Fast Transition
TAP	Transition Activity Pool
UN	United Nations
UNPJCI	National Union of Photo-Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Cote d'Ivoire's conflict grew from ethnic, geographic, and religious roots that produced both economic and political disparities. The country's founding president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, encouraged labor migration from neighboring countries, especially Burkina Faso and Mali, to work in the cocoa and coffee plantations. Rising cocoa prices fed a booming economy in the 1960s and 70s, which led to prosperity in the predominantly Christian and Animist south and a wider gap with the predominantly Muslim north. Regional and social tensions emerged when cocoa prices began falling in the 1980s, and accelerated following Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993. To advance their own agenda, politicians began exploiting the notion of *Ivrité*, or who is Ivoirian. Burkinabé and Malian immigrants, who had come to work in the plantations, were increasingly less welcome. At last, the pressures were too great, and conflict erupted along ethnic, religious, and geographic fault lines.

The Côte d'Ivoire Transition Initiative (CITI) was launched in September 2011, following a bloody four-month conflict that broke out when then President Laurent Gbagbo disputed the results of the 2010 national elections that had favored his rival, Alassane Ouattara. The elections – intended to bring an end to more than a decade of conflict – instead triggered four months of renewed violence that killed over 3,000 people, displaced hundreds of thousands, and reignited the ethnic, geographic, and religious divisions fueled during the 14-year crisis. French military forces intervened to arrest President Gbagbo, allowing Ouattara to take office in April 2011.

As the newly installed government of President Ouattara struggled to assert a semblance of authority in the country and bring about order, CITI's initial strategy focused on two objectives: *“Increasing confidence in the government’s capacity and commitment to meet the needs of all Ivoirians”* and *“Promoting reconciliation through citizen participation in the recovery process.”* During the second quarter of 2012, although the wording differed slightly, CITI essentially brought together the original two objectives of under the single goal of improving public confidence in the post-conflict recovery period. Through the remainder of Year 1, CITI grants focused on facilitating community-to-government dialogue; access to information; marginalized citizens, most notably youth; and strengthening the national assembly.

The strategy evolved thereafter along with the team's understanding of the causes of instability in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as changing political, economic, social conditions. Although the implementing environment shifted, the strategy consistently focused on preventing violence and addressing critical stability issues throughout the program. Access to objective information remained a theme throughout, as did citizen participation and engagement.

At the outset of Year 2, CITI refined its strategy to focus on economic stability in the north, while addressing the insecurity and community divisions that plagued the west, east and south. Further, based on the recommendation of the first Program Performance Review, CITI focused on 12 key cities, some closely linked to major urban centers. These included Yopougon and Abidjan communes in the Autonomous District of Abidjan, Divo in the south, Duékoué coupled with Bangolo, Toulepleu and Bloléquin in the west, Abengourou in the east, and Bouaké coupled with Sakoussou and Korhogo in the north.

Ivrité

President Henri Konan Bédié employed the term *Ivrité* in 1995. Though it initially referred to the common cultural identity of all those living in Côte d'Ivoire – including labor migrants – nationalist and xenophobic ideas, fanned by political and media discourse, gradually transformed the term to refer exclusively to populations from the south and east. Before the 1995 and the 2000 elections, a law drafted by the President Bédié and upheld by the Supreme Court required both parents of a presidential candidate to be born within Côte d'Ivoire. This led to the disqualification of the northern presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara, who claimed to represent the predominantly Muslim north and immigrant workers, particularly those from Mali and Burkina Faso who worked the southern coffee and cocoa plantations.

During this period, CITI sought to increase public confidence in the recovery. Program activities highlighted how poor governance contributed to instability. Conflict occurred when decisions were made behind closed doors, without public input. Corruption in public services led to demonstrations that occasionally turned violent. Community dialogues, which sought to address issues of insecurity and reduce tensions, brought into sharp focus the role of land tenure and identity issues in the inter-community conflicts that regularly erupted throughout the country, especially in western Côte d'Ivoire.

CITI's Year 3 and final strategy emerged following the second Program Performance Review (PPR) in September 2013 and the subsequent October 2013 Rolling Assessment (RA). CITI's final strategy brought together these elements by focusing on the key instability factors the team had identified: corruption, impunity especially where related to former warlords, identity issues, and land tenure conflicts that could disrupt the 2015 elections if not addressed. To achieve the revised Year 3 goal, *Contribute to political and community stabilization in the lead-up to the next presidential election period*, CITI developed a range of activities:

- clarify and support implementation of laws and rights;
- reduce violence and insecurity in communities;
- clarify and support implementation of policy, laws, and regulations pertaining to land tenure;
- support the resolution of instances of impunity and lack of justice;
- increase access to credible information on critical issues;
- create space for citizen-government collaboration; and
- strengthen participatory planning, budgeting, and monitoring.

To concentrate resources and impact, the program further reduced its geographic reach to six urban areas: Abobo, Bouaké, Duékoué, Divo, Korhogo, and Yopougon.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In the aftermath of the post-electoral crisis, political dialogue had broken down completely due in part to the imprisonment of several leaders of the former ruling *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (Ivoirian Popular Front or FPI) including former president Laurent Gbagbo, who is currently detained at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and faces trial on charges of crimes against humanity, and the house arrest or exile of many others, including Affi N'Guesson, Blé Goudé and Simone Gbagbo, among others. During CITI's first months of implementation, political stakeholders across the spectrum, except FPI, focused on positioning themselves for the legislative elections, which were held as scheduled on December 11, 2011, in relative calm. The political situation improved unevenly throughout the three years of CITI's implementation, with forward momentum occasionally broken by contentious issues. The government progressively increased the space in which the opposition could operate, finding compromises at critical junctures.

The transfer of former President Gbagbo to the ICC in The Hague on November 29, 2011, marked an important national development, dominating political discourse and provoking mixed reactions among Ivoirians. Warrants were also issued against former first lady Simone Gbagbo and ex-Young Patriots leader Charles Blé Goudé. Reactions on the transfer of Blé Goudé and Simone Gbagbo were mixed, with some segments of the population welcoming the development as an important step towards ending impunity, while others condemned it for political or procedural reasons.

The beginning of 2012 saw a slight improvement in the political dynamics with the FPI holding its first rally in January in Yopougon, considered to be its stronghold. Though attacked by alleged pro-Ouattara youth, the rally marked the resumption of political activities. The government established the “*cadre*

permanent de dialogue” (permanent dialogue framework) in April 2012 to formally engage opposition political parties, though the FPI declined to participate. Direct political dialogue with the FPI was launched on July 13, 2012, when the government met with the FPI for the first time. Still, the former ruling party chose not to participate in the October 25 meeting of the permanent dialogue framework, where the agenda included security and elections. The year 2012 also saw the release of the first top officials imprisoned after the post-electoral crisis.

In the second half of 2013, the Ouattara government took additional steps to ease political tensions. In a conciliatory gesture on August 5, the government ordered the provisional release from prison of 14 high-ranking individuals associated with former President Laurent Gbagbo and the FPI, including its leader, Pascal Affi N’Guessan, and the former president’s son, Michel Gbagbo. A presidential pardon was announced on September 20, 2013, leading to the release of nearly 3,000 persons detained for non-violent offenses committed during the post-election crisis. Discussions between the political opposition and the government continued, although the FPI continued to decline to participate in the permanent dialogue framework. On December 9, the FPI president N’Guessan and Henriette Diabaté, secretary general of the ruling *Rassemblement des Républicains* (Rally of the Republicans or RDR), met to discuss ways to advance political dialogue.

In a sign of growing political reconciliation and increasing political space to operate, exiles continued their return home over the course of 2014, including top officials such as former Ministers of Defense and Energy under former President Gbagbo and the former port director, suspected of having backed pro-Gbagbo militias during the post-electoral crisis. Thirty pro-Gbagbo prisoners jailed for alleged participation in the post-electoral crisis were released in January 2014. In preparation for the 2015 elections, the FPI and other significant opposition parties announced the formation the Opposition Party Alliance.

Electoral reform accelerated in the second quarter of 2014 when the government used the permanent dialogue framework to launch discussions on restructuring the electoral commission; the FPI continued to decline to participate in these discussions. In response to significant resistance from civil society and opposition parties, the government reduced the number of its representatives in the revised bill approved by the National Assembly on May 28, 2014.

Building on this momentum, the government announced on June 4, 2014, the modalities for resuming the issuance of identity cards nationwide, which formally resumed in July. Efforts to link the census to long-standing questions of national identity caused concern. The 2014 census was the first since 1998, after being postponed since 2008. The FPI argued that the Ouattara government was including non-Ivoirians to boost its chances of winning future elections, and ultimately called for a boycott of the census. It also accused the government of inadequate administrative and logistical preparations.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

The Ouattara government launched three important initiatives to promote national reconciliation investigate crimes committed during the 2010-2011 crisis, and begin the process of healing after more than a decade of conflict tore the country apart.

A *Commission de Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation* (Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission or CDVR) was inaugurated on September 28, 2011, to hear from those who committed and were victims of atrocities committed since the conflict began in 2002. Upon completing its two year mandate, the CDVR, led by former Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny, was roundly criticized by civil society organizations and the international community for lack of results. Its final report was released to the public only in December 2014, and its mandate formally ended in February 2015.

To address past human rights abuses, particularly those committed during the 2010-2011 crisis, the government established two bodies with complementary mandates: the *Commission Nationale d’Enquête*

(National Commission of Inquiry or CNE) to conduct non-judicial investigations into the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and the *Cellule Spéciale d'Enquête* (Special Investigative Cell or CSE) to investigate and prosecute post-election crimes. The CNE was given a slightly broader mandate, while only the CSE was given a mandate to prosecute.

In July 2012, the government officially released the CNE's final report, which identified armed groups loyal to both President Ouattara and former President Gbagbo as perpetrators of serious human rights violations, including summary executions. Though President Ouattara instructed the Prime Minister to take the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of the commission's recommendations, CSE indictments and trials have mostly focused on Gbagbo's supporters, leading to claims of a 'victor's justice.'

SECURITY SITUATION

The government took many initiatives to improve security, including the reconstitution and nationwide deployment of security forces, as well as negotiations to encourage exiled military forces close to the former regime to return to duty with the Ivoirian armed forces. Growing frustrations with impunity and corruption contributed to insecurity, especially among those linked to the former rebellion or former government.

The security situation progressively improved between 2011 and 2014, yet remained fragile throughout CITI's implementation period. This was particularly true in the economic capital Abidjan and the western part of the country. In the west, the presence of mercenaries, militias, self-defense groups, and *Dozos* (traditional hunters), combined with the free circulation of arms, contributed to insecurity. Repeated security incidents fed into broader concerns about a return to violence. For example, an armed attack on February 22-23, 2014, in Grabo, a small town located near the Liberian border, resulted in five fatalities, four armed forces and one assailant. Some considered it a coup attempt, while others scoffed at the idea given the distance from the capital and small size of the attack.

In Abidjan, large number of weapons remained in circulation following years of conflict and the majority of the 12,000 prisoners who escaped from custody during the crisis remained at large. That situation, amongst others, contributed to relatively high levels of crime and security incidents. In addition, a new phenomenon of mob violence involving youth ages 10-18 – known as '*microbes*' – arose in poor neighborhoods of Abidjan, especially Abobo, in 2013. Government security forces sought to curb the violence, but were unable to alter the dynamics causing the violence. In the summer of 2014, imams launched an outreach campaign to the predominantly Muslim youth.

