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JAMAICA COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECT II (COMET II)

QUARTERLY REPORT

January 1, 2014 – March 30, 2014

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACB	Anti-Corruption Branch (of the Jamaican Constabulary Force)
CBO	Community Based Organization
COL	Culture of Lawfulness
COMET II	Community Empowerment and Transformation Project II
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CRC	Community Resource Centers
CSSB	Community Safety and Security Branch
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRF	Dispute Resolution Foundation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EMPR	Environmental Mitigation Plan and Report
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
GCC	Global Climate Change
JASW	Jamaican Association of Social Workers
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
JRIU	Justice Reform Implementation Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPDEC	National Association of Parish Development Committees
NIA	National Integrity Action
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
RFA	Request for Application
SDC	Social Development Commission
SRO	School Resource Officer
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency of International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Empowerment and Transformation Phase II project (COMET II) is a five-year USAID-funded project which began on December 2, 2013. The objectives of COMET II are to strengthen community and civil society organizations, increase citizen cooperation and accountability, strengthen juvenile justice and youth at-risk programs, and further support community-based policing practices. The project also supports improvements in the adaptive capacity of communities to prepare for the impacts of extreme weather events and to address global climate change adaptation issues. Cross-cutting development themes are interwoven through COMET II activities—including gender equity, disability rights and HIV prevention—by integrating specific targeted interventions across the wider suite of programmatic activities.

Project activity this quarter focused primarily on start-up efforts and creating the administrative foundation necessary for successful implementation. The project became completely staffed, housed in a fully functional office located in Kingston, and the required Annual Work Plan for Year One, Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), Environmental Mitigation Plan and Report (EMPR), and Grants Manual were all finalized and approved by USAID. Specialized training in grants and procurements were provided and relationships with project counterparts were developed, all essential for full project implementation. In particular, the partnership with Social Development Commission (SDC), Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), and the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) has very quickly developed and is managed through a Steering Committee which meets weekly. COMET II has taken significant steps to ensure the cross-cutting themes are now starting to emerge in program activities and this will be reported on under the Components.

In February, Mr. Doug McCaffery was appointed Acting Chief of Party (COP) and, in March, USAID approved him to serve as Interim COP pending the appointment of a permanent COP. The USAID Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) continued his mentoring role and was instrumental in continuing to weave cross-cutting themes into the main program activities. The COMET II team demonstrates a high level of capability and commitment along with a comprehensive understanding of the program requirements.

I. COMMUNITY DRIVEN CRIME PREVENTION

Under Component One, Community Driven Crime Prevention, COMET II promotes and supports community efforts to address the underlying issues of insecurity through a variety of approaches including training and technical assistance to targeted communities and civil society organizations (CSOs). The COMET II small grants program will enable the capacity of local organizations to be built and will provide direct support to community-driven activities. This component also supports the implementation of global climate change (GCC) adaptation activities, particularly Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), across all components.

Small Grants Program (Activity I.1)

During the quarter, the COMET II Grants Manual was finalized and approved by USAID. Due to the key role that grants will play in the operations of the project, and at the request of COMET II staff and the Interim COP, the Tt DPK Home Office provided two grants experts to plan and provide an intensive week of grants training with the project team. This concentrated training activity started at the end of the quarter and carried over into early April. The experts focused on one-one training with the Grants Manager, and other targeted COMET II staff members based on specialized area, focusing on the solicitation and negotiation, pre-award risk assessments, implementation, financial management, procurement, and the close-out phases of the grants cycle. At the end of the week, along with COMET II Grants Manager, the two grants experts co-facilitated a general grants orientation workshop for all COMET II staff. Afterward, they held a meeting with the senior management to provide a broader overview of grants, focusing on contractual requirements, reporting, and fraud prevention and detection techniques.

