



LIBERIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND VOICE INITIATIVE (LAVI)

**SUMMARY ACTIVITY REPORT
SECOND QUARTER: YEAR I
January - March 2016**

LIBERIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND VOICE INITIATIVE (LAVI)

**QUARTER TWO REPORT
JANUARY 1-MARCH 31, 2016**

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ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Council
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
SMI-L	Building Markets Sustainable Marketplace Initiative Liberia (SMI-L)
CBO	Community-based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEMESP	Center for Media Study and Peacebuilding
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
Comprac	Community of Practice
COP	Chief of Party
COR	USAID Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DRG	Democracy, Rights, and Governance
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
FDA	Forestry Development Agency
FLY	Federation of Liberian Youth
FOI	Freedom of Information
FY16	Fiscal Year 2016
GOL	Government of Liberia
GUC	Grants under Contract
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IREDD	Institute for Research and Democratic Development
KM	Knowledge Management
LAVI	USAID/Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries Transitional Initiative
LGSA	USAID/Land Governance Support Activity
LINSU	Liberia National Students Union
LIPA	Liberia Institute of Public Administration
LLC	Liberia Labor Congress
LMDP	Liberia Media Development Program
LSA	USAID/Liberia Strategic Analysis project

ME&L	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MELP	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Procedures
MLME	Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy
NARDA	New African Research and Development Agency
NAHWAL	National Health Workers Union of Liberia
NTAL	National Teachers Association of Liberia
NCSC	National Civil Society Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PPCC	Public Procurement Concessions Commission
PUL	Press Union of Liberia
QPR	Quarterly Performance Review Meeting
RF	Results Framework
RRF	Rice & Rights Foundation
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
ToT	Training of Trainers
UL	University of Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIPNET	Women in Peace Building Network
WONGOSOL	Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 25, 2015, USAID contracted Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) to implement the USAID/Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI) project. LAVI is a five-year activity designed to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships to advocate for and monitor policy and accountability reforms. LAVI will contribute to the overall goal of USAID/Liberia's civil society and media interventions, to increase the influence of citizens and media in the governance of public goods and services. The program also supports Development Objective I in USAID Liberia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS): more effective, accountable, and inclusive governance.

Four key objectives underscore the goal of LAVI:

- Increased horizontal and vertical linkages among actors engaged in similar issues;
- Increased organizational capacity of targeted civil society organizations (CSOs) to participate in issue-based reforms;
- On-going capacity development services available on local market; and
- Learning and methodologies shared and applied by other development actors.

This report covers activities implemented under the LAVI project during Quarter Two (January –March, 2016). During this period, LAVI made significant progress on fundamental project activities that would lead to the smooth running of the project. The LAVI project office was fully established to facilitate operations; recruitment of local and international staff was finalized, with all positions filled; LAVI grants manual and protocols for grant implementation were drafted and approved by USAID/Liberia; LAVI's work plan for FY 2016 and ME&L plan were finalized and approved by USAID/Liberia; and outreach to engage a broader spectrum of the Liberian CSO community and other key stakeholders accelerated through a variety of approaches. In this process, LAVI reached out to 60 CSOs, NGOs, and other non-traditional actors through e-mails, phone calls, meetings and invitations to participate in LAVI activities.

In an effort to enhance its outreach efforts, LAVI held its first partners meeting on January 28, 2016. The meeting was intended to present LAVI's goals and objectives to the local partners; to provide clarity where necessary and to solicit feedback from the partners on LAVI's goal and objectives. The meeting also created an opportunity for LAVI to understand the common issues affecting the formation of coalitions among CSOs, and issues related to capacity gaps among CSOs. The partners who attended the meeting hailed from Montserrado, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties.

As part of LAVI's continuous effort to reach out to Government, LAVI COP Kelley Jones held a meeting with Senator Albert Chie, co-chairperson on the House and Senate Committee on Lands, Mines, Energy and Natural Resources and Environment. The meeting was a courtesy call to Senator Chie to introduce LAVI, and to solicit the support of the Senator for all LAVI activities, particularly in the Natural Resource Management and Concessions area.

To encourage local ownership and high-level strategic oversight of the project, LAVI collaborated with USAID/Liberia to establish the Project Advisory Council. The five-person council held its inception meeting on March 10, 2016. The Council elected its chairperson who will chair the Council for one year.