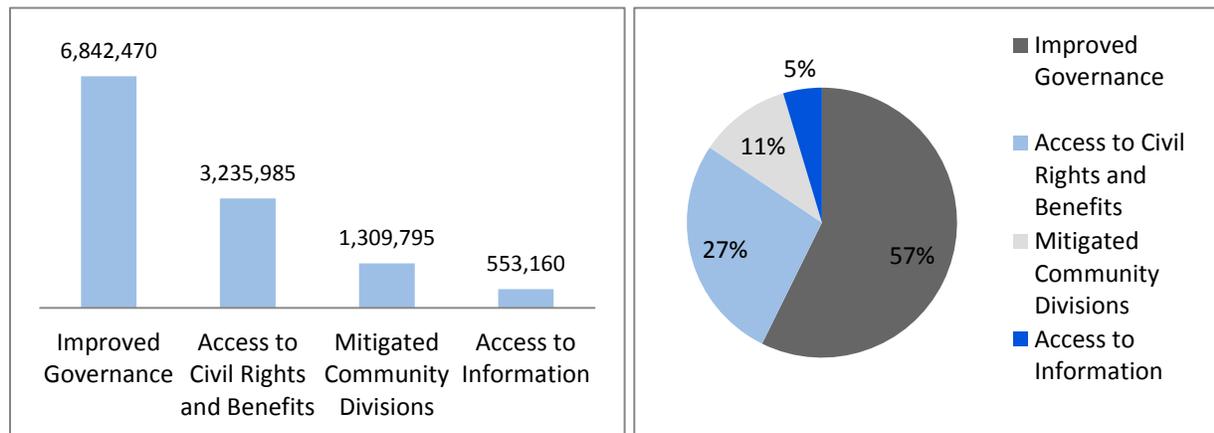
Throughout 2012 and 2013, slow progress in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform further contributed to insecurity. During that period, a series of attacks targeting national security forces in and around Abidjan and along the borders with Ghana and Liberia took place, aimed at destabilizing President Ouattara's government. Those attacks marked an important change in the domestic security dynamic. They were reportedly planned, financed and, to a certain extent, carried out by networks and individuals affiliated with members of the former regime inside and outside of Côte d'Ivoire, some of whom reportedly were recruited, trained and armed in Liberia. Working with war-affected youth, linked to insecurity, became an underlying theme of the program, with many initiatives to help engage them as productive members of society and bring them into the formal economy.

In light of the spate of attacks targeting national security forces, President Ouattara created the National Security Council to serve as his principal forum for considering national security and policy matters. These types of attacks came to end in the last quarter of 2013 following the arrest of many alleged perpetrators. However, isolated incidents continued to occur along the border with Liberia. Following the relaxation of arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire, allowing government forces to buy light weapons without advance approval, the Government also announced the future disarmament of *Dozos*.

SUMMARY OF GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

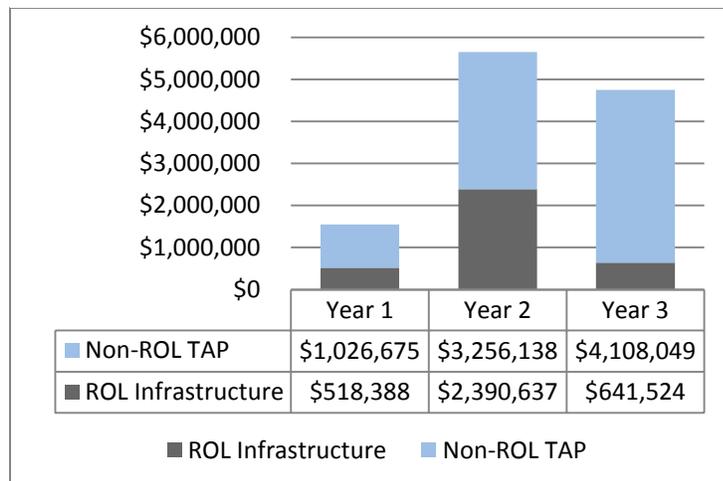
CITI issued 232 Transition Activity Pool (TAP) activities over its three-year implementation period, totaling \$ 11,941,410. The overwhelming majority of these were in-kind grants (214), with 12 Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) and six Direct Distribution of Goods and Services (DDGS). Of CITI's final four objectives, the majority were in support of improved governance followed by increased access to civil rights and benefits. Though they accounted for smaller portions of the TAP budget, activities that sought to increase access to credible information and mitigate community divisions were themes throughout many grants. The largest of the four, Improved Governance, included efforts to expand courthouse space at six sites in Cote d'Ivoire. The costs associated with this improved infrastructure totaled \$3.5M, slightly more than half of the budget for this objective. The bar and pie graph below provide a visual presentation of the funds dedicated to the four program objectives.

Figures 1 and 2: TAP Activities by Objective



The strategy shifts described earlier affected both commitment and disbursement rates over the three-year period of implementation. As indicated in Figure 3 below, Year 2 and Year 3 commitment rates were significantly higher than in Year 1, during which only 13% of TAP were committed. The highest commitment rate came in Year 2, when 47% of TAP funds were allocated. ROL infrastructure drove much of this trend, accounting for nearly half of the TAP budget that year. By Year 3, the ROL infrastructure-related grants accounted for only 18% of the TAP budget. Overall, ROL infrastructure consumed 30% of the TAP budget.

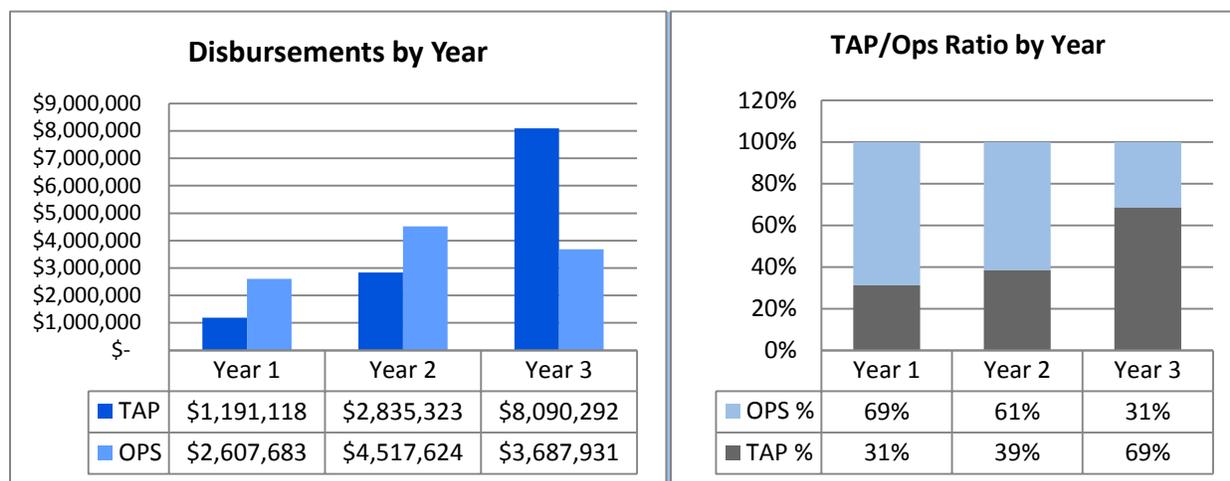
Figure 3: ROL Infrastructure vs. Non-ROL TAP Commitments



When the strategy was revised at the outset of Year 3, 40% of TAP funds remained giving CITI approximately six months to design and launch activities to achieve the new program objectives. CITI rose to the challenge, implementing all remaining grants from Year 2 and launching new grants in Year 3. CITI disbursements exceeded \$8M in Year 3, partially driven by the \$3M in commitments for ROL infrastructure made in Years 1 and 2. As indicated in Figures 4 and 5 below, CITI disbursements in Year 3 were more than

double than those of Year 1 and 2 **combined**. Because resources for operations declined from Year 2 to Year 3 and TAP commitments remained high, the TAP/Operations ratio climbed to 69/31 for Year 3, the reverse of the Year 1 ratio.

Figures 4 and 5: TAP Disbursements and TAP/Ops Ratio by Year



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

I. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

The outcome of the 2013 local elections represented a shift away from traditional voting patterns where people vote defensively in block for the candidate from their ethnic group, regardless of past performance or agenda. This suggests that the democratic process is maturing and that Ivoirians want new leaders who will bring about change in governance. However, in view of recent history, Ivoirians throughout the country were not entirely convinced that the democratic process would bring about the desired change. This situation meant that the actions of the new municipal leaders would weigh heavily in the scale of political stability by either increasing confidence in the political process or disappointing the population once again leading to heightened volatility and possibly even a return to the conflict.

Seizing this window of opportunity to work with newly elected municipal councils, CITI helped improve governance practices and ensure that the councils would address the potentially explosive grievances of their constituents. In addition, CITI improved governance practices of higher level government institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and the National Assembly. Overall, CITI spent \$6.8M on 96 TAP Activities addressing governance issues.

I.1. STRENGTHEN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND MONITORING

As a first step in strengthening local governance, CITI provided material and logistical support to the *Direction Générale de la Décentralisation et Développement Local* (General Direction for Decentralization and Local Development, DGDDL) to ensure the non-violent transfer of power from incumbent mayors to mayors-elect in nine targeted municipalities across the country as well as all 13 communes of the district of Abidjan (CDI182) shortly after the April 2013 elections.

Furthermore, in partnership with the DGDDL, CITI provided emergency administrative training for newly elected officials (CDI191) in August 2013. Mayors traveled from towns as far as 1,000 km away, at their own cost, to participate in CITI's trainings and to learn how they could make a difference in their towns. Working sessions went well into the evenings to allow the mayors to obtain answers to their questions and concerns.

In Year 2, building to the success of these activities, CITI created a comprehensive program to support the implementation provisions of existing laws that entail participatory planning, budgeting and monitoring at municipal level. CITI worked with international consultants to design a training program and provide training of trainers on participatory municipal planning and budgeting (CDI198 and CDI264), as no local knowledge was available. These trainers then traveled to CITI's six target communes including Abobo, Bouaké, Duékoué, Divo, Korhogo, and Yopougon to train civil society representatives and local official on participatory planning and budgeting.

It is worth noting that this is the first time ever that the concept of participatory budgeting was brought to the attention of civil society organizations and local officials in Côte d'Ivoire. Until then, civil society organizations were almost always excluded in the management of their municipalities. The training helped change this culture and created a momentum of dialogue between local officials and their constituents.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND BUDGETING

In most of the cities, the results of the trainings were immediately visible. In Korhogo (CDI206 & 218), for instance, the participatory budget was submitted to a vote and agreed upon unanimously by the City Council. It was similarly adopted by the City Councils of Bouaké (CDI189 & 215), Divo (CDI204 & 216), and Yopougon (CDI209 & CDI221). The only discordant note came from Abobo (CDI200 & CDI211) whose municipal officials did not show interest in process, even failing to attend the training sessions. As a result of this lack of interest, CITI decided not to take the process any further in that commune and cancelled any outstanding activities. CITI had known that working with the Abobo officials had the possibility of not yielding much result – as they had not shown much willingness to participate in other CITI activities in the past – but it was a risk CITI had been willing to take, as the civil society was committed to catalyzing change.



CDI204 – Interview of Divo Civil Society Platform President with Radio Sud Bandama.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND SOCIAL AUDITS

Meanwhile, in all other target cities, CITI provided the necessary support to the municipal authorities to hold public consultation forums on municipal planning priorities with the help of the previously trained civil society members (CDI227/CDI228/ CDI229/CDI230/CDI233). In all cities, the public consultations led to the creation of a prioritized list of projects for the municipalities' budgets for the following year.

Community consultations did not just result in municipal budget priorities but they also provided an opportunity for the population to discuss and address their most pressing concerns. In Duékoué, the community consultation forums turned into an opportunity for constructive dialogue across neighborhoods previously at odds. As the consultations on budget priorities provided a common goal, this helped unite previously divided neighborhoods and often turned into street festivities following the consultations. Many of the participants expressed their satisfaction in meeting and having productive discussions with neighbors that they had not been able to talk to since the post-election crisis.

Once the groups completed prioritized lists of projects, CITI sought to ensure accountability for their implementation by providing support for social audits of the previous year's municipal budgets in Bouaké, Duékoué, Divo, Korhogo and Yopougon. The social audits allowed civil society representatives

trained for this purpose to review the municipalities' expenditures and visit the corresponding projects to assess their quality. Though the audit committees encountered some resistance in obtaining the information on expenditures in all of the different municipalities, they still managed to conduct the audits. In all the cities, it was clear that a large number of projects on the ground did not match the reported expenditures. In Duékoué, for example, it was reported that a school was constructed in the previous year, which was not actually the case. The same observation was made for the construction of a cybercafé for the youth in the locality.