During the quarter, the COMET II grants team made the following accomplishments:

- Prepared two grant requests for applications (RFAs), for Components One and Three, and submitted to USAID for approval
- Held an abbreviated grant application workshop for the Cambridge CDC in the St. James parish which has been identified as a strategic, non-competitive grant
- Developed project templates for RFAs, Scope of Work/Program Descriptions, a Grant Payment Tracker, Site Visit Report, and Grant Standard and Required as Applicable Provisions Cheat Sheet
- Developed Materials for future Grant Application Workshops
- Developed Process Maps for Grant Reimbursements, advances, and close-out
- During a grants strategy meeting with the Component Leaders, Interim COP and the USAID COR, identified plans for upcoming grants including:
 - 5 non-competitive grants to CDCs in each of the project's target parishes. They will work along with New Horizons to develop and implement community resource centers (CRCs) in those target communities.
 - Component 2 competitive grant to develop and deliver materials and workshops to the JCF in promoting a culture of lawfulness.

The two completed RFAs, for Components One and Three, are ready for advertising, however, at USAID's request, they are on hold for publication until after the formal launch of the grants program during Awareness Day for Grants and GCC scheduled for May 8, 2014. The grants team is currently developing other RFAs which are expected to be finalized and released on May 8, as well.

Strengthening Community Based Organizations (Activity 1.2)

COMET II's work under this activity involves the development of a social enterprise model which will then be rolled out in targeted communities to build the capacity of select community-based organizations (CBOs). Implementation of these activities awaits the establishment of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) baseline, which will be developed by the University of West Indies (UWI) Mona School of Business. The project's management team has overcome the major obstacles that have slowed subcontract negotiations with UWI and the subcontract is expected to be finalized in April. The delay in finalizing this subcontract with UWI has the potential to create program slippage to other activities under this Annual Work Plan. For example, the Output Indicator of developing five CRCs – one in each Parish – has been identified as undeliverable and COMET II will request a change to the Annual Work Plan and PMP to reduce the target to two.

COMET II has made significant headway in establishing a partnership between its key counterparts and stakeholders to support and strengthen legitimate local governance structures. The partnership with SDC, PIOJ, and the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) has very quickly developed and is managed through a Steering Committee which meets weekly. This committee will prove a very fruitful driver for establishing strong community safety and security initiatives going forward. Three Sub-Committees—Culture of Lawfulness, Global Climate Change, and Community Resource Center—function through a similar partnership model and are tasked with planning and reporting to the Steering Committee. The partnering agencies will formalize their relationship on May 2, 2014 by signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

One product of the partnership with SDC, PIOJ, and the JCF was the first parish visit conducted in St. James. The group toured the St. James SDC offices and installed Dax Pessoa, the COMET II Community Coordinator for St. James, in the office space there provided by the SDC. Additionally, the group met with the regional JCF leads, all of whom pledged their support for the project. The group also met with the Community Development Council (CDC) in the COMET II pilot community of Cambridge where the project team introduced the Community Coordinator, gave an overview of the project to the CDC and youth members, and toured prospective sites for the CRCs.

The project has engaged short-term technical advisor (STTA) Tania Chambers to build the capacity of CBOs to enable them to apply for and manage the grant process under the COMET II condition that they be registered as companies 'limited by guarantee'. Ms. Chambers' will begin her activities following finalization of the baseline data as, under direction from USAID, capacity building cannot commence until that happens.

Supporting Youth Empowerment (Activity 1.3)

COMET II has developed a RFA to identify grantees to support youth empowerment. Specifically, the grantees will develop a program to implement community sporting events for youth and will establish youth skill trade/ vocational programs. As detailed earlier, the release of the RFAs is on hold per USAID's request until after the official Grant Program Launch on May 8. As the RFA will be publicized for the required 30-day period, these grants will likely be awarded in late-June or early-July. Given the short implementation period for these grants during Year One, this could have an impact on the required Outcomes in these two sub-activities pending the grantees' ability to plan and complete the activities during the final quarter of the Annual Work Plan.

The project's plan to establish micro-enterprise initiatives in target communities is reliant on the development of a micro enterprise model through the UWI subcontract which is yet to be finalized.