LAVI also held roundtable meetings with CSOs and other partners at its office in Sinkor. The two political economy analysis (PEA) roundtable meetings were intended to discuss general issues around the natural resource management (NRM) sector, and led to identification of specific issues suitable for LAVI's intervention in its first year.

To enable LAVI staff to implement key project activities, address gender issues, and understand the dynamics of multi-stakeholder coalitions, LAVI conducted a number of trainings for its staff in Quarter Two. The trainings included ICT4D training, Network Analysis, Depth of Partnership, Gender and Social Inclusion, and Political Economy Analysis (PEA) trainings. The trainings provided the LAVI staff with the skills to conduct different analysis and to replicate the training for grantees and members of community of practice (Comprac).

LAVI also commenced efforts to award its first set of grants under the NRM thematic window. As part of this process, the team began to draft a request for application (RFA) which will be submitted to USAID for review and approval. LAVI expects to award its first set of grants in Quarter Three. These grants will be awarded in different categories for different purposes. For example, LAVI will award grants to qualified and competent CSOs to implement projects to address specific issues within the NRM sector, while subsequent grants will be intended to provide capacity building support to selected LAVI partners.

Also in Quarter Two, LAVI commenced efforts to establish its Learning Lab. The Learning Lab will create a collaborative space for networking, outreach, and developing innovations, particularly to research and advocate for open and inclusive governance..

Finally, LAVI will also continue to expand its pool of partners and raise awareness concerning the goals of LAVI among the general population focusing primarily on non-traditional organizations and marginalized groups.

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

LAVI's project achievements are reported under each result as per the program results framework, and activities outlined in the Gantt Chart of the approved work plan. The report details the accomplishments under each result, the challenges encountered (if any) and methods used to resolve those challenges, the lessons learned, and the measures taken to improve project implementation. For activities that are not completed or implemented, the report provides reasons for delay in implementation, and outlines follow-up actions for the outstanding activity, detailed with specific time line, responsible person, and approach(es) for implementing the activity.

A. RESULT I: Horizontal and Vertical Linkages among Actors Engaged in Similar Issues Strengthened

During the second quarter of project implementation, LAVI intensified its outreach efforts by holding several meetings with key actors. The meetings were intended to assess existing horizontal and vertical linkages, the relationships between and among CSOs and the existing gaps within these relationships. Discussions from the meetings informed LAVI about the activities with which the organizations were involved, and the challenges they were facing. Through these meetings, LAVI was able to identify formal and informal networks that exist among the CSOs and non-traditional actors, trade unions, professional associations, private sector and other private individuals that provide professional services.

LAVI continued to build on its activities from Quarter One by continuing to raise awareness about its activities, strengthen relationships with relevant stakeholders and expand its pool of partners including non-traditional partners. This effort yielded good results, as CSOs like the Labor Congress, National Health Workers Association and other non-traditional actors have begun to actively participate in LAVI activities. LAVI's outreach efforts also helped to obtain an understanding of the activities that the various

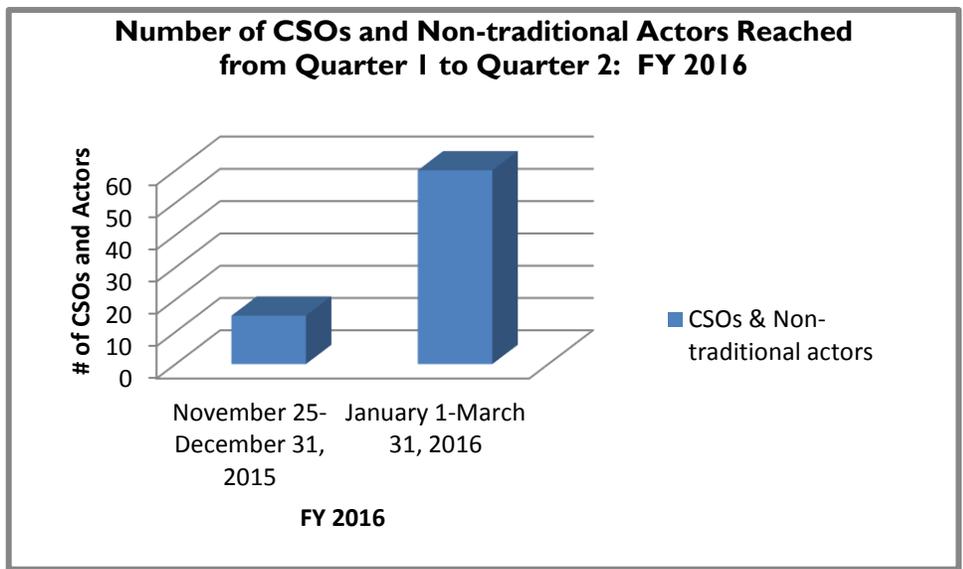
organizations and CSOs were implementing, and the level of engagement among the CSOs. This information enabled LAVI to strategize and reinforce its efforts to encourage broader collaboration among CSOs and at the same time sensitize them on issues that are of common interest to them. Through these processes, the CSOs are acquiring better understanding of LAVI’s activities, at the same time realizing that coalitions can be formed with other partners regardless of their primary area of focus.