During the community hearings held on the social audits, the population raised a lot of questions and formulated requests to the municipal officials about municipal budget line items. Representatives of the municipalities present during the meeting answered questions and tried to address the residents' concerns. The municipal authorities used the opportunity to encourage populations to pay their taxes for the development of their localities. They also committed to making participatory budgeting an integral part of the yearly municipal planning in all of the selected locations. Residents in all cities were very impressed with public engagement and presentation of the social audit, an accountability exercise they were encountering for the first time. They particularly appreciated the transparency and committed to paying their taxes as long as the municipality continues to account for its expenditures.

Location	Examples of Impact from Social Audits
Bouaké	The public presentation of the audit sparked intense but friendly discussions and led to the development of an action plan for the next year, integrating the principles of the participatory budget process. The City Council officially incorporated the Civil Society Platform in the monitoring and tracking of FY14 municipality budget already in progress, and agreed to involve the Platform in the preparation of the FY15 budget.
Divo	Of the 18 projects financed by the municipality last year, only six were found to have been completed, four were incomplete and eight had not been done at all. The municipality committed itself to consulting with its constituents prior to deciding on budget priorities. In exchange, residents committed themselves to paying their taxes and elected representatives from all neighborhoods agreed to participate and report on future sessions of the municipal council.
Duékoué	The City Council initially did not provide accurate information to the social audit committee, which persevered in getting the right lists. More than 2,500 people attended the public hearing where the results were presented. The mayor committed his municipality to participatory planning and budgeting by signing it into its by-laws. The municipality also integrated the prioritized list of community projects into their following year's municipal budget.
Korhogo	Public pressure forced municipal authorities into providing budget documents requested by the audit committee. During neighborhood meetings where the audit results were presented, residents expressed their satisfaction in seeing the mayor being held accountable for the management of the municipal budget. They asked questions and formulated requests for items to be included. The mayor publicly committed to publishing the municipal budget next year.
Yopougon	Of the nine projects financed with the 2013 budget only two projects had been completed, five had been started but not finished, and two were not done at all. A Yopougon resident noted <i>"It's the first time we have ever been asked for our opinions on municipal priorities...we also know how the municipality has been spending our tax money, it's unheard of here."</i> The municipality has adopted participatory budgeting as part of its regular governance process. Every year, the populations' priorities will be collected and after a selection, these priorities will be reflected in the mayor's budget.

The social audit exercise improved the relationship between local authorities and their constituents for whom this process demonstrated the municipalities' willingness to be transparent and manage the budget in the interest of the community. The social audit discussions doubled as social cohesion exercises. Especially in Duékoué, people reiterated that it allowed them to see that they were all in the same boat and needed to work together if they wanted their situation to improve. They realized that, beyond participatory budgeting, they needed to work together and with the municipality to address the issues of impunity in their town and ensure rule of law in their town. The same situation applies in Divo where civil society representatives felt empowered to monitor and evaluate the implementation of their municipal budget.

I.2. SUPPORT FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW

Despite statements of good intention from the government, perpetrators of serious war crimes have been left unpunished and adherence to the rule of law remains elusive. In western Côte d'Ivoire and the Duékoué region in particular, violence and impunity in the region are largely the result of continued political tension and polarization stemming from the post-electoral crisis and the lack of any real engagement by local government authorities in fighting impunity. At the community level, traditional authorities and community leaders tend to protect that people believed to be responsible for crimes or atrocities. The victims are constantly threatened, making it impossible to collect their testimony.

To address these challenges, CITI worked at the local level with civil society groups while providing support to Ivoirian judicial institutions responsible for justice. In particular, CITI supported the Women Leaders of Duékoué, a local association, to design a community-based mechanism to address issues linked to the lack of rule of law in the region (CDI252).



CDI252 Outbrief to the people by women leaders in Duékoué on their design of a community-based mechanism to support justice.

Specifically, the association worked with all relevant stakeholders including representatives of civil society and local authorities to address critical justice issues and generate local solutions to put an end to impunity. They also organized discussions on critical justice issues in the 12 main districts of Duékoué city using participatory theater. A resident related at a discussion on impunity following a participatory theater play, *“I’m amazed, I did not imagine that people in Duékoué could address impunity and human right violations in a public forum without resorting to violence. This is a real breakthrough!”*

By the end of the activities, Duékoué community representatives, traditional authorities and elders had signed off on a new justice charter and committed to work together to put an end to impunity and promote rule of law in Duékoué. When asked about the impact of the activity a few weeks later, a representative of the women’s group noted, *“It’s amazing! People are no longer protecting criminals of their own ethnic groups. More and more people are calling us to denounce criminals in Duékoué. In fact, the chiefs from the villages around Duékoué are so impressed, they have requested that we undertake this same activity in their villages.”* This positive outcome was confirmed in comments by the president of the local Dialogue Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR), *“As a consequence of this activity, we’re seeing a marked decrease in the number of human right violations. Several human right violations cases have been reported to and acted upon by the police. We – the CDVR – have been monitoring the progress on these cases to ensure justice for the victims.”*

DIALOGUE, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

CITI provided support to the *Commission de Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation* (Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission or CDVR) to ensure the effectiveness of its local commissions in Bouaké, Adjamé, Duékoué, Guiglo, Treichville/Marcory, Cocody/Bingerville, Adzopé, Abengourou, Abobo, Divo, Korhogo, Yopougon-Précaire, and Yopougon-Songon. The support included provision of furniture and equipment as well as technical training to help local commission members develop the skills needed to conduct the qualitative phase of the national consultations. Finally, CITI provided logistical assistance to the local commissions in the form of rental vehicles and meeting venues.

These activities improved the confidence of both the staff of the local CDVRs and the population that the Government was willing to implement reconciliation process. Indeed, because local CDVR offices were not functional, rumors had spread that the Government did not truly mean to ensure justice and reconciliation. CITI's support to the local commissions helped change this perception. A visitor to a local CDVR office observed that, *"The government is really slow but at least, it looks like they're finally trying."*

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS OF POST-ELECTION ATROCITIES

In an attempt to help address these issues, CITI provided technical support to the Ministry of Justice's *Cellule Spéciale d'Enquête* (Special Investigative Cell or CSE) to develop and implement strategies to ensure that investigations and prosecutions of post-election human rights crimes met international standards of due process and procedure and focused equally on alleged perpetrators from both the winning and losing sides. CITI deployed a short-term technical assistance team—composed of a prosecution expert (CDI177), a witness protection expert (CDI179) and a registry expert (CDI178)—to support the CSE.

Still, despite CITI's support and strong international pressure for the Ivoirian government to comply with its promises for equitable application of the law, ongoing investigations continued to be one-sided. A national commission of inquiry reported in August 2012 that both sides had committed hundreds of summary executions, yet the UN reported that, as of July 2013, only three of the 207 investigations subsequently opened relate to perpetrators from pro-Ouattara forces.

EQUIPPING AND EXPANDING COURTHOUSES

Given the importance of rule of law in ensuring long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire, CITI also worked with the Ministry of Justice to revitalize local tribunals, a visible justice institution in the lives of the Ivoirians. After ten years of slow degradation and neglect, the Ivoirian Justice System has been making efforts to reestablish its presence and credibility throughout the country.

These efforts came in response to demonstrations against the judiciary in eastern and western Côte d'Ivoire. People in those regions claimed that judges were showing political favoritism to certain groups. In the rebel-held north, the state judicial system needed to be entirely rebuilt as it had ceased to function during the conflict and approximately 75% of the courts had been looted or destroyed.

In Year 1, CITI provided equipment to 15 courthouses (CDI005 to CDI019), predominantly in the southwest and east. The activities boosted the courts' capacity to reopen and operate. Additionally, CITI worked with the central Ministry of Justice to help restore the national printing press, which prints all judicial documents including national identification cards.

OTI also cleared five grants (CDI036, CDI057, CDI077, CDI078, and CDI086) to help organize open houses that provided judicial employees with opportunities to demonstrate accessibility and willingness to build new bridges with the communities they serve. Individuals were given an opportunity to raise their personal legal concerns during the activity, in some cases leading to private consultations with judges, clerks, or prosecutors.

Finally, working closely with the Ministry of Justice, CITI identified six courthouses where increases in population size in turn intensified demand for court services beyond what the existing facilities could handle. CITI broke ground in 2013 for the construction of courthouse annexes in Bouake, Dabou, and Dimbokro (CDI096, CDI097, and CDI100) and in 2014 for annexes in Bouna, Man and Sinfra (CDI101, CDI103, and CDI104). CITI hired a control company to provide quality control at each site, as well as short-term technical assistance to regularly monitor construction. Finally, six grants provided necessary furniture and equipment at each annex.



CDI100 Dimbokro courthouse annex.

The level of effort required for these six grants was significant, and will be explored further in the lessons learned section. USAID granted AECOM an initial two-month administrative extension (from August 28 to October 28, 2014) to finish, among other tasks, the courthouse construction in Bouna, Dabou, and Man and then a three-month no cost extension (until January 30, 2015) to finish the construction in Man. The Minister of Justice, Gnénéma Mamadou Coulibaly, expressed its warm gratitude to the U.S. Ambassador to Cote d’Ivoire Terrence P. McCulley and to President Ouattara. Ambassador McCulley and Minister Coulibaly inaugurated the Bouaké courthouse on March 28, 2014. Before, during and after photos for each courthouse site and building are included in Annex 1.

CITI also worked with the Ministry of Justice to develop strategies to improve residents’ access and trust in the judiciary in Bouake, Dabou, Dimbokro and Sinfra. Each of the tribunals thus organized a four-day workshop to establish common understanding of the reasons for public mistrust of the judiciary system and proposed sustainable solutions to overcome their issues.

The workshops revealed that some of the key reasons for the distrust were perceived corruption and lack of transparency. To address these issues, each of courthouses organized an open house and published judicial fees on a public board. The open houses attracted an average amount of 300 visitors per location. As a result of these activities, judicial records show an increase in the number of cases brought to the attention of the judiciary, according to the judicial staff.

The activities have also improved the population’s perception of the judiciary. *“I know what services the tribunal can provide for me and I know I can turn to them for help,”* said a visitor during the open house. The activities at the Tribunals drew recognition from the highest levels of the government including President Ouattara himself who, according to the U.S. Ambassador, had expressed his appreciation for the Bouaké courthouse rehabilitation and the outstanding support provided to the judiciary during a meeting in April 2014.

I.3. SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

One government institution with little history of public outreach is the National Assembly. Most Ivoirians complain that once they elect members of parliament (MPs), they leave their home towns and return only to solicit votes for their re-election. Historically, the National Assembly was little more than a rubber stamp for the executive, rarely introducing bills or engaging in debate on social or economic issues. However, the current class of legislators has expressed the desire to make a difference.

Former Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, previously head of the armed opposition and now Speaker of the National Assembly, demonstrated an interest in establishing favorable conditions for the emergence of a new, more independent institution. In support of Speaker Soro's vision to transform the National Assembly into a formidable instrument for representational government, democratic change, and recovery, CITI provided material and technical support as well as critical rehabilitation of the Speaker's office (CDI033, CDI037, CDI060, CDI116, CDI0117, CDI0118, CDI119, and CDI126).



Before and After Photos – Speaker's Office

CITI provided office equipment necessary to open the first legislative session in March 2012 as well as technical assistance to set goals and create a roadmap to revise rules and procedures. Additionally, CITI helped the National Assembly undertake a perception survey to assess public opinion and the opinion of the deputies themselves on the role of the National Assembly. This survey allowed the deputies to understand the expectations and priorities of their constituents. In advance of the October 2012 session, CITI provided IT equipment for a multi-media room for MPs and legislative staff, including six legislative Commissions.



Finally, CITI ensured the rehabilitation of the Speaker's Office to facilitate the type of communication and responsiveness that are imperative for a well-functioning democratic institution.