Enhancing Community Capacity to Adapt to Global Climate Change (Activity 1.4)

The COMET II EMPR was developed and approved by USAID in early March. The COMET II team has embraced the integration of GCC throughout program activities despite their initially limited knowledge of the subject. Senior Technical Advisor Dr. Gina Green and the GCC Coordinator conducted a GCC sensitization seminar for the project staff on February 20 where the team was trained on how to integrate GCC into all the project activities, where possible. The session also provided insight into the requirements of all grants to consider the GCC requirements in their activities.

The GCC Coordinator and senior project manager continue to engage with the relevant Government of Jamaica (GOJ) agencies and other nongovernmental organizations responsible for GCC and emergency management. COMET II has identified that through USAID and other donors, much is being done in this area and COMET II will be lead partnership efforts between these organizations to ensure synergies in approach for greater impact and to ensure that donor activities are not replicated.

COMET II identified Mona Informatix, a division of UWI, to conduct a geographic information systems (GIS) vulnerability assessment and mapping of five communities to identify climate-smart locations for CRCs with minimum impact of the effects of a disaster.

In conjunction with USAID, COMET II has also identified a youth group, the Rangers, that is highly trained and organized to work on activities in the area of DRR. The Rangers are a production of a youth foundation in Jamaica and they engage in climate change prevention activities such as cleaning drains and digging channels for water diversion, among other activities. The Rangers' work directly correlates with the project's aim to ensure disaster preparedness initiatives are incorporated into community safety programs. COMET II will identify the organizational capacity of the Rangers and, where required, provide assistance. The project intends to replicate the resulting model and replicate it across the 25 identified target communities.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TO FOSTER A CULTURE OF LAWFULNESS

Under Component Two, Public Engagement to Foster a Culture of Lawfulness, COMET II promotes and supports the development of initiatives conducive to the establishment of a culture of lawfulness (COL). During Year One, COMET II will support the training of journalists

and police officers on COL, integrity, and ethics issues. COMET II's public engagement focuses on GCC- and DRR-related issues within the context of COL when working with communities.

Involving Civil Society Organizations in a Culture of Lawfulness (Activity 2.1)

The COL Sub-Committee of the COMET II/SDC/JCF/PIOJ Steering Committee will drive all efforts under this activity including an examination of the capacity of Parish Development Committees (PDC) to drive the COL agenda and the development of a strategy to inculcate COL responsibilities into the PDCs in pilot locations. The COL Sub-Committee expects these activities to be completed by April 30 in consultation with stakeholders such as the National Association of Parish Development Committees (NAPDEC) and building on the work being carried out by National Integrity Action (NIA).

Mass Media Campaigns to Foster a Culture of Lawfulness (Activity 2.2)

COMET II has begun engaging EWA Communications, a boutique public relations firm, to assist the development and dissemination of two public service announcements (PSAs). These messages will be used for the developing a strategy for training 25 'civilian journalists' in disseminating COL messages via the range of electronic mediums such as mobile phones, Facebook and Twitter. In both of these efforts, COMET II is collaborating with NIA to ensure synergies between both projects works in this area.

Engaging the Police to Promote a Culture of Lawfulness (Activity 2.3)

At the end of March, COMET II began developing an RFA to identify a grantee who will work with the JCF Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) to develop capacity building workshops for delivery to the ACB and Community Safety and Security Branch (CSSB) to augment the JCF ethics programs. While the target audience for COMET II is the ACB and the CSSB, the head of the ACB has indicated that once the training program is developed, they will be delivering the workshops force-wide throughout the JCF. The messages will revolve around human rights and accountability and the program will be designed to be non-confrontational. The project will release the RFA on May 8 with the other developed RFAs.

3. ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING AND PROGRAMS FOR AT RISK YOUTH

Under Component Three, Alternative Sentencing and Programs for At-Risk Youth, COMET II works, collaboratively with the Justice Reforms Implementation Unity (JRIU) of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), to provide a holistic approach to assisting to prevent and divert at-risk youth from risky behavior into productive and lawful enterprises and employment.