D.1 – Conduct assessments and analysis

Outreach meetings with International/Local Organizations and Government of Liberia Institutions

During Quarter Two, LAVI reached out to 60 CSOs, professional associations, government agencies and private sector institutions through e-mails, meetings, and phone calls inviting them to meetings and events to share program information and lay the foundation for partners to establish and strengthen linkages amongst them.

As part of these activities, LAVI held meetings with 16 organizations. These organizations included NRM Consortium, Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Liberia Labor Congress, Rural Human Rights Activist Program, Senator Albert Chie, Co-Chairperson of the House and Senate Committee on Lands, Mines, Energy, Natural Resources and the Environment ,the



National Teachers Association of Liberia (NTAL), the Liberia National Students Union (LINSU), the National Health Workers Association, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Civil Society Council of Liberia, Center for Security Studies and Development, Liberia Governance Support Activity (LGSA), Trust Africa, the Concessions Working

Group and GIZ. The meetings enabled LAVI to share LAVI project information and gather first hand information from the INGOs, CSOs and GoL institutions on their current activities. Some of these meetings were also intended to introduce LAVI’s Chief of Party Kelley Jones and to discuss some of LAVI’s activities including the upcoming grant application process.

Based on these meetings, LAVI updated its partners’ database which now includes universities, labor unions, trade unions, private sector entities, and the Inter-religious Council of Liberia. LAVI will continue to expand its pool of partners to ensure that the project builds coalitions and a network of partnerships that are inclusive and reveal issues that affect the greater population. LAVI recorded a very high response rate from partners who were invited to participate in its partners meeting and roundtable discussions. While the reasons for the high turnout rate is not very clear, a it is likely a result of the level of effort the project staff put into reaching out to partners. For example, invitations to partners are

followed with phone calls. Next, whenever the partners participate in any of LAVI's meetings or activities, the LAVI staff emphasize local ownership of the project activities and outcomes. Finally, given the nature of the LAVI's multi stakeholder approach, partners have expressed keen interest in employing different tactics in their advocacy work.

LAVI Partners Meeting: January 28, 2016



One of the group sessions at the LAVI Partners Meeting held at the Corina Hotel on January 28, 2016

On January 28, 2016, LAVI held its first partners' workshop at the Corina Hotel in Monrovia. The objectives of the workshop were threefold: 1) to present LAVI's overall goals and objectives to potential partners, 2) share knowledge amongst partners on how to strengthen collaboration amongst actors of LAVI, and 3) solicit feedback from partners on collaboration initiatives. Twenty seven (27) participants representing 25 institutions (see Annex V) from Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, and Grand Bassa Counties attended the meeting. In total, LAVI invited 30 organizations, and 25 attended including representatives from two government agencies. The workshop was participatory and very interactive.

LAVI's COP, Kelley Jones, officially opened the meeting followed by brief remark from LAVI's Contracting Officer Representative (COR), Michael Haines. Mr. Haines informed the gathering that the LAVI project and the Liberia Media Development Program (LMDP) were two USAID funded projects complementing each other to promote accountability and to increase the voice of citizens.

After brief remarks from Mr. Haines, all participants introduced themselves and the organizations they represented. This exercise allowed participants from Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties to interact with members of other organizations in Montserrado. After the introductions, the LAVI team presented the overall goal and four objectives of the project, and the anticipated results of each objective along with their indicative activities.

Following the presentation of the objectives of LAVI, the participants were organized into three different groups to brainstorm ways in which stakeholders could strengthen collaboration and linkages among different actors (Government, Monrovia based CSOs, county based CSOs, community based organizations (CBOs), the private sector, and the communities). They also deliberated on the role each actor would play in strengthening collaboration among partners on the LAVI project. Below are the outcomes of the group discussions on each of the issues.