These concrete improvements to the National Assembly laid the foundation for the USAID's new legislative strengthening program that continues to work with the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire to improve its ability to research, deliberate, and enact much needed legislation, as well as improve deputies' outreach to their constituencies.

II. INCREASED ACCESS TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

Building on citizens' desire to voice their opinions and have government representatives hear their concerns, CITI supported a series of activities to allow citizens to air their grievances about dysfunctional public services in front of municipal officials and then work with them to improve service delivery. Overall, these activities accounted for 74 TAP Activities and more than \$3.2M in program expenditures.

Forums in Year 1 brought together civil society and city officials in Bouaké (CDI035), Bangolo (CDI053), Abobo (CDI068), Bloléquin (CDI122), Ayamé (CDI052), and Yopougon (CDI196). These town hall meetings provided local residents an opportunity to voice their grievances to local authorities and discuss actions that would demonstrate the willingness of the state to resume its role as a service provider. In each of these cities, hundreds of people representing every major group including traders, farmers, youth, women, traditional chiefs, and religious leaders gathered to articulate their grievances and find solutions. The forums resulted in increased trust and cooperation between local authorities and their constituents.

For example, in Ayamé, a pro-Gbagbo stronghold of the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire, or PDCI), citizens and city officials discussed ways to address issues

that had been fostering violence and insecurity along Côte d'Ivoire's eastern border. Workshop participants agreed that residents' cooperation with the security forces was necessary to improve security and stability in town. Shortly thereafter, town residents representing all shades of the political spectrum helped local security forces to identify a group of armed men, who were planning to blow up the nearby hydroelectric dam. In Yopougon, the forums resulted in actions from the municipal authorities. Not only did the mayor agree with the recommendations, he obtained 7M CFA (approximately \$15,000 USD) to repair some roads in the commune, showing his commitment to the process.



CDI196 Working group discussions at town hall meeting in Yopougon.

Beyond building cooperation between local government leaders and the population, the forums allowed CITI to better understand its operating environment and refine its strategy. In particular, a series of workshops in January 2013 aimed at revitalizing the economy in Bouaké (CDI106) uncovered the impunity of former warlords as a major factor of instability in that region. Former rebel warlords—many becoming commanders in the Ivoirian military—were plundering millions of dollars from the Ivoirian economy through smuggling and a parallel tax system on cocoa, timber and other export goods. The inability of the Ivoirian government to impose law and order on the former warlords and their cronies fed into a vicious cycle of economic and social instability. Legitimate businesses subjected to taxes and laws were not only unable to compete but also dis-incentivized to remain in the legal economy and contribute to a stable and viable Côte d'Ivoire.

2.1. REMOVING OBSTACLES TO ECONOMIC GROWTH BY TACKLING IMPUNITY

To address these obstacles, CITI supported local government officials and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bouaké and Korhogo under grants CDI174, CDI162 and CDI285 to organize a series of activities throughout the second year the program to fight impunity and revitalize the local economy. As a result, local authorities and the business community in both cities realized they were victims of the same system and understood the benefit of working together to fight commercial corruption. Local government representatives started working closely with businesses to implement the various recommendations of workshops and setup mechanisms to fight impunity in the business sector. In fact, business associations later held several meetings, without CITI support, to overcome the divisions across business associations and improve cooperation with local officials in order to denounce and fight impunity.

This increased cooperation soon became evident by the significant increase in the number of traders who paid taxes. In Bouaké, the number of vendors who regularly started paying their taxes more than doubled, going from 16% before the September 2013 workshop to 38% over three months post-workshop. As of June 2014, the number of vendors regularly paying their taxes had risen to 57% and *“this momentum seemed likely to continue”* according to Regional Tax Director Yao N’Goran. While difficult to quantify, traders also reported a significant decrease in the number of requests for bribes from state officials, which they said contributed to increasing their profits. The Bouaké municipal department of tax collection informed CITI in June 2014 that its daily tax receipts had increased to \$7,400, more than double what previous administrations had been collecting. Interviews with traders and local authorities suggested that the increase was most likely linked to the CITI activity.

The situation of the traders in Korhogo also improved according to the regional delegate of the chamber of commerce. The January 2013 workshops that brought together local authorities and traders to address issues preventing economic growth helped raise awareness of all stakeholders on the need to improve the business environment (CDI285). Chamber representatives interviewed felt that complaints from traders

on abuse of local trade authorities decreased considerably, going from 4-5 complaints per day before the activity to an average of 2 complaints per week after the activity.

When, in early 2014, CITI implemented comparable activities in the Abobo commune of Abidjan (CDI195), Abobo traders were encouraged by the positive results achieved by the Bouaké and Korhogo traders in their fight against impunity. In fact, they discovered that economic problems, instability and regular incidents of violence in Abobo were also linked to the impunity of the former *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) warlords, much in the same way as in northern Côte d'Ivoire. The Abobo traders started working together to create a single trade association in Abobo so that they can better advocate their interests.

In an attempt to reproduce similar results countrywide, CITI then provided support to the National Chamber of Commerce (CDI251) to undertake a series of activities with economic stakeholders from across the country. The National Chamber of Commerce thus brought together representatives of its ten regional delegations along with influential private sector representatives to capitalize on the positive results previously obtained in both Bouaké and Korhogo and spread them across the rest of the country. The workshop was followed by a training workshop on the legal and regulatory framework for commerce in Côte d'Ivoire. Within a mere four weeks of these national level activities, the impact already became apparent: The National Chamber of Commerce and the private sector associations collaborated to lobby the National Tax Office to review and amend the regulations linked to the levy of commercial taxation for small businesses.

ILLEGAL USE OF PUBLIC LANDS

In addition to lobbying against tax and trade related corruption, trader associations received CITI's support to help fight against impunity linked to public land tenure that impeded their ability to do business. Despite the existence of rules prohibiting the use of public property for private and commercial ends, individuals and corporations throughout Côte d'Ivoire continued to establish businesses and housing illegally on public land. These businesses and housing were in turn destroyed only to be rebuilt shortly thereafter.

Traders explained that they do not respect public property regulations and risk the destruction of their illegally built business because they did not have a better alternative. Indeed, designated commercial zoning – such as markets – are scarce in Ivoirian cities and virtually non-existent in most neighborhoods. As a result, the majority of the traders were not able to securely own or legally rent commercial space, even if they could afford to do so financially. As such, their best option was to pay a bribe (unofficial rent) to government officials to occupy public land. The risk of eviction remained after the activity, but the initial and recurring costs became much lower than in any of the other alternatives available to them at that time (private ownership and rental). Government officials, who benefited from this situation directly, saw little point in enforcing the law.



CDI272 Opening press conference for workshop on illegal sales of public spaces in Bouaké.

In Bouaké, the problem worsened to the point that the police later reported at a February 2014 workshop that the majority of complaints (over 5,000 cases) filed with them over the past six months were linked to land tenure issues. The workshop was part of a CITI-supported and widely publicized civil society initiative to reclaim a school and a market that had been illegally allocated or sold to private citizens. With CITI's support (CDI272) and the help of the Regional Director of Environment and Sanitation, trader and parents associations organized a series of workshops, demonstrations, and press conferences to

mobilize local residents around these issues and lobby the local authorities to take corrective action. These activities not only drew attention to the issue in local media but also created awareness of the illegal occupation among the local population, who later demanded change. Even the traditional chiefs joined the ranks of those demanding change and refused to cooperate on new allocations of public lands until the resolution of the land issues.

In response, the prefecture recognized publicly that those parcels had been given illegally and publicly promised to issue a decree restoring the lands according to their original designation but had not done so by the time CITI came to an end in 2014. In fact, he was reluctant to act not only because he wanted to avoid scandal around his own behavior but also out of fear of reprisals. Indeed, the key officials involved in this issue were threatened by the ex-warlords who had acquired and illegally built on the school and market parcels. The prefect also unsuccessfully resorted to threatening the civil society representatives involved in the initiative.

Finally, in an attempt to squash the issue and end the bad publicity, the prefect requested and obtained the reassignment of the Regional Director of Environment and Sanitation, who had served as the Chairman of the Monitoring Committee on the Public Land Management. The Regional Director had been heavily involved in the fight against the illegal allocation and occupation of public land and had repeatedly denounced the corruption surrounding the issue in the media. The Ministry of the Environment and Sanitation, who complied with the request in view of immense pressure at the national level, later expressed its intention to promote its former regional director. Though the two issues remain unresolved, the reassignment of the Regional Director and his expected promotion can be seen as indicators that the activity is viewed by both local and national authorities as a serious threat to the status quo. Indeed, a victory of the civil society groups on public lands would seriously threaten the economic interests of the former rebel warlords who grew accustomed to using state resources and authority to acquire personal wealth in all impunity.

EMPOWERING TRANSPORTER ASSOCIATIONS

Another threat to the former rebel warlords' power and impunity came directly from their former source of power: their militias. Indeed, given its strategic importance, the transport sector had been controlled by the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) for war operations. Following the 2010-2011 crisis, the sector remained largely under the control of ex-FN warlords with over 90% of transporters being war-affected youth. The ex-FN officials, many of whom were found in government, employed a large number of their former rebel militiamen – both as transporters and thugs – to protect their (illegal) business interests. Due to their ties to high-level politicians, the ex-FN warlords acted with impunity, undermining both the rule of law and the local economy. Ex-FN leaders maintained control over transporters by dividing them into groups; the ex-warlords pitted the divided groups against each other and fostered rivalries between groups to keep them in check. The tactic ensured that the transporters were unable to engage collectively as a block with local authorities, leverage their full membership to improve their livelihoods, or unite against the ex-FN warlords in favor of an open and competitive marketplace.

To address this issue, in Years 2 and 3 CITI worked to unify transporters in Bouaké (CDI107 and CDI165), Korhogo (CDI172 and CDI296), and Abobo (CDI193) by focusing the various associations of transporters on their common economic interests in order to attenuate the control of the ex-warlords. CITI supported transporters in each of the cities to organize a series of workshops and solidarity activities to improve transporters' organizational skills, their understanding of their rights and their ability to advocate for themselves by way of legal and democratic means.

As a result of these activities, the transporter unions that had been deeply divided realized they would be economically better off if they were united, and began using a common lobbying strategy to advocate for their interests with the local authorities. In Bouaké and Korhogo, the transporters negotiated reduced driver's license fees with the transportation authorities and successfully lobbied the municipal authorities

for road repairs. Most importantly, the transporters increased cooperation with the local authorities and their systematic reporting of offenders significantly reduced human rights violations and crime from security forces, including arbitrary arrests, cruel and inhuman treatment of detainees and extortion at checkpoints in both cities.

In Abobo, local transporters (CDI193) agreed with local authorities on the management of a bus station that had sat unused since its August 2012 inauguration due to disagreements around a management plan. In fact, the station experienced violent clashes and disagreements between transporters of different unions, led by a former warlord on the one hand and the mayor on the other. In an effort to monopolize transport revenues in the municipality, the mayor had not included all transportation actors in the management structure of the station. As a result, the different groups of transporters realized that it was in their economic interest to work together and ensure an inclusive and participatory management of the station. After considerable discussion, they established a monitoring committee to improve Abobo bus station management. They organized a June 2014 workshop with Ministry of Transport and municipal representatives that generated management recommendations and an implementation plan

MOBILIZING MOTO-TAXIS AND ARTISANS

CITI facilitated the mobilization of two particularly important groups against impunity in Bouaké: motorcycle-taxis (CDI295) and artisans (CDI304). Both groups were very large and made up predominantly of war-affected youth, many of whom were still armed. Therefore, their socio-economic integration is critically important for community stability. In fact, ex-FN officials continued to manipulate a large number of the moto-taxis and artisans to their own political and economic ends, using their former identity as rebels and preying on their economic vulnerability.

