



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

Contract Number DOT-I-00-03-00009-00

Monthly Report

December 2011

Submitted January 10, 2011

1. Country Situation Update

Pope Benedict XVI to visit Cuba

The Roman Catholic Church announced that Pope Benedict XVI would visit Cuba March 26-28, 2012, in the only the second Papal visit to the island post-Revolution, following John Paul II's first visit in 1998. Benedict will visit Santiago, where Raul Castro will receive him personally. In line with the official reasons to honor the 400th anniversary of the appearance of the *Virgen de Caridad del Cobre*, Benedict will visit the sanctuary of Cuba's patron saint before flying to Havana to meet with Cardinal Jaime Ortega, other church leaders, and a private meeting with Raul Castro. The Pope will perform Mass in Havana's Revolution Plaza, where John Paul II previously held Mass for a huge crowd estimated above 500,000. Though the visit is short and closely tied to the anniversary of the *Virgen de Caridad del Cobre*, the timing appears to recognize the larger role in civil society, economic reforms and protection of human rights the Church has been allowed in recent years.

Cuba to release 2,900 prisoners as act of goodwill

In response to pressure from religious institutions and relatives, Raul Castro announced on December 24 that 2,900 prisoners, some held for political crimes, would be released as a goodwill gesture. Of the 2,900 individuals to be released, 86 are foreign prisoners from 25 countries. U.S. contractor is not included in this group. President Raul Castro stated that "the humanitarian aspect of the amnesty would show Cuba's strength" in anticipation of Benedict's upcoming visit to the island. Cuban authorities maintained that the country holds no political prisoners, accusing those charged with political crimes of being mercenaries of the U.S. government, and stressed that the scheduled amnesty would not be extended to any prisoners convicted of serious crimes including murder, espionage or drug trafficking.

Economic Reforms

The Cuban Government reports that 80% of licensed *cuentapropistas* have joined the State worker's union, the *Central de Trabajadores de Cuba* (CTC), the only union permitted on the island. The Government states that this level of participation reflects the disposition of the majority of these self-employed workers to organize themselves and have representation under their various occupations and specializations. The Secretary General of the CTC, Salvador Valdés Mesa, said "the organization has worked at all levels of its structure throughout the last year, to integrate those workers who opt for this mode of employment." However, despite the optimism on the part of the Government, union members and independent journalists condemn pressures placed on *cuentapropistas* to join the CTC, with CTC membership guaranteeing the Castro Regime additional control over the emerging self-employed sector. According to Roberto de Jesús Guerra, *cuentapropistas* who do not join the CTC are required to present a "declaration," explaining their decision. Without joining the CTC, *cuentapropistas* lose the ability to participate in the decision-making processes currently defining these emerging sectors. As part of the controls imposed over the self-employed sector, CTC officials visit CTC members periodically. The majority of non-State (self-employed) workers not affiliated with the CTC are from commercial trade, food service (more than 100,000) and transportation (approximately 60,000.)

2. Programmatic Highlights and Major Activities

Programmatic Activities:

Key Programmatic Accomplishments:

- **Sector CP** - *This innovative sector seeks to counter apathy and stimulate civic engagement by supporting media projects that communicate positive, unbiased messages through different aspects of everyday life and humor. In previous activities under this sector, the CCSSP created a variety of media products and was able to shape the social content of the items produced to promote civic analysis and a sense of duty for the targeted audience.*
- [SJO083]: Final payments have been made to the grantee, and all reports have been submitted for approval. A final evaluation is in development and administrative closeout will be completed in January.
- [SJO101]: This grant supports the production of 4 deliverables based on the results of grants SJO074 and SJO092. During December, the third deliverable was released and distributed. The fourth deliverable was submitted for approval, and is scheduled for release in January. The fifth deliverable has been revised and will be completed, approved and ready for launch by the third week of January.
- [SJO102]: This grant continues activities started under grants SJO070 and SJO079. During December, a second set of deliverables was approved and distributed according to a revamped distribution strategy. The grantee submitted a report of the results of distribution during November, and will provide the same for December. During January, a third set of deliverables will be finalized for distribution.
- [SJO103]: As a follow-on activity to SJO076, this grant supports the creation of additional products for distribution through popular networks. The dissemination strategy approved in November was revisited in December following low impact. Under the revised strategy, the products' popularity is increasing and working to reenergize efforts toward influencing new audiences.
- [SJO104]: This grant launched a new product targeted toward a new audience demographic, to be distributed across several platforms. A final draft of the deliverable was approved in December, including technical and content requirements, and the grantee has started to produce the final deliverable.
- [SJO105]: Based on ideas similar to SJO104, this grant will launch a new product to promote the development of local communities and group collaboration skills. The grantee submitted a draft deliverable of content and technical requirements. Pending approval of special time and budget considerations, the grantee will begin production of the final deliverable.
- [SJO106]: The grantee is preparing a workshop curriculum using materials finalized under SJO083 and coordinating travel logistics for mid-January. Activities dependent on cash disbursements are being reviewed and may be adjusted for implementation under a different mechanism.
- [SJO107]: This grant will support a community networking tool developed under SJO084. The platform was launched publicly in December, with targeted promotion to local audiences to encourage participation. A viral dissemination plan is scheduled for January to increase user participation.

