

**Cuban Civil Society Support Program  
(CCSSP)**

Contract Number DOT-I-00-03-00009-00  
Task Order No. 4

**Monthly Report**

**January 2010**

*Submitted February 5, 2010*

## 1. Country Situation Update

### *International Relations:*

- ***US-Cuba relations continue to deteriorate.*** The detention of a US citizen working on a USAID-funded civil society program in Cuba this past December set back US-Cuba relations and has raised questions regarding democracy programs in Cuba. The Cuban government stated that ; actions on the island demonstrate the USG's efforts to destabilize its government. The arrest comes in the wake of increased activity by independent civil society groups in Cuba and increased repression on the part of the state. The Haiti earthquake also served to fuel additional accusations on the part of the Cuban government. Although Cuba allowed US aircraft to utilize Cuban airspace to transport personnel and supplies into Haiti, Fidel Castro is questioning the deployment of more than 10,000 US soldiers to Haiti, claiming that Washington dispatched troops "to occupy Haitian territory," and other likeminded nations such as Bolivia and Venezuela have followed suit.
- ***Diplomatic crisis between Spain and Cuba.*** A diplomatic crisis between Spain and Cuba emerged after the Cuban government did not allow a Spanish member of the European congress, Luis Yáñez, member of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE – currently in government), to enter the country. According to media reports, Yáñez maintains a confrontational attitude toward the Cuban government and maintains contacts with dissident sectors in Cuba. Yáñez stated his visit was touristic. Cuban authorities banned Yáñez's entry stating it was merely implementing the laws of the land. The incident gained relevance since Spain usually sets the tone for EU-Cuba relations and now presides over the European Union.

### *Local News:*

- ***Racism dialogue begins in Cuba.*** Cuba's state-run television aired a one-of-a-kind discussion where local experts spoke of the challenges Afro-Cuban descendants still face today with respect to equal treatment under the Communist system. For the first time, the state-run media's show entitled, "A Cuban battle against racism," openly admitted that racism exists and that it has been ignored to prevent any form of division within the Revolution. "Racial discrimination remains in people's minds in the family, in interpersonal relationships and even in Cuba's institutions," were some of the assertions made during the show. Cuban and Afro-American activists recently denounced human rights violations suffered by Afro-Cubans at the hands of the Castro regime.
- ***Blogger Yoani Sanchez criticizes Cuba's president for trying to silence bloggers.*** In her blog Generation Y, Yoani states that bloggers are not easily silenced by coercion and that the risks are different for Cuban journalist. She stated that the regime used censorship, bribes and "professional death" as means to control information. "The government controls the cameras in television studios, the microphones in radio stations, the pages of magazines and newspapers on the island, but up there, out of their reach, a satellite network...offers anyone who wants it the chance to post opinions in a practically limitless way," she said. The Cuban government has not provided a response.

## 2. Programmatic Highlights and Major Activities

### *Key Programmatic Accomplishments*

- Travel to the island is still on hold and staff continues to seek other ways to carry out activities while maintaining successful grantee and local beneficiary engagement.
- ***Grant Cluster 1.1***
  - SJO018, SJO025: Staff is seeking alternative means of delivering necessary assistance to finalize field work. Local beneficiaries are drafting the final reports and designing the next steps for this