In particular, the former warlords' divisive influence and their support of both moto-taxis and artisans' participation in criminal activity were some of the top instability factors in the city. CITI therefore undertook activities with both groups to help them see themselves as productive members of society and the economy. Specifically, CITI sponsored workshop discussions that allowed the moto-taxi riders to realize that their reputation as criminals was actually hurting them. *"We are accused of so many crimes in the city...this impacts our income earning ability – yet anyone on a motorcycle can pretend to be a moto-taxi,"* said Souma Aboubacar, the president of the moto-taxis association.



CDI295 Bouaké moto taxi drivers at ceremony with city officials where vests and license plates were provided.

To tackle this problem, the moto-taxis decided to create an association and formally register their members. The registrants were then provided, with CITI support, a kit consisting of a branded vest and license plate that formally identifies them as an official moto-taxi. As explained in the media campaign, the vest and plate allowed potential customers to easily identify and report any criminal activity by a moto-taxi to the police.

To further reassure the residents of Bouaké, all registered moto-taxis formally committed to adhere to a code of conduct and purge criminals from their ranks during a CITI-sponsored public ceremony at city hall. The registered moto-taxis were proud of the results of the identification activity: *"The registered drivers are making more money than the others because passengers prefer to use drivers with vest and plates – They trust us more,"* said Siaka, a moto taxi driver. This was confirmed by Bouaké resident Idriss

who said, *“There is no question about that, I would definitely choose to ride on a moto-taxi with vest and plate - I think that’s what everyone would do.”*

Beyond changing the community perception of them, this grant has changed the way the moto-taxi drivers view themselves. Indeed, up until CITI’s activities, moto taxis drivers continued to go by their war nicknames. Following the activities, they wanted to transform their identity to productive and accepted members of society once again. Consequently, the moto-taxi drivers began reclaiming their pre-war identities and preferred being called by their legal names. The driver Cheick explained, *“For over ten years, everybody has called me “AK47.” Most people in Bouaké didn’t even know my real name. I think this has worked against me... I want everyone to call me Cheick and know me as a moto-taxi driver, nothing else.”* CITI reached 5,000 of Bouaké’s 19,000 moto-taxi operators across several activities.

Artisans faced similar reputation problems. The majority of Bouaké residents was afraid of the artisans and did not want to conduct business with them directly. Their reputation for violence was such that even local authorities did not dare approach them to collect taxes. To address these issues, CITI provided a grant to the Regional Chamber of Artisans (CDI304), which resulted in reducing conflict between artisan unions and between them and the local authorities. In fact, the artisans agreed to form a single union under the leadership of the Regional Chamber of Artisans. The increased trust in local authorities resulted in artisans registering with the tax office and the municipality extending its authority for the first time in areas where it had been too dangerous for tax and municipal officials to go. Such had been the case, for example, in Sokoura, Petonne and Djambrou, where local authorities dared not go even accompanied by a police escort.

Finally, the artisans organized a successful craft fair. Participating artisans made profits well above those they usually make and saw their orders double or even triple in some cases. Beyond this, the craft fair contributed significantly to the reintegration of war-affected youth. Mr. Sanou, a bag maker, explained that the grant had given him and many of his fellow war-affected youth the opportunity to go back to their original professions by allowing them to make new contacts and win orders. He said, *“Working with the Regional Chamber of Artisans has done more to improve our lives in a matter of weeks than our involvement with the Authority for the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (ADDR) for nearly three years.”*

In addition, the efforts of the traders and others involved in the fight against impunity at the local level contributed to Côte d’Ivoire starting to take action against the former warlords. In November 2013, 14 former cocoa sector officials, originally charged in 2008, were convicted for embezzling hundreds of millions of dollars between 2002 and 2008. More recently, in late July 2014, Issiaka Ouattara, known as Wattao, was removed from his post as second in command of the CCDO, a Special Forces institution comprised of 800 men among the best armed and trained in Côte d’Ivoire. Still, authorities have yet to credibly investigate the role of high-level political officials also believed to have been implicated and to have used the embezzled funds, in part, to purchase arms.

2.2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Corruption of public officials not only reduced economic opportunities and stifled the livelihoods of local traders; it also undermined all public institutions in Côte d’Ivoire. Despite the availability of funding for government procurement, government offices were often unable to provide an adequate level of basic public services due to endemic fraud and corruption. Corrupt practices excluded a large segment of the population from basic services such as education and health as well as economic opportunities. As a result, poverty remained entrenched and discontent rose, which in turn fueled instability. To address corruption, CITI supported a significant number of activities aiming to increase community oversight and local government accountability for basic services such as education, urban sanitation, and civil registration, as well as taking steps to improve transparency and fight corruption.

In Bouaké (CDI130), Korhogo (CDI144) and Divo (CDI163), CITI provided support to the Ministry of Education Regional Offices (DRENETs) to address the issue of corruption in schools by setting up an effective corruption reporting mechanism. In these cities' school districts, like in many others throughout the country, illegal fees were being collected not only by the administration, but also by teachers during the school exams. This undermined the quality of public education while making school unaffordable for a large number of Ivoirians. During the 2012-2013 school year, CITI supported the installation of telephone hotlines managed by committees composed of students, public administrators, teachers and parents. Under CDI275, the DRENETs also developed a public awareness campaign including a TV Public Service Announcement (PSA) to increase the effectiveness of the hotlines.

Based on testimonies from residents in all three cities, the anti-corruption hotline has served as a powerful deterrent against fraud. They perceived the nationally broadcast PSA broadcast about the school fraud hotline a clear demonstration of the government's commitment to fight corruption and willingness to enforce the often neglected rule banning mobile phones during examination periods. Mr. Kalable, a Divo resident, stated "*Nobody [in the schools] wants to risk their jobs by getting involved in corruption schemes.*" All three Regional Offices also proudly indicated that the initiative has enabled them to live up to their slogan "*Zero fraud and zero corruption*" for the March 2014 National Examinations.

According to community members, corruption in the Bouaké municipal waste management also decreased significantly as a result of CITI initiatives. In response to a glaring waste collection issue, CITI issued a grant (CDI131) to support the General Association of the Sanitation Committees (known by its French acronym, CGCAB) to bring together all relevant stakeholders in order to address the issues that were resulting in the accumulation of trash throughout the city. During the ten years of crisis, CGCAB had ensured waste collection whilst the mayor's office ensured the transport from the consolidation points to the dump. Since the end of the post-electoral violence, large piles of garbage had become a common sight in Bouaké, as trash was no longer being taken to the municipal dump.



CDI131 Before photo of a trash pile near Hotel Harmattan cleared with CITI support

Workshop discussions in April 2013 revealed that corruption in awarding trash collection contracts by the Ministry of the Environment and mismanagement of municipal resources were at the root of Bouaké's sanitation woes. Bringing these problems to light through extensive media coverage and setting up systems to improve accountability dramatically improved trash collection. Within days of the activities, the piles of trash had been removed. Further, as the local authorities were to discover in the weeks following the end of the grant, the activities had dramatically altered their relationship with their constituency. The local civil society felt empowered to demand services and accountability from their government representatives. This ensured that the trash collection system setup under this grant still functions effectively, 18 months after the support ended.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL REGISTRIES

In the same way, CITI worked with civil registration centers to address the systemic issues undermining the local government's ability to ensure birth registration and issue formal identification to residents in Bouaké, Divo, Duékoué, Korhogo, and Yopougon. Lack of identification is one of the key reasons many Ivoirians are unable to gain access to civil rights and benefits. Failing to obtain a birth certificate has far reaching social and political implications. Indeed, those who never registered find themselves marginalized and excluded from society, as they could not access basic social services, such as education or formal employment, and were denied voting rights. This precarious status forced

them into the informal sector, and even resulted in joblessness and banditry, and made them susceptible to harassment by security forces. This continued marginalization of a significant portion of the population constituted a potentially destabilizing issue. Though a local government process existed to remedy this situation, very few people took advantage of it to obtain identification. This occurred for a combination of factors, including poor knowledge and interpretation of the laws on the birth registration process, dysfunctional civil registry services, and corruption and lack of transparency in the production and delivery of identity documents.

To address these issues CITI worked with the Bouaké, Divo, Yopougon and Korhogo prefectures, as well as the Duékoué municipality, to support comprehensive initiatives to address birth registration issues. Specifically, CITI provided equipment (computers, printers, registers) and technical support (civil registry software installation and training) to increase the capacity of civil registry service agents and improve both the effectiveness and transparency of the birth registration process. Renovations at existing civil registration buildings of Yopougon (Niangon and Toits Rouges) improved working conditions and increased space available at the facilities employed for registration. These initiatives were followed by information campaigns in all five locations, culminating with the dispatching of mobile birth registration clinics in Duékoué (CDI138), Bouaké (CDI265) and Korhogo (CDI289).



CDI265 Birth registration campaign in Bouaké.

To date, in all locations where CITI implemented activity on civil registry, interviews suggest that the processing period and the cost related to the production of a birth certificate drastically decreased. In Duékoué, for instance, residents acknowledge that it takes now no more than a day to get a birth certificate as compared to before the activity when they had to wait two weeks. In addition, it is now more affordable for them since the activity with CITI helped determine the real cost of the document. Civil registry staff in all locations also acknowledged that the equipment provision improved their efficiency and the quality of their work.

- In Duékoué, CITI successfully registered 16,000 people in two weeks, in contrast to a coalition of United Nations (UN) organizations and international NGOs working in the region that had only registered 13,000 people in two years. In addition, CITI paid for 10,000 fiscal stamps, but an additional 6,000 benefited from the October 2013 mobile clinic, greatly surpassing expectations.
- The March 2014 mobile clinics allowed the registration of over 30,000 people in each of the Bouaké and Korhogo region. People commented that the campaign showed them that their leaders cared about them. One young man said: *“I am impressed by the Djebonoua mayor who personally came out to educate people about birth registration. He was outside all day answering questions despite the sweltering heat.”*
- Another important development occurred among the Bouaké judges who had initially refused to participate in the operation because of their demands for per diem had not been met. After witnessing the large crowds coming to register, not only did they drop their demands for per diem, they volunteered to work on Sunday to register as many people as possible, demonstrating a significant change of heart.
- CITI also received praise from local government authorities for the support provided to civil registry offices in Yopougon. The mayor expressed his gratitude for CITI’s support saying that it had allowed

the municipal civil registry staff to reduce the processing and delivery time of civil documents to one to two days, from three months before activities began in January 2014 (CDI281). He expressed his gratitude for CITI's rehabilitation of the civil registry centers in the Niangon and Toits Rouges neighborhoods (CDI280).

- In Divo, CITI focused primarily on improving the effectiveness and transparency of the birth registration process by providing equipment (computers, printers, registers) and technical support to increase the capacity of civil registry service agents (CDI192). Through CITI support, six birth registry centers in the department of Divo received civil registry management software. Ms. Gnoinyaie Judicael, the chief of the registration service in the Didoko birth registry center, attested that *“before the computerization of civil registry records, it could take sometimes one week to find records of an applicant, but today thanks to the computer and software provided by USAID, we can process a request in five minutes.”* Those interviewed were very happy with the changes. Roger, a Divo resident, said *“I can now get a birth certificate within two days. That is a huge improvement. I used to have wait two weeks to get a birth certificate!”*



CDI192 Divo civil registry employee receives training on issuing a birth certificate with CITI-provided equipment and software.

Given the importance of identity issues in Côte d'Ivoire, the activities on birth registration drew significant media attention. Although most praised the initiatives, one opposition media house claimed that the birth registration campaign in Bouaké aimed at ensuring President Ouattara's re-election by naturalizing a large number of foreigners¹ thus stirring tensions between the communities.

III. MITIGATED COMMUNITY DIVISIONS

Mitigating community divisions was an early focus for CITI and throughout the life of the program, as political and community tensions remained high throughout the country. Promoting reconciliation and mitigating divisions and violence was one of CITI's stated goals throughout the life of the program, accounting for 44 TAP Activities valued at \$1.3M.

3.1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO MANAGE CONFLICT

Year 1 conflict mitigation activities focused primarily on bringing together groups in conflict through community meetings, youth mappings, and cultural activities. For instance, CITI supported a coalition of women's associations representing the Yacouba, Malinké, Guéré and Wé ethnic groups in Toulepleu to organize a series of activities to show a return to normalcy and their commitment to peace (CDI039).