- **Sector CP (2)** - *This sector has exponentially exceeded expectations, and has demonstrated a true desire for freedom of expression and a need for increased networking capacity on the island. Therefore, the CCSSP has allocated significant resources toward achieving further success in this sector.*
 - [SJO098]: The deliverable and final reports were submitted by the grantee in November, and additional information has been requested by Creative. The grantee is working to finalize this additional information and revise the deliverable accordingly.
 - [SJO100]: Continuing activities started under SJO094 to deepen quality use of the platform and transition to a sustainable management structure, the grantee has adapted new promotion tactics to engage new users and encourage existing users to increase their use. Some tactics have been less successful than others, and the grantee is revisiting ideas to better target the successful approaches to target audiences. The grantee continues to monitor platform functionality to ensure continued services.
- **Sector US** – *In this sector, CCSSP explored the reality of this population group and discovered significant potential for civic initiatives. With Latin American NGOs whose experience and characteristics are similar to the target population, civic activities are conducted to influence independent action.*
 - [SJO075]: Final reports have been submitted, and final payments for administrative costs were requested. The grant is in administrative closeout and an evaluation is in development.
- **Other Activities**
 - [SJO082]: The field work was successfully completed and the team returned to their country safely. Following their return, the grantee held several sessions with the field team to systematize all information collected. The final reports were submitted to OTI/Creative the third week of December. A follow up grant will be negotiated with the grantee during January.
 - [SJO090]: In parallel to SJO082, the supporting field team returned to their country without issue, and contributed to the final report covering activities under both grants. Travel expense reports have been submitted for processing. A cost-extension amendment is under review by OTI in order to support an additional M&E instrument and a debriefing meeting with the COP and PDO.
 - [SJO096]: The schedule of activities was extended through January instead of December. The grant will not need further funding, only a time extension to allow the beneficiaries to finish activities and reporting requirements. Concrete results are expected by the end of January.
 - [SJO097]: The primary activity was successfully completed during November. The grantee submitted final activity and expense reports in December. Final payments and a final evaluation will be completed in January.
 - [SJO099]: The grantee hosted a series of workshops for beneficiaries based on the island. The grantee provided two experts to facilitate the workshops, and to transmit knowledge and specific techniques on project management and engaging small groups.
 - [SJO108:] This grant was issued as an intermediary phase to effectively coordinate follow-on activities to SJO095. A strategic planning session was held between OTI, Creative, the

grantee organization and a potential implementing partner. A final session report detailing next steps has been submitted for approval and follow-on activities are being developed based on the outcome of this session.

Program Operations

- Grants cleared to date: **106** (16 in process, 13 completed, 65 closed, 7 cancelled, 5 rejected after clearance)

Status Count				
Pending	Cleared	Completed	Closed	Cancelled / Rejected
0	16	13	65	7 / 10* <i>*5 had been cleared</i>

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CLEARED		
1	SJO075	\$69,655.00
2	SJO082	\$185,409.00
3	SJO090	\$39,710.00
4	SJO096	\$50,425.00
5	SJO097	\$49,482.00
6	SJO098	\$70,000.00
7	SJO099	\$61,952.00
8	SJO100	\$175,400.00
9	SJO101	\$157,290.00
10	SJO102	\$81,301.00
11	SJO103	\$13,164.00
12	SJO104	\$66,158.00
13	SJO105	\$94,516.00
14	SJO106	\$26,694.00
15	SJO107	\$127,492.00
16	SJO108	\$15,231.00
Subtotal:		\$1,283,879.00

COMPLETED		
1	SJO061	\$26,671.00
2	SJO068	\$46,723.00
3	SJO076	\$71,104.00
4	SJO078	\$40,251.00
5	SJO079	\$63,136.00
6	SJO083	\$35,491.00
7	SJO084	\$91,254.00
8	SJO085	\$42,903.00
9	SJO087	\$90,000.00
10	SJO092	\$80,549.00
11	SJO093	\$90,000.00
12	SJO094	\$144,922.00
13	SJO095	\$36,760.00
Subtotal:		\$859,764.00

CLOSED		
1	SJO001	\$95,420.00
2	SJO003	\$17,157.00
3	SJO006	\$81,421.00
4	SJO007	\$123,098.00
5	SJO008	\$34,332.00
6	SJO009	\$24,256.00