- activity, which includes training of trainers in leadership, teamwork, and project management, among other areas.
- SJO024, SJO042: These grants are in the process of being closed out and two follow-on projects are under development.
  - SJO029: A strategy planning meeting with consultants held in January resulted in a cost amendment realigning the budget so that activities could be shifted to help local beneficiaries develop greater independence and confidence. Upon lifting of the travel hold, activities will be continued to enhance and encourage local beneficiaries to work independently.
  - SJO039: Staff continues ongoing coordination with the grantee and local beneficiaries. Prior to restrictions placed on travel, grantee staff traveled to the island with part of the material assistance and key instructions to begin the start up phase of the project. Course content is under development and two additional on-site coordinators were identified and engaged. The search for an adequate location is underway and two additional grantee staff will travel to the island as soon as allowed to consolidate the coordination team and finalize operational details.
  - SJO046: Material assistance for this activity was procured and grantee staff is prepared. Activities will resume upon lifting of the travel hold.
- **Grant Cluster 1.2**
    - SJO010, SJO028: During a meeting in January, the grantee and CREA determined adjustments to the implementation strategy and security protocols. As a result, a time, cost and scope of work amendment was approved to allow for off-shore trainings and other tasks agreed to in the planning meeting. Training materials are currently under development.
    - SJO011, SJO047: Activities commenced with the update of the website and continued engagement of local beneficiaries. Grantee staff will travel to the island upon lifting of the travel hold.
    - SJO016, SJO032, and SJO033: A meeting with grantee representatives was held to determine how best to engage phase II of this overall initiative and expand current activities. The parties involved agreed to have one of the grantees assume administrative duties while the other remains as a local implementer to ensure greater accountability and enhanced programming. A subsequent planning meeting will be tentatively held in February with local beneficiaries. Material assistance was procured and will be delivered upon lifting of the travel hold.
    - SJO020, SJO034: Field activities were carried out as planned in January and local beneficiaries finalized logistic preparations. Two workshops, an independent artistic event and the groundwork for audiovisual workshops were all conducted successfully. No travel to the island occurred as per the USAID travel restrictions. Due to the travel hold, the grant will be amended to change the end date and to include an offshore training component.
    - SJO009, SJO036: Staff is in the close out process for SJO036 and a follow up grant is in development. Activities will resume upon lifting of the travel hold.
    - SJO041: After a successful strategic planning session, a second stage grant is in the works and SJO041 is in the process of close out.
  - **Grant Cluster 2.1**
    - SJO015, SJO017, and SJO022: As a result of the workshop held last September under SJO015, three coordinators are ready to train the seven coordinators that will carry out the community activities in Cuba. A total of five manuals on different topics were prepared and communities identified areas of interest to implement activities. A full report of the survey results was presented and a time extension will be processed due to the travel hold and other implementation delays. A meeting with the grantee is scheduled for February to discuss next steps and to determine adjustments in implementation.

- SJO035: Strategy planning meetings were held under this grant which is now in the close out phase. Follow on activities will resume under a new grant upon lifting of the travel hold when field research will be conducted to identify local projects for the different target groups.
- **Grant Cluster 2.2**
  - SJO001, SJO044: A follow-on grant to SJO001 (SJO044) was approved to engage the targeted sector in strengthening their organizational capacity but has been delayed due to the travel hold. A coordination meeting with grantee staff of SJO045 is scheduled in a third country. Both grants reach out to similar demographic groups and both grantees have unique qualities and abilities that will complement and strengthen the consultant's eventual implementation.
  - SJO026, SJO030, SJO045: Travel scheduled for January has been delayed due to the travel hold. A coordination meeting with grantee staff of SJO044 is scheduled in a third country.
  - SJO027, SJO038: Grantee staff continued logistical preparations for implementation, including identifying writers for the civic education tool, determining content structure and fine tuning the survey instrument. Grantee staff will travel to Costa Rica in February to train surveyors. An initial survey will be conducted with recently emigrated Cubans and upon lifting of the travel hold they will commence surveying locally.
  - SJO031: SJO031 is in the close-out phase. A follow-on grant is in development to design the steps needed for developing a community engagement initiative. Once approved, this new grant will implement an assessment of previous projects and develop the ground work for new activities.
- **Grant Cluster 3.1**
  - SJO003, SJO007: SJO007 is completed and final evaluation by the PDO is underway. We anticipate submitting a follow-up e-grant for this initiative in February to continue production and distribution of a second installment.
- **Grant Cluster 3.2**
  - SJO008: Phase out of this grant has begun. Grantee staff traveled to Costa Rica to discuss future strategies and determined this initiative will be transferred to a USAID/LAC/Cuba grantee. The consultant took the time to present an informative session on information technologies in the Cuban context.
  - SJO019, SJO040: SJO019 is in the close-out phase. Implementation activities for SJO040 have commenced and a coordination meeting with grantee staff was held in January. The necessary technologies have been procured and are in place. First products are planned for delivery in February.
- **Grant Cluster 4.2**
  - SJO043: Implementation has been delayed due to the travel hold. Activities will resume upon lifting of the travel hold.
- **Field Officer Grants**
  - SJO037: Grantee staff returned and a debriefing/planning session was held in January. The consultant successfully identified 15 potential beneficiaries and is currently working alongside staff on designing up to four follow-on activities from this trip.