Inspired by the dedication of the women of Toulepleu, two leaders of two local women's associations who had participated in earlier CITI grants in Abidjan and Abengourou (CDI001, CDI002, and CDI058) volunteered their time to help prepare and manage the events in Toulepleu. The first, a seminar on ways to bring solidarity to a divided community by focusing on common interests, drew over a thousand participants. Afterwards, the women gathered for women's soccer matches, traditional dance performances, and a sampling of ethnic cuisines. The event was the largest public social gathering in many years, as intra-communal ethnic violence had caused local residents to be wary of any public meeting.

¹ See *Notre Voie*, dated March 31, 2014

Beyond creating relationships among groups previously in conflict, the early conflict mitigation activities also served as the basis for future CITI activities by providing information on conflict drivers in Côte d'Ivoire. This is reflected in CITI's activities throughout the country but particularly in its work with the youth of Duékoué. CITI focused on the youth because they were the victims and perpetrators of the political violence during the post-electoral crisis. The intense fighting and loss of life of early 2011 made it difficult for Duékoué residents to heed the government's appeals for reconciliation and the peaceful resumption of daily life. The youth, in particular, viewed the appeals as little more than political propaganda.

In this context, a dialogue activity was out of the question. Faced with the necessity to find an indirect approach to reconciliation, CITI decided in October 2012 to mobilize a diverse group of Duékoué youth around a common problem (CDI031). The activity brought together nearly 100 youth representing every neighborhood and ethnicity in Duékoué to conduct a community mapping to obtain community opinion on the use of and materials to be made available in the town's cultural center that had been looted during the conflict. The youth developed and delivered a visual presentation of the findings of the polling process before a gathering of their peers, elders, and city authorities on the last day of the activity.

The mapping exercise later informed CITI's support to the rehabilitation of the Duékoué municipality's meeting room (CDI269), which in turn validated the findings of the survey on the importance of providing a community meeting space for reconciliation and stability. Indeed, within just three days of the rehabilitated building's handover in June 2014, the mayor of Duékoué used it to hold a meeting with youth to discuss their priorities and participation in local governance. Two days later in the newly rehabilitated meeting space, the prefect of Duékoué chaired the Communal Youth General Assembly to elect youth representatives. Then, just two weeks later, VERBATIM, an international NGO, used the municipality's meeting room, demonstrating the impact that CITI had in providing this multi-use space for the community.



CDI269 Duékoué Mayor participating in youth forum in newly renovated meeting hall.

More importantly, the mapping activity established friendships among youth across the political divide and resulted in the creation of the first truly diverse youth association in the town and an invaluable partner for CITI. Building on the group's diversity and the youth's newfound willingness to participate in reconciliation activities, CITI trained the youth on how to collect and analyze information from reliable sources – including information from local authorities – and help produce radio programs to prevent community members from acting on rumors (CDI110).

As a result, the youth not only collected and provided information to the local radio station; they took it a step further on their own initiative and used their network to actively prevent violence. Indeed, they would call each other and visit if necessary, something that would not have happened before CITI's interventions, to establish the accuracy of the rumors and then use the information to prevent tensions from escalating and resulting in violence. For example, the Malinké youth would rely on their Guéré friends to let them know what had happened in incidents involving both groups in a Guéré neighborhood. They would then use the information to calm the youth in the own community and prevent retaliation by explaining that this was the isolated act of bandits – not the concerted action of an entire community.

The youth were then invited to air their frustrations and express their discontent in constructive fashion through discussions with local authorities and politicians that were later broadcast on radio. To demonstrate their commitment to peace and stability, they decided to contribute positively to rebuilding their town by working with the local authorities to restore traffic signs and put in new ones in parts of

Duékoué. This activity not only reinforced and expanded the youth union, but also helped improve their relationship with the local authorities and allowed them to create a positive change in their communities.

In Sakassou, the Sub-prefect was similarly pleased with the outcomes of CITI's activities. In his discussions with the final evaluation team, he credited CITI for the calm that currently prevails in his town, a year after the last CITI activity had been completed in Sakassou. In Year 2, CITI provided support to the Sub-prefect's office to address increasing tensions between the Baoulé and Dyula and conflict between the Baoulé and the Malinké that had resulted in massacres during the crisis and continued to regularly erupt in violent incidents. The Baoulé-Dyula political alliance was a key factors facilitating then candidate Ouattara's success in the 2010 elections. Furthermore, Sakassou has a very strong symbolic value in the eyes of the Baoulé as it is the seat of the Baoulé queen. Consequently, any violent conflict erupting between Baoulé and either ethnic group has the potential to destabilize the country socially and politically.



CDI132 Malinké traditional dance ceremony launches community dialogue between Baoulé and Malinké ethnic groups in Sakassou.

Based on the recommendations that came out of the Baoulé-Dyula dialogue (CDI132), the communities set up an ethnically diverse conflict mitigation committee to resolve community disagreements before turning violent. This same committee was then tasked with the maintenance and management of the Cultural Center that was rehabilitated jointly by the Baoulé-Malinké communities (CDI139) as well as the organization of a cultural festival and a soccer tournament, which were supported by CITI. Since the handover ceremony in November 2013, this Committee has managed the Cultural Center in an inclusive and transparent fashion and successfully prevented escalation of occasional social tensions into violence.

3.2. SETTLING LAND TENURE DISPUTES

The number of judicial cases linked to land tenure throughout the country is significant. Although the Ouattara government passed reforms on land tenure, rightly recognizing its link to recent politico-military violence, it failed to adequately support local administrative and judicial mechanisms involved in resolving land conflicts. This situation left many people still unable to access their land more than two years after the crisis, especially in the west. Several attacks on Ivoirian villages near the Liberian border were reportedly related to land dispossession, showing the potential for future violence if the government would not ensure the fair resolution of land disputes.

Initiatives to address land tenure disputes needed to address several factors. First, they needed to acknowledge cultural factors and traditional land tenure systems of the region, which often ran counter to the law and might have also contradicted each other. Second, initiatives needed to create win-win solutions that would allow, for example, both parties in conflict to agree on how they could both benefit from the land. Finally, local populations might not recognize state actors and the traditional land chiefs as having legitimate authority to enforce legal decisions on land issues within and across communities. As a result, they simply appealed to the authority most likely to side with them on their particular issue.

To address these issues and building on its work to foster dialogue and collaboration across ethnic groups and between citizens and local authorities, CITI piloted in Year 3 a land tenure conflict mitigation initiative (CDI294) through a grant to the Duékoué Central Sub-Prefecture. The project created and documented a common land tenure management system for all Fengolo communities and elected a land

governance council tasked with resolving existing land boundary conflicts. Though threats and fierce opposition were commonplace in the early days of the dialogues, tensions progressively faded away as community members successfully resolved some long-lasting issues. The presence of all community leaders – who also discussed every agreement with their “cadres” – highly influential members of their community in Abidjan – lent legitimacy to the decisions. The Duékoué sub-prefect noted how thrilled he was with the results: *“You know, 80% of my time is spent dealing with land issues. I used to have Fengolo people in my office every day because of land tenure disputes but I haven’t seen them since the [CITI] activities several months ago now. We should do this everywhere in the West. This is the way to resolve these issues!”*

3.3. MITIGATING VIOLENCE DURING THE ELECTORAL PERIOD

The April 2013 municipal elections presented an opportunity for Ivoirians to deepen the recovery process and complete the cycle of elections that would restore all elected offices. CITI’s initiatives included a series of activities to prevent political manipulation of youth and increase awareness of political parties’ code of conduct.

Bouaké residents were exasperated by the numerous delays in holding municipal elections, which they saw as an attempt by incumbent politicians to avoid their eventual defeat. Indeed, the incumbent Bouaké mayor feared the loss of control of large amounts of state financial resources, often used for private gains, and was ready to secure a win while the Bouaké youth threatened violence if he was declared the winner. To prevent the tensions around elections from erupting into violence, CITI raised awareness around political manipulation especially among the youth, through a series of activities including participatory theater, a workshop on political manipulation and the production of a film and radio show based on these activities (CDI141). Similar activities were also organized in Bloléquin, Abobo and Abengourou (CDI156, CDI157, and CDI166) where CITI provided support to youth and women’s groups to build awareness around the political parties code of conduct, denounce politicians’ use of hate speech and their potential incitement to violence while urging people to vote peacefully.

CITI successfully mitigated tensions in its targeted communities in the lead up to the 2013 elections. Based on Sakassou residents’ testimonies, this was the very first time elections were held without a single incident of violence in the town. Unlike the previous election, after which a group of Sakassou youth attacked and burned the vehicle of the newly elected mayor, the announcement that the incumbent mayor was the winner of the Sakassou 2013 municipal elections was received with equanimity and respectful congratulations. Duékoué youth also found the municipal elections were peaceful, a first in their community. Although there were no violence prevention activities ahead of the elections, the youth attributed the peaceful elections the fact that the youth were now united (after participating in CITI activities) and were able to deal with conflict peacefully before it erupted.

Election results in Abengourou, Abobo, Bloléquin, and Bouaké paralleled the rest of Côte d’Ivoire, where the ruling RDR won many seats at the regional level (10 out of 31) and independent candidates won at the municipal level (71 out of 194). Opposition FPI party candidates often ran on an independent ticket, as their party was officially boycotting the elections. This voting pattern not only suggested dissatisfaction with President Ouattara and the RDR at the local level, but also increased expectations of accountability.

IV. INCREASED CITIZEN ACCESS TO OBJECTIVE INFORMATION & UNDERSTANDING OF CRITICAL ISSUES

One of the obstacles to successful transition in Côte d’Ivoire is the lack of non-partisan information and the manipulation of information to support political ends in the media. Most local radio stations are dependent on the municipality for financing and consequently the mayors largely control their broadcast content. The few private stations were commercial radios that rarely produced local programming content in part because such programming was expensive and technical staff often lacked the capacity to undertake non-commercial programming easily. In addition, many local radio stations were looted during

the post-election violence, forcing communities to rely on word of mouth and politicized national media outlets, including state-owned television. This situation significantly hampered Ivoirians' access to objective information, limited their ability to make their voices heard, and prevented the media from contributing to recovery by holding politicians and other government officials accountable. Addressing these issues became one of CITI's strategic priorities' from the very beginning. Overall, CITI funded 18 in-kind grants worth \$553K to improve Ivoirians' access to objective information.

ACCESS TO OBJECTIVE INFORMATION

In its first year, CITI provided equipment and did a range of repairs to communal radios in the western cities of Duékoué, Guiglo, Toulepleu, Bin Houye, and Daloa (CDI023, CDI026, CDI027, CDI028, CDI029, and CDI038). These municipalities had been particularly affected by politically motivated ethnic violence and were struggling to emerge from social instability because of their inability to access dependable information about current events rather than relying on rumors and hearsay.

CITI also provided assistance to the *Agence Ivoirien de la Presse* (Ivoirian Press Agency, AIP) a decentralized and trusted media agency, through training for journalists on how to accurately report judicial issues (CDI025, CDI051, CDI087, CDI088). According to AIP director, the months following the training showed an improvement in the quality of the press articles produced and compliance with the Code of Ethics in the production of the articles. AIP offices in Abengourou, Gagnoa and Agboville were also rehabilitated and received computer equipment for the reporters. The computers enabled the submission of first-hand news in real time, improving the fight against rumors. The use of laptop and internet connection also increased news production, going from 20 news articles per day before the support to 50-60 per day after the support.

CURRENT AFFAIRS REPORTING

Building on these successes and to complement other program objectives, CITI worked closely with local radio stations in Bouaké, Duékoué, Korhogo, and Yopougon in Year 3 to help them produce radio programming that addressed the local populations' concerns rather than ignoring it. CITI provided the necessary technical assistance and equipment to four local radio stations to enable them to create local programming content (CDI239).