COMET II has identified a risk in this area as the MOJ has been attempting to develop alternative sentencing and diversion programs for nearly four years without success. Not to be impeded by the slow progress of the MOJ, COMET II will work directly with community groups in a proactive manner and focus on a 'prevention' approach as well as intervention through alternative programs with at-risk youth and remandees.

Prevention (Activity 3.1)

COMET II identified the Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF) as a key partner in youth crime prevention programs. The Alternative Sentencing Coordinator completed a formal assessment of the DRF's organizational capacity to determine its ability to support COMET II activities (see Annex A). As noted in the report, determined that DRF does not have the capability to operating in all target parishes and appears to not to have the necessary funding to extend beyond its current scope. However, the DRF is a potential applicant to grant RFAs which may provide opportunity for COMET II to assist with building the capacity of the organization.

COMET II intends to engage the Jamaican Association of Social Workers (JASW) to assist with development and delivery of youth oriented strategies. The project leadership has already had

meetings with JASW to define a scope of work for their technical assistance. Social work skills will be imperative in community interventions, especially with youth.

COMET II has developed a RFA to identify grantees to implement youth at-risk prevention program, involving education and vocational activities. The RFA will be released on May 8 following the Grant Program Launch.

In conjunction with Activity 1.4, COMET II also plans to work with the Rangers to engage at-risk youth to participate in the planning and execution of DRR events.

Diversion/ Alternative Sentencing (Activity 3.2)

In March, COMET II met with the JRIU to assess current progress on alternative sentencing. As indicated before, it appears little progress has been made in this area and COMET II will continue to monitor any progress and, where possible, add support to JRIU initiatives.

Rehabilitation (Activity 3.3)

Along with the grant for Activity 3.1 mentioned above, the Component 3 grant RFA also seeks to identify grantees to develop a youth rehabilitation program to reintegrate youth who are first time offenders and remandees. The RFA will be released on May 8.

4. COMMUNITY BASED POLICING

Under Component Four, Community-Based Policing (CBP), COMET II continues to consolidate gains made to date by communities and the JCF in CBP practices. During Year One, COMET II will collaborate with the MNS and the MOE to support the safe school campaign concurrently building the capacity of School Resource Officers (SROs). Activities focus on promoting community engagement in community safety programs both in CRCs (established under Component One) and via initiatives such as Youth Summer Camp and Youth Leadership Training to foster better relationships between the JCF and communities.

The work under this Component is being synchronized with activities under other Components.

Supporting Community Based Policing (Activity 4.1)

COMET II and CSSB will complete updates to the JCF CBP marketing material by the end of April which will incorporate the Commissioner's strategy of "proximity policing". The development of CRCs in selected communities will enhance the initiative of proximity policing as a police post will be incorporated into each CRC. The updated material is also being used to refine CBP training within the JCF and COMET II has begun the vetting process to identify the intended audience.

COMET II has commenced reviewing the JCF's SRO Program and has included a JASW social worker in the discussions and sessions with SROs. It is immediately clear that SROs require training in dispute resolution which COMET II intends to include in its forthcoming recommendations for an updated program. The Community Policing Coordinator and the COP have scheduled a focus group discussion for mid-April to hear from SROs to garner their thoughts on the status of the SRO program and what is needed to enhance the program.

COMET will be supporting the National Police Youth Club Summer Camp and will provide messaging and sessions to be incorporated into the program specifically relating to topics such as COL, GCC, and gender. These sessions will be conducted by Component 2 Coordinator and the GCC Coordinator. The first logistics meeting to determine the program and budget will be held in early April.

Supporting the Jamaican Constabulary Force Anti-Corruption Strategy (Activity 4.2)

Discussions with the JCF, and the head of the ACB in particular, indicate that the JCF Anti-Corruption Strategy is being effectively implemented. In the past 4 years, over 450 police officers have been removed from the JCF with the Commissioner 'losing faith' in them. Further,

many police officers have been charged with a range of offenses, including a number of recent cases in which the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) has charged a number of police officers with murder.