ENSURING LINKAGES AND COLLABORATION AMONG ACTORS

To ensure linkages are built and collaboration is strengthened among actors, the participants recommended that LAVI should:

- Foster joint advocacy initiatives between CBOs and CSOs to enable advocacy interventions to have a "louder voice" and a greater impact
- Facilitate more joint meetings between CSOs and CBOs at the community level, and between government and CSOs.

- Adopt measures that will promote learning and technology transfer from one organization to the other by improving communication and Information sharing amongst coalitions of different thematic areas on a regular and coordinated basis.
- Conduct experience sharing meetings, hold regular roundtables and share resources amongst actors to keep all key stakeholders informed about project implementation.
- Regularly engage the private sector and keep them informed on the work of CSOs.
- Hold joint information sharing campaigns and ventures including government, civil society and the private sector to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement among key partners.

ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS OF ACTORS IN ENSURING HEALTHY LINKAGES AND COLLABORATION

On the issue of the role each actor should play during the course of the project to ensure cooperation, coordination, collaboration and joint actions are taken for the success of the project, the participants recommended that capacity building for CSOs should involve Government decision-makers and other non-traditional actors, including faith-based organizations, trade unions, academic institutions and professional associations. They also emphasized government's low level of responsiveness to Freedom of Information requests which are pre-requisites to open engagement with government. Another issue recommended for consideration is the issue of trust among CSOs. The CSOs recommended that the lack of trust should be addressed at all levels of society through campaigns, awareness ventures, and continuous engagement. To sustain these efforts, NGOs and GOL should facilitate dialogue between the private sector and communities, while at the same time the government and the international community should create an enabling environment for strengthening linkages among coalitions. Finally, the partners recommended that CSOs must increase public awareness on policies and NRM provisions.

ENSURING INCLUSION OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND CBOS IN LINKAGES

In response to the question of how LAVI can ensure the inclusion of women, youth and CBOs in the linkages that will be strengthened among CSOs, government institutions and private entities, the participants recommended that coalitions will need to be deliberate in their approaches to ensure inclusion of women, youth and other marginalized groups at all levels. They also added that women and youth should be included in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and that projects should consider activities' impact on children and other marginalized groups in all decision-making processes. The group also suggested that capacity-building is an important tool for promoting equality and equity.

Finally, the partners recommended that LAVI should support and empower CBOs, with the requirement that they include women and youth in their activities in the process of strengthening linkages.

At the end of the meeting, the LAVI Contracting Officer Representative (COR) Michael Haines recommended that LAVI includes labor unions, universities, private sector, and other non-traditional actors in its activities. Mr. Lancedell Mathews, Executive Director of the New African Research and Development Agency (NARDA), commented that the illiterate population seems to be the forgotten/marginalized group in CSO engagement in Liberia and that everyone should start thinking about them as a marginalized group that needs attention like any other. At the end of the meeting, the LAVI COP thanked all the partners for attending the meeting. She informed them that the project will remain in touch with them as project activities unfold.

LAVI CSOs Roundtable Meeting: March 14, 2016

On March 14, 2016 LAVI held its first CSO roundtable meeting on natural resource management. Fifteen (15) participants represented nine CSOs at the roundtable meeting held at LAVI Office. The primary objectives of the roundtable discussion were to conduct a scoping exercise to identify possible

thematic areas for LAVI/multi-stakeholders intervention and to brainstorm with potential partners and CSOs to identify specific areas for possible intervention within the natural resource management thematic window.



LAVI CSOs Roundtable Meeting: March 14, 2016 at LAVI Office

The National Health Workers Union of Liberia (NAHWAL), the Liberia Labor Congress (LLC), the Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD), Trust Africa, the Natural Resource Management Consortium (NRM), Rice & Rights Foundation (RRF), and the Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) attended the meeting. LAVI’s consultant on Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and the LAVI staff also attended the meeting.

The meeting helped to assemble multiple actors from different thematic areas together in the same room to brainstorm on issues related to NRM, and build consensus on specific issues for intervention. One common thought that emerged from the meeting was the fact that issues arising in the NRM thematic area affect CSOs from different thematic areas, especially since these issues affect the population in general.