As a result, four stations – Radio Media Plus (Bouaké), Radio Satellite (Korhogo), Radio Fraternité (Yopougon), and Radio Voix du Guémon (Duékoué) – each produced a local current affairs program. Though the training only took place in early March 2014, the change in programming quickly delivered results. A sampling of the results include:

- Korhogo's Radio Satellite produced two episodes on local issues that later prompted the authorities to take action. The first episode discussed the problems around an illegal trash dump in one of the city's residential neighborhoods. Within days of airing of the program, the waste was cleared and more frequent trash collections instituted so the problem would not arise anew.
- Radio Satellite then decided to create an episode on the reasons behind the illegal use of sidewalks for commercial activity. The analysis and contributions from the population – and especially the traders – made it clear that the key reason for the illegal use of sidewalks was the lack of legal market space in the municipality. The Prefect agreed and issued a decree to provide the necessary market space. The sidewalk traders moved to their new spaces and are no longer illegally occupying public land.



CDI239 Ivoirian journalists receiving training.

- Radio Guémon chose to report on the participatory budgeting process sponsored by the municipality (CDI205 & CDI217). They interviewed civil society representatives on their campaign to make the process a requirement, solicited city council members' opinions, and reported on the Duékoué City Council vote to make a participatory budget an inherent part of their yearly municipal planning process.

RECONCILIATION THROUGH PHOTOJOURNALISM

CITI worked with the National Union of Photo-Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire (UNPJCI) to create a non-partisan traveling photo exhibition and audio visual presentations on post-election violence (CDI194 and CDI308). UNPJCI is an association of photojournalists coming from various politically divided media outlets (The Patriot, Time Voice, Fraternité Matin, etc.), which increased the credibility and neutrality of the message because it portrayed all sides of the story. The March 2014 exhibition took place in three Abidjan neighborhoods including Plateau (Abidjan's business center), Abobo (pro-Ouattara) and Yopougon (pro-Gbagbo); the two latter communes were the most affected in Abidjan during the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis.

Based on the success of the exhibition, CITI cleared a follow-on grant, allowing the exhibition to travel to Bouaké, Duékoué, Divo, and Korhogo in May 2014. Despite fears that the exhibition could exacerbate the existing political tensions, they took place without a single incident and had a contrary effect, even in the city of Duékoué that experienced some of the worst atrocities. Facilitators with expertise in conflict mitigation and psychology were hired and involved in discussions around the photos to create a safe platform for individual reflection, honest dialogue, interpersonal healing and community reconciliation. Through this visual demonstration of how Ivoirians on both sides of the political divide were involved in violence, the exhibition ensured its credibility and political neutrality. The impression of neutrality was further enhanced by the participation of local photojournalists who, despite their diverse political opinions, were united in advocating peace and reconciliation.



CDI194 UNPJCI organizer showing leading visitors through the photo exhibition in Abidjan.

The exhibits attracted over 40,000 people in all locations; the majority of whom were themselves victims or perpetrators of violence. One visitor cried in front of the pictures while explaining that she had lost all three of her children during the war and pleaded with all present to work together so Ivoirians never experience such violence again. Another visitor admitted that, prior to his visit to the photo exhibition, he had been thinking of taking revenge on his neighbor who had attempted to kill him during the post-election crisis. However, the images prompted him to reconsider and he had decided to forgive his neighbor instead. All visitors interviewed expressed their desire to ensure that the *“time of chaos, violence and insecurity is deeply buried in the past.”* A young ex-combatant from Abobo said while shedding tears, *“These photos remind me the harm I did, I had goose bumps watching them, I killed people during the crisis and I don't want to live this tragedy again...I am so sorry of what I did.”* Albert, a 35 year-old Duékoué resident, summed up the impact of the photos, *“Going back to war after seeing these pictures would be total madness.”*

These comments illustrated the extent of the influence the media can have on the political parties in a post-conflict setting, serving as a tool to promote peace or further political manipulation. The media can give voice to people who would otherwise remain unheard especially on governance issues.

LESSONS LEARNED

UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGY FACILITATES GRANT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

OTI programs should always have a clearly-defined strategy, including easily understood country objectives, a manageable geographic footprint and clear guidance on areas of intervention so program teams can adequately develop grants ideas. The strategy and objectives are subject to rolling assessments and adaptation to remain responsive and relevant to the situation on the ground. At the same time, OTI programs must maintain the flexibility to respond quickly to unforeseen developments leading to activities that might not fall within the defined intervention areas.

CITI regularly reviewed the socio-political situation to inform strategic thinking. Rolling Assessments (RA) complemented Strategic Review Sessions (SRS) to revise and refine program objectives to react to the changing socio-political evolution and adapt as needed. Despite these efforts, there were many initial misunderstandings and lack of clarity about CITI's strategy and objectives, which did not become clear until almost two years into the program. In Year 1, CITI presented 25 TAP activities that were yellow-lighted but ultimately rejected. Because of misunderstandings and lack of clarity, considerable time was spent on developing activities that could have otherwise been spent on implementing cleared activities. An August 2012 teambuilding session adjusted the strategy slightly to focus more on governance in 12 targeted urban areas, resulting in a significant reduction in rejected activities from 25 in Year 1 to 14 during Year 2.

The September 2013 Program Performance Review (PPR) and October 2013 RA clarified CITI strategy, which improved activity development and implementation. This modification involved an intentional pivot away from responding to the aftermath of the 2010-2011 crisis to preparing for the 2015 elections, focusing on service delivery and addressing the underlying tensions that could lead to a repeat of the 2010-11 crisis. CITI's geographic focus was reduced from 12 to six urban zones. The strategic improvements were best demonstrated by the rejection of only five new grant ideas in Year 3.² Monthly commitment rates climbed to \$430K, while disbursements averaged \$630K; reaching a CITI record \$1.4M in June 2014. As noted in Figures 4 and 5 on page 6, the TAP/Ops ratio improved from 31/69 in Year 1 to 64/36 in Year 3, thanks to an increased volume of activities across the board.

RISK TAKING IS WORTHWHILE EVEN IF IT DOESN'T ALWAYS PAY OFF

Risk taking can pay off with the right selection of local partners who possess in depth knowledge of the local context and a desire to make a difference, supported by careful engagement with political actors and opinion leaders. Additionally, some grant ideas must be cleared very quickly to take advantage of fleeting windows of opportunity and demonstrate responsiveness to grantees and the community or group positioned to benefit from the activity.

CITI was requested to refrain from engaging in any political activities or with political actors, the chief UN political advisor, or any groups that might be considered politically sensitive or "risky." This position limited the scope of activities and diminished CITI's ability to make use of its networks to resolve problems quickly as they arose.

For example, CITI was unable to engage strategically with recalcitrant political actors in Bloléquin and Abobo (see below); or to seek buy-in from influential Ivoirians who could have helped to accelerate some

² This does not include 35 grants associated with the Participatory Planning, Budgeting and Monitoring cluster that were rejected when CITI revised its strategy in October 2013 and narrowed its geographic focus from 12 to 6 municipalities. Scaling back this cluster allowed CITI to expand in other objectives, especially access to civil rights and benefits. These tradeoffs were discussed as a result of the PPR and during the RA, giving considerable buy in to the shift in programming.

of the more risky or complicated activities such as work with transporters, civil registry and vendors. Examples include:

- CDI282 was a proposed activity working with an Abobo-based football group that fought against insecurity caused by *microbes*, or gangs of adolescent youth. The proposed soccer tournament needed to be implemented during the school holidays, but was ultimately abandoned because it was not given a timely green light.
- Submitted on May 7 and cleared September 28, 2012, CDI061 was developed after a group of Christian leaders approached CITI for support increasing space for political expression and developing greater inclusivity for all Ivoirians in political processes. Their emphasis was on the positive role churches can play in the post-conflict recovery process. While the grant was originally supposed to take place locally in each city, OTI requested that it be downsized and everyone brought to Abidjan out of concern regarding the activity's association with religious leaders. While the grant was ultimately successful, the only real complaint was that it would have had more of an impact had it taken place in the individual cities – a missed opportunity for CITI.
- Members of the *Jeunes Patriotes*, a youth militia who had been militant supporters of former President Gbagbo, approached CITI for support in engaging in productive economic activity in order to turn away from violence and criminality. The activity was declared as “too risky.” In Year 2, CITI was increasingly afforded the space to work with war-affected youth that included former militia and other at-risk groups, although not directly. Under CDI295, CITI developed relationships with the motorcycle taxi groups in Bouaké and individual drivers, and helped them to forge productive and sustainable relationships with local authorities. Among CITI's most successful activities, it was replicated in Korhogo and expanded into other sectors in Year 3. It is possible that if the team had been able to work with war-affected youth and other opposition groups earlier in the program, CITI could have had an enhanced impact on security and stabilization.
- Activity ideas around the prevention of electoral violence and/or political manipulation were deemed to be submitted “too early” before the elections. However, this early submission was necessary to maximize the depth and breadth of activity impact. Some of these activities, such as grants CDI157 and CDI166 were cleared almost four months after submission. While the grantees and the community thought highly of the outcomes of the various electoral grants, they wanted them to have been implemented earlier with more resources provided to expand relationships with those vulnerable to manipulation.

STRIVE TO BUILD POLITICAL WILL WHEN ABSENT

CITI demonstrated the value of remaining engaged with the community in spite of lackluster engagement by elected and appointed officials. Limited political will to tackle deep-seated problems with activities designed to increase accountability and transparency is a common feature in political transition programming. In many cases, local communities were much more willing to participate in risky activities (CDI272-Bouaké, CDI262-Abobo and CDI274-Fengolo) than were local government representatives. It was not unusual for the government to hesitate to associate itself with such activities, only further inspiring a conviction on the part of the community that they were in a rare position to actually make a difference.

Even in Côte d'Ivoire's comparatively favorable environment, there was a high probability that the 'governance blitz' activities would not succeed in either Korhogo or Abobo. The Korhogo mayor, whose family enjoyed an almost complete political monopoly, had previously been hesitant to work with the civil society or accept participatory budgeting and planning. Over the course of working with CITI on participatory monitoring (CDI2016 and CDI218), he came full circle: cooperating with the social audit, involving the community in municipal decision making and participating in radio programs on governance issues.

The situation was different in Abobo (CDI200 and CDI211). CITI knew that getting the engagement from the Abobo authorities would be difficult; in fact, the government blocked the participatory budgeting and planning activities at every turn. Abobo civil society, however, was engaged and intent on continuing to seek accountability and collaboration with city hall after CITI's involvement. Going into the governance blitz activities in Abobo was a risk worth taking because of the voice we gave civil society, even if municipal officials did not cooperate.

Similarly, the mayor in Bloléquin served as an obstacle to CITI's work in that city. An activity supporting a community radio had to be cancelled because the mayor did not live up to a commitment that the radio would operate under community management. Unfortunately Abobo and Bloléquin have very different dynamics, and in spite of the strong community will and involvement, the politics and personal interests of Bloléquin's leaders soured the potential for CITI impact.

FIND THE RIGHT MIX OF 'HARD' AND 'SOFT' ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

CITI implemented a range of infrastructure activities, often in combination with softer training workshops and dialogue forums. One lesson from CITI is that OTI programs need to find the right balance between hard and soft activities to ensure that the two feed into program objectives in mutually reinforcing ways.

Among CITI's most highly regarded activities are those that combined infrastructure rehabilitation and equipment purchases ('hard' activities) with training, technical assistance, opportunities for dialogue and community-based action ('soft' activities). Indeed, equipment and infrastructure became a way to engage divided communities once dialogue and community-based action had been initiated. Activities in Divo are good example where CITI supported the Civil Society Platform to engage in a dialogue between the Dida and Malinké communities. In developing the action plan, participants identified a number of priority action items to restore confidence, cooperation and peaceful coexistence. CITI later provided technical, material and logistical support to Divo City Hall to revitalize the role, management, and functionality of the Divo Cultural Center so that it could be used by community members in ways to further strengthen ties across ethnic groups.