COMET II review indicates that the JCF Vetting Unit is operating efficiently and officers intended for all sensitive posts are subject to the vetting process. COMET II will continue to monitor activities of the ACB and the Vetting Unit and assistance will be provided when required.

The project team has met with other anti-corruption bodies, such as the Financial Investigation Division (FID) and INDECOM, and at this time they are not seeking any support from COMET II. They have been informed of COMET II's program intentions and the limited ability for assistance to their agencies.

5. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Start-up activities commenced within days of the awarding of the contract in early December and continued in full force in January. Implementation of the program has progressed steadily notwithstanding an early change in COP. By the end of March full staffing had been achieved, an Interim COP appointed, and progress on implementation is now under way.

Effective Management of Program Staff (Activity 5.1)

All staff members are in place. The finance and administration team, despite its limited staff, continues to efficiently manage office functionality and institutionalize strong administrative practices.

The COMET II staff has adopted the Activity Plan Tracker and is focused on their implementation responsibilities and timelines. During sessions, the team has identified where activities may cross Components and they are working together in those instances to achieve outcomes.

Monitoring and Evaluation (Activity 5.2)

This is an area of risk and schedule slippage. As mentioned above, the subcontract with UWI to prepare the baseline data has been delayed due prolonged negotiations. While the project expects a signed subcontract in April, many activities across the program cannot begin until after the baseline data is collected and collated.

Senior Technical Director Glenn Crannage will return to Jamaica in May to assist the M&E Coordinator and the COP continue development of the M&E reporting tools for the COMET II project. As noted in the approved PMP, the first recording of Indicator outputs and outcomes are scheduled for Month 6 (May) which will be reported to USAID in the next quarterly report.

6. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Implementation challenges noted at the beginning of the quarterly reporting period have, for the most part, been overcome. The early change in the COP caused some minor interruptions, but now COMET II implementation is progressing smoothly under the leadership of Interim COP Doug McCaffery. Office set-up and staff recruitment efforts, which continued through early March, are now completed which ensure the project team is operating at full capacity.

There are two continuing programmatic delays and implementation challenges to note:

- Delays in subcontract negotiations with UWI have set back several program activities that are pending the collection and collation of the baseline data necessary for M&E requirements and developing a model for supporting social enterprise. The COMET II team has successfully navigated the final negotiation hurdles and this subcontract will be signed during April and activities will commence immediately. Senior Technical Director Glenn Crannage's return in May will also assist the team to focus on the M&E approach and finalize the baseline data.

- Although COMET II is prepared to implement the grants program and to publish the first round of RFAs, grant activity is on hold pending the Grants Launch/Awareness Day scheduled for May 8. The late start to the grants program may affect expected Outcomes for Year One as certain Annual Work Plan activities will be completed through the work of grantees.

7. UPCOMING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

There are two significant activities happening in the next quarter:

- On May 2, COMET II will sponsor a MOU-signing event that embraces and formalizes the partnership that has developed between the SDC, PIOJ, the JCF, and USAID. The importance of this event cannot be understated as it serves as the foundation on which COMET II intends to build a holistic approach to support communities in developing in achieving this goal and they have active roles to play.
- On May 8, COMET II will sponsor a Community Awareness Day for approximately 150 CBO representatives. The event will be divided into three parts:
 - During the first part of the event, the USAID Mission Director will present 15 youth from St. James with their birth certificates. For youth to be enrolled in school, they need to present a copy of their birth certificate which are not available to many Jamaican families and cause a significant obstacle for many disadvantaged youth across Jamaica. This presentation is symbolic of the 1,400 birth certificates that USAID has provided funding for youth in the area.
 - The second part of the day is the official launch of the COMET II grant program which will lay the foundation for the project's grant activities over the next five years. On the same day, three RFAs will be released and advertised which will result in up to 10 grants being issued.
 - The third part of the day will provide an overview and presentation to stakeholders and communities on the GCC component of COMET II including its intentions and expected outcomes. Renowned Jamaican expert, Professor Tony Clayton of UWI, was invited to be a guest speaker and he will provide the keynote speech for this section.