### **Program Operations**

- Outreach to regional NGOs continues. Program staff is considering potential grantees from Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, and Panama.
- Grants cleared to date: 47 (20 in process, 10 closed, 11 completed, 5 rejected, 1 cancelled)

Status Count				
Pending	Cleared	Completed	Closed	Cancelled / Rejected
1	20	11	10	1 / 8* *5 had been cleared

CLEARED		
1	SJO007	\$ 123,098
2	SJO008	\$ 53,292
3	SJO022	\$ 93,180
4	SJO025	\$ 91,620
5	SJO028	\$ 95,626
6	SJO029	\$ 96,257
7	SJO032	\$ 111,579
8	SJO033	\$ 63,964
9	SJO034	\$ 135,072
10	SJO037	\$ 53,918
11	SJO038	\$ 134,666
12	SJO039	\$ 65,797
13	SJO040	\$ 96,137
14	SJO041	\$ 5,778
15	SJO042	\$ 23,335
16	SJO043	\$ 85,503
17	SJO044	\$ 34,578
18	SJO045	\$ 69,156
19	SJO046	\$ 42,527
20	SJO047	\$ 43,948
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$ 1,519,031</b>

CLOSED		
1	SJO001	\$ 95,374
2	SJO003	\$ 17,157
3	SJO006	\$ 81,421
4	SJO009	\$ 24,256
5	SJO010	\$ 30,434
6	SJO011	\$ 19,551
7	SJO012	\$ 14,204
8	SJO017	\$ 2,345
9	SJO018	\$ 12,729
10	SJO020	\$ 11,430
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$ 308,901</b>

COMPLETED		
1	SJO014	\$ 87,236
2	SJO015	\$ 10,210
3	SJO016	\$ 83,962
4	SJO019	\$ 97,968
5	SJO024	\$ 18,220
6	SJO026	\$ 5,922
7	SJO027	\$ 6,404
8	SJO030	\$ 24,316
9	SJO031	\$ 7,295

COMPLETED		
10	SJO035	\$ 19,172
11	SJO036	\$ 15,349
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$ 376,054</b>

PENDING		
1	imISJO001	\$ 99,579
2	SJO048	\$ 25,985
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$ 125,564</b>

CANCELLED		
1	SJO013	\$ 9,827

REJECTED		
1	iSJO001	
2	iSJO010	
3	iSJO011	
4	<b>SJO002</b>	
5	<b>SJO004</b>	
6	<b>SJO005</b>	
7	<b>SJO021</b>	
8	<b>SJO023</b>	

**Administration and Operations**

- **Activity Database (ADa):** On-going staff training continues and is focused on improving execution and streamlining of routine tasks. The Database Manager continues to participate via Skype in an OTI effort to develop a Web-based Activity Database.
- **Finance:** Finance and Programming department are in discussions to improve grantee’s reporting function and ironing out accounting requirements.
- **Procurement:** Equipment procurement has continued for approved grants; however delivery to the island has been halted until the travel hold is lifted.
- **Human Resources:** A new Program Security Manager began in January and recruitment for an additional Program Assistant and Finance Assistant continues.

**Information and Communication Technologies**

- Equipment procured continues to be prepared for travel with the expectation of an eventual lifting of the travel hold.

**Security**

- The new Program Security Manager participated in a week-long orientation. He is in the process of reviewing and updating as needed all security protocols.

### 3. Budget Information

CLIN	Description	Total	Obligated 2008	Disbursed December 2009	Cumulative Amount Disbursed
001	Operations	\$ 4,877,599		\$ 166,429.57	\$ 2,206,075.67
002	Fixed Fee Operations	\$ 244,380		\$ 8,321.48	\$ 110,303.79
003	Grants	\$ 10,200,000		\$ 124,495.55	\$ 990,143.78
004	Fixed Fee on Grants	\$ 204,000		\$ 2,489.91	\$ 19,802.87
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 15,535,979</b>	<b>\$ 7,170,671</b>	<b>\$ 301,736.51</b>	<b>\$ 3,326,326.11</b>

### 4. Problems Encountered: Issues and Proposed Actions

- The travel hold that followed the detention of a US contractor continues. The CCSSP is making the necessary adjustments to continue implementation, local beneficiary/grantee engagement and minimize exposure to risk.
- Due to the recent earthquake in Haiti, OTI postponed the Program Performance Review that was scheduled for the end of January 2010.

### 5. Upcoming Activities

- CREA/Costa Rica has the following activities planned for February 2010:
  - Continue, as much as possible, implementation of grants currently in the pipeline.
  - Continue to identify NGOs for grant ideas that are in the works.
  - Evaluate and determine contingency plans and prepare for an eventual lifting of the travel hold.
  - Travel to the island has been placed on hold until further notice. Briefings and planning continues in preparation for travel.
  - Hold strategic planning sessions in Costa Rica for activities: SJO022, 033, 038.
  - Meeting of consultants in a third country for SJO041, 044, 045.
  - CCSSP administrative procedures training for grantee administrator of SJO044 & 045 in Costa Rica.
  - Finalize close out process for completed grants.