7	SJO010	\$30,359.00
8	SJO011	\$19,601.00
9	SJO012	\$14,204.00
10	SJO014	\$47,453.00
11	SJO015	\$7,328.00
12	SJO016	\$72,709.00
13	SJO017	\$2,345.00
14	SJO018	\$12,759.00
15	SJO019	\$89,059.00
16	SJO020	\$11,430.00
17	SJO022	\$72,098.00
18	SJO024	\$12,784.00
19	SJO025	\$86,994.00
20	SJO026	\$4,655.00
21	SJO027	\$4,743.00
22	SJO028	\$63,655.00
23	SJO029	\$57,625.00
24	SJO030	\$17,830.00
25	SJO031	\$5,876.00
26	SJO032	\$78,769.00
27	SJO033	\$74,390.00
28	SJO034	\$65,522.00
29	SJO035	\$19,429.00
30	SJO036	\$14,525.00
31	SJO037	\$36,210.00
32	SJO038	\$99,163.00
33	SJO039	\$38,510.00
34	SJO040	\$141,427.00
35	SJO041	\$4,947.00
36	SJO042	\$21,551.00
37	SJO044	\$86,900.00
38	SJO046	\$21,940.00
39	SJO047	\$29,152.00
40	SJO048	\$4,542.00
41	SJO049	\$89,900.00
42	SJO050	\$129,050.00
43	SJO052	\$53,161.00
44	SJO053	\$12,248.00
45	SJO054	\$30,309.00
46	SJO055	\$55,503.00
47	SJO056	\$69,091.00

48	SJO057	\$4,538.00
49	SJO058	\$125,571.00
50	SJO062	\$54,802.00
51	SJO063	\$8,819.00
52	SJO064	\$4,284.00
53	SJO065	\$25,886.00
54	SJO066	\$17,316.00
55	SJO067	\$86,732.00
56	SJO069	\$19,149.00
57	SJO070	\$28,838.00
58	SJO071	\$55,674.00
59	SJO072	\$213,130.00
60	SJO073	\$24,155.00
61	SJO074	\$36,328.00
62	SJO077	\$176,206.00
63	SJO080	\$6,918.00
64	SJO081	\$12,245.00
65	SJO086	\$11,225.00
Subtotal:		\$3,097,246.00

CANCELLED		
1	SJO013	\$9,825.00
2	SJO043	\$5,687.00
3	SJO045	\$16,707.00
4	SJO059	\$3,325.00
5	SJO088	\$14,808.00
6	SJO089	\$17,654.00
7	SJO091	\$3,929.00
Subtotal:		\$71,935.00

REJECTED		
1	iSJO001	
2	iSJO010	
3	iSJO011	
4	SJO002	Rejected After Clearance
5	SJO004	
6	SJO005	
7	SJO021	
8	SJO023	
9	SJO051	Never Approved
10	SJO060	

Administration and Operations

- **Activity Database (ADa):** Creative staff continue to update the Activity Database with information from the field. In addition, the DC-based team is working closely with the Implementation team in the field to ensure weekly tracking of grant expenditures and maintain adequate grant / operations funds control. The most recent ADa update from OTI was completed successfully throughout master and local copies of the database.
- **Finance:** All financial transactions continue to be managed from Washington, D.C. with support from a finance assistant in the field who working closely with grantees to ensure timely grant implementation. Projections for the last six months of the program are being developed to ensure obligated funds are fully committed.
- **Close Out:** Creative submitted a revised Contract Completion Plan to OTI for approval of planned close out activities to take place beginning March 2012. In preparation for close out and to ensure audit-readiness of grant files, the Creative's Field Finance Manager will conduct an internal audit of priority grants and a due diligence audit of the SJO082/SJO090 grantee during the month of January.

3. Budget Information

CLIN	Description	Total	Obligated	Disbursed November 2011	Cumulative Amount
001	Operations	\$ 4,887,599		\$ 88,175	\$ 4,552,244
002	Fixed Fee Operations	\$ 244,380		\$ 4,409	\$ 227,612
003	Grants	\$ 10,200,000		\$ 92,264	\$ 4,492,375
004	Fixed Fee on Grants	\$ 204,000		\$ 1,845	\$ 89,847
	TOTAL	\$ 15,535,979	\$ 11,170,671	\$ 186,693	\$ 9,362,078

4. Problems Encountered: Issues and Proposed Actions

- There were no significant issues to report in this period.

5. Upcoming Activities

Creative has the following activities planned for January 2012:

- Creative staff will hold a debrief meeting with the general coordinator from the SJO082/SJO090 grantee to assess the main results from these grants and develop follow-on activities for the first quarter.
- Beneficiaries under SJO096 will hold two activities open to the public in January. These activities will highlight the work of the beneficiaries and attract new participants.
- Following training and planning meetings, SJO099 beneficiaries will return to the island to begin new activities under their own projects. These activities will be supported by a follow-on grant.
- OTI/Creative will meet with grantee staff implementing under SJO101, SJO102, SJO103, SJO104, and SJO105 to assess product deliverables and coordinate strategy.
- Three Creative staff will attend M&E and research methodology training in Washington, DC.