Other activities that focused purely on infrastructure yielded tangible outcomes, but didn't benefit as much from associated training, public outreach, or technical assistance to increase impact. For example, the U.S. Government requested that CITI work with the Ministry of Justice to equip 15 courthouses and expand six courthouses (Bouaké, Bouna, Dabou, Dimbokro, Divo, and Man) to accommodate more staff required to address the needs of increasing populations. CITI was not able to design complementary activities that would increase impact. Most towns felt outside of CITI's zones of intervention – only Divo and Bouaké were targeted cities. Four of the six were completed as the project ended, preventing CITI from organizing additional activities.

MANAGING INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRES SPECIALIZED RESOURCES

Several noteworthy lessons emerged in our infrastructure programming. The first is that the implementing partner and OTI need to clearly understand the technical and financial resources required to succeed. When the U.S. Embassy asked CITI to work with the Ministry of Justice to expand facilities, the resources requested were intended to cover just the construction, estimated at \$1.6M. CITI came to realize that much more effort was required than originally anticipated, including costs associated with developing the designs to the specifications required by the Ministry of Construction, hiring a control company to provide independent quality control as required by Ivoirian code, hiring skilled engineers and construction managers to monitor the construction, and procuring furniture and equipment for the new spaces. These required elements and complementary activities brought the total justice infrastructure budget to approximately \$3.5M. With those additional costs came supplemental management and oversight requirements demanding the SMT's time and attention, reducing its ability to focus on CITI's non-infrastructure activities. Behind the scenes, AECOM and OTI dedicated considerable time and energy to nudging the construction and supervision firms, and the Ministry of Justice to a successful completion.

Second, CITI identified ways to streamline its procurement processes. After facing many issues with the sub-contractor for CDI096 and CDI100 but not cancelling the contract, when issues arose with the sub-contractor for CDI104, AECOM wrote the necessary warning letters and cancelled the contract when performance did not improve. CITI learned from this process the contractor solicitation process should integrate past performance and capacity into the decision making equation. The lowest price is not always the best value to the US Government.

At the outset, CITI did not expect that infrastructure would play such a large role in the program. The procurement process was very lengthy, and the CITI team had to understand the Ivoirian building code and related laws and establish contract templates applicable to the Ivoirian context, while minimizing risk for AECOM and OTI. Ultimately, this unanticipated bureaucracy slowed down the implementation of rehabilitation projects, especially CDI96, CDI097, CDI100 and CDI104. The rehabilitation of existing structures poses additional challenges as it requires good structural assessment and quantity estimation, typically in the face of non-existent or incomplete construction plans for the original structure. The larger the project, the more important it is to have experts on staff to provide input, instead of relying on international consultants and inadequately trained local engineers. Over the course of the CITI program, AECOM expanded its network of engineers with experience providing technical and administrative oversight in environments such as Côte d'Ivoire.

CREATE A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION, INCLUSION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

The notions of inclusion, participative budgeting and planning, and direct collaboration between the population and the administrative leaders definitely seemed to be a foreign language to Ivoirians at the time of CITI's launch. Fully experienced and capable local expertise was not available. CITI was required to hire foreign experts in participatory budgeting and planning. CITI contributed to addressing this gap in the target areas where CITI intervened and this became a major success of the program. This was particularly evident in the round table activities (CDI035, CDI068, CDI052, CDI053, and CDI196) and governance blitz activities (CDI189, CDI200, CDI204, CDI205, CDI206, CDI209, CDI211, CDI215, CDI216, CDI217, CDI218 and CDI221).

Also, concentrating efforts in cities, such as Duékoué and Bouaké, using a holistic approach, targeting multiple layers of society (women, youth, civil society, city hall and prefect authorities, religious and cultural leaders and using media as a means to diffuse information locally) played a very important role in the positive change in mentality and in furthering the evolution of cultural norms because it allowed the clustering of mutually reinforcing activities in specific locations. The decision at the end of Year 2—targeting six cities instead of 12—allowed CITI to achieve this depth of impact.

CREATE A MONITORING AND EVALUATION CULTURE FROM DAY 1

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer only joined the CITI team in July 2013, almost two years into program implementation. Having an M&E culture from the beginning of the program would have helped the program internalize the importance of regularly gathering information to better assess CITI's impact early on. Involving the M&E Officer early in the program strategy and activity development can go a long way to establishing some kind of baseline that will facilitate the measurement of activity performance over time.

Only two cluster evaluations were executed throughout the life of the program. It would have been ideal to implement one or two more cluster evaluations by the same external evaluators, to ensure continuity and to assess the cumulative impact of the activities implemented in the interest of better programming. The international STTA provided under CITI helped the local firm to do this, but had the initiative been undertaken earlier, subsequent evaluations might have been even more helpful allowing CITI to accomplish even more over its period of performance.

CONCLUSION

CITI was the right program at the right time for Côte d’Ivoire. As noted in the final evaluation, CITI was “timed appropriately, effectively focused on people’s needs to reengage, and remained relevant by taking a holistic approach and working with stakeholders at the right societal levels.” Over and over again, CITI activities focused on bringing divided communities back together, helping them find ways to work together after being ripped apart by conflict. The decision to focus on depth in six targeted communities paid off in the third year of programming as CITI was able to tackle a range of issues coming from different angles and working with different partners, resulting in a multiplier effect that might not have been achieved with less concentration of effort.

CITI further helped government reestablish ties with those same communities, increased citizen participation in municipal planning, budgeting and monitoring, and supported government efforts to improve service delivery after so many years of negligence. As noted in the Final Evaluation, these were “pioneering” activities because they gave the population a say in how it is governed in a country that is highly respectful of hierarchy. These are the hallmarks of a successful OTI program.

AECOM was honored to be selected as OTI’s implementing partner and remains convinced that the contributions of the entire team were a key factor in OTI’s decision to launch a follow-on program. Building on the accomplishments of its predecessor, CITI2 is continuing to provide strategic political transition support assistance through the important 2015 national elections.

ANNEX I: COURTHOUSE GRANTS – BEFORE & AFTER PHOTOS

CDI096_CONSTRUCTION ANNEXES TO COURTHOUSE OF DABOU _ CÔTE D'IVOIRE MARCH 2014



Image 1 : Wood-framing and roof (Before)



Image 2 : Wood-framing and roof (After)



Image 3 : Water supply



Image 4 : Toilets (After)



Image 5 : Overview (Before)



Image 6 : Overview (After)

**CDI097_CONSTRUCTION ANNEXES TO COURTHOUSE OF BOUAKE _ CÔTE D'IVOIRE
FEBRUARY 2014**



Image 1 : Worksite organization



Image 2 : Foundation



Image 3 : Construction of main building



Image 4 : Structural (Wood-framing) and footbridge



Image 5 : Painting



Image 6 : Installation of equipment



Image 7 : Front view



Image 8 : Overview



Image 9 : Office furniture



Image 10 : Office furniture



Image 11 : Metallic shelves, Archive room

**CDII00_CONSTRUCTION ANNEXES TO COURTHOUSE OF DIMBOKRO _ CÔTE D'IVOIRE
MARCH 2014**



Image 1 : Soil test



Image 2 : Foundation work



Image 3 : Construction of main building (Before)



Image 4 : Construction of main building (After)



Image 5 Archive room (Before)



Image 6 : Archive room (After)



Image 7 : Toilets (Before)



Image 8 : Toilets (After)



Image 9 : Installation of equipment



Image 10 : Rear view



Image 11 : Office furniture



Image 12 : Office furniture

**CDII01_CONSTRUCTION ANNEXES TO COURTHOUSE OF BOUNA _ CÔTE D'IVOIRE
AUGUST 2014**



Image 1 : Front view Annex A (Before)



Image 2 : Front view Annex A (After)



Image 3 : View Annex B (Before)



Image 4 : View Annex B (After)



Image 5 : Overview (Before)



Image 6 : Overview (After)



Image 7 : Hallway Annex A (Before)



Image 8 : Hallway Annex A (After)



Image 9 : Staircase Annex A (Before)



Image 10 : Staircase Annex A (After)



Image 11 : Hallway Annex

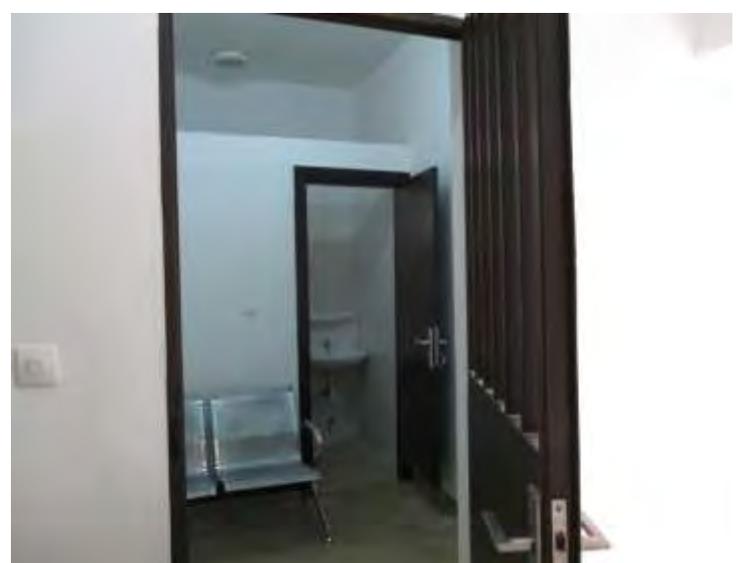


Image 12 : Temporary holding Cell

**CDII03_CONSTRUCTION ANNEXES TO COURTHOUSE OF SINFRA _ CÔTE D'IVOIRE
JUNE 2014**



Image 1 : Excavation



Image 2 : Worksite set up and organization



Image 3 : Main building, wood-framing and roof (Before)



Image 4 : Main building, wood-framing and roof (After)



Image 5 : Interior view (Before)



Image 6 : Interior view (After)



Image 7 : Front view (Before)



Image 8 : Front view (After)



Image 9 : Equipment (View 1)



Image 10 : Equipment (View 2)



Image 11 : Electrical Installation and Fire Safety

**CDII04_CONSTRUCTION ANNEXES TO COURTHOUSE OF MAN _ CÔTE D'IVOIRE
DECEMBER 2014**



Image 1 : Worksite organization



Image 2 : Excavation



Image 3 : Construction of main structure (View 1)



Image 4 : Construction of main structure (View 2)



Image 5 : Construction of main structure (Before)



Image 6 : Construction of main structure (After)



Image 7 : Overview 1 (Before)



Image 8 : Overview 1 (After)



Image 9 : Overview 2 (Before)



Image 10 : Overview 2 (After)



Image 11 : Hallway Annex B (Before)

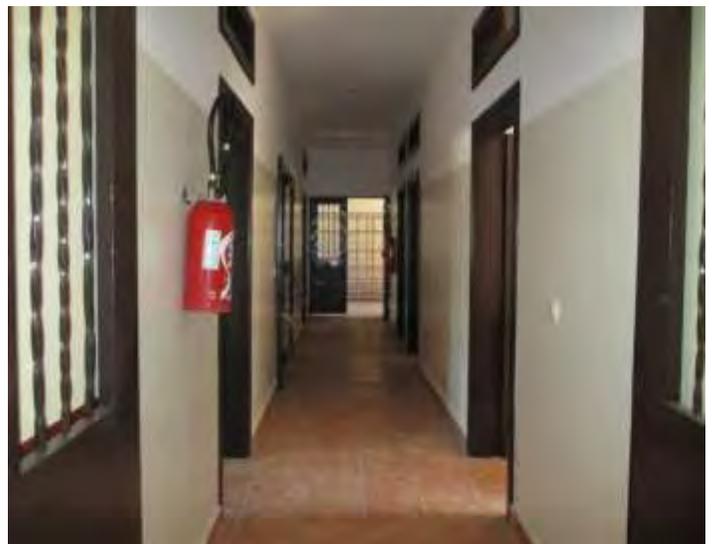


Image 12 : Hallway Annex B (After)



Image 13 : Passageway (Before)



Image 14 : Passageway (After)



Image 15 : Toilets (Mixed)



Image 16 : Toilets (Disabled person)



Image 17 : Office furniture



Image 18 : Office furniture

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