Even though the meeting did not identify specific areas of intervention on the NRM sector, it helped to identify other critical areas of concern across other sectors in Liberia. The meeting highlighted areas of interest that LAVI could take forward to the Advisory Council for future consideration when the next thematic funding window is in the planning stage. The PEA concept served as the lens through which LAVI is expected to draw an understanding on which issues are within the manageable capacity of LAVI, and which ones will yield greater impact. Some key issues under NRM listed for consideration during the meeting are as follow:

Under the NRM advocacy intervention the following issues were identified:

MAIN ISSUE	SPECIFIC PROBLEMS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land 2. Tax: Transparency and illicit financial flow in the concessions management 3. County Social Development Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to security • Women interests and empowerment in concession areas • County social development fund sitting not inclusive to all • Lack of monitoring on the environmental social impact plans on concessions • Lack of openness in contracting and awards of concessions • Allegations that companies are not paying a fair share of the taxes they owe

The following issues were raised by the CSOs that attended the meeting:

Liberia Labor Congress (LLC): Labor Issues Related To NRM

Following discussions on the advocacy issues, the Labor Congress outlined the issues that they believe affect the labor unions in the concession areas. The Labor Congress described these issues as alarming and worrisome. Some of the problems pointed out by the Labor Congress in the NRM sector are as follows:

- Poorly managed relocation of citizens from concession areas with little or no support
- Low salaries paid to local employees
- Non-inclusion of the Labor Congress on the negotiation of concessions agreement
- Rampant redundancy of employees by companies with little or no compensation.
- Alleged poor working conditions in concession areas.

National Health Workers Association of Liberia (NAHWAL)

During the meeting, the National Health Workers Association of Liberia listed the following issues affecting health workers interest in the NRM sector:

- Women in concession areas do not get the health and safety support they need
- Medical facilities in concession areas are not adequately equipped
- Lack of in-service trainings in the sector for health workers
- Weak health and safety measures for surrounding villages in concession areas
- Generally, working conditions in the concession areas are not as healthy as they should be
- Poor relationship between NAHWAL and the government
- Lack of national health and safety policy even though there is some provisions in concession agreements

Women's Concerns and Issues Related to NRM (WONGOSOL)

During the meeting, WONGOSOL also raised a number of issues as follows:

- Institutional capacity building for women to make them more competitive to company recruitment
- Protection of children in concession areas
- Women's access to justice when they face violence and abuse at the work place
- Consideration of women in the decentralization processes
- Women's reproductive rights at the work place
- Civic education for women
- Low political representation

Due to the interest generated by the team, the meeting ended with a recommendation from the team that LAVI should organize special sessions on each thematic area or issues that the NRM cuts across. They named the issues as land, labor, health and security, and gender related issues.

At the end of the meeting, the LAVI COP Kelley Jones thanked the CSOs for their participation in the meeting. The CSOs in response thanked LAVI for introducing the multi-stakeholder approach, and for the meeting. Some of them explained that though they knew each other through other engagements, they have never converged in a meeting to discuss issues that are of common interest to them. They further added that this process will help strengthen advocacy approaches which will lead to healthy relationships with government and other stakeholders.

D.3 – Make Grants Award

The LAVI Grants Team assisted the DAI Home Office in tailoring DAI's comprehensive Field Grants Manual to the Liberian context which is a deliverable for the LAVI project. The Grants Manual will be used as guidance for the management and implementation of the LAVI grants program. The grants manual was approved by USAID on 30 March 2016.

Following the approval of the Grants Manual, the minimum grant eligibility criteria for the NRM/Concession Thematic Window funding was drafted by the LAVI grants team. The Grants Team also drafted the Evaluation Criteria and Score Sheet for the NRM/Concessions thematic widow funding as required by the grants manual.

LAVI is finalizing the drafting of the RFA for the first set of grants under the NRM. Once the RFA is finalized, it will be submitted to USAID/Liberia for review and approval. Once approved, it will be published to solicit grant proposals from interested parties. This awarding of grants is expected to be implemented in Quarter Three.

B. RESULT II: Organizational Capacity of Targeted CSOs to Participate in Issue-Based Reforms Increased

Develop Assessment Tools for Civil Society Grantee Partners

In February 2016, the capacity development team initiated a desk review of literature related to organizational capacity development to draft a customized Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool that will be tailored to the LAVI objectives. Some of the documents reviewed were the Organization Performance Index (OPI), the OCA tools for USAID funded programs, Organizational Development self-assessment with gender and youth, strategy and operational plan description and other OCA tools specific to past projects the team had worked on.

During the quarter under review, the team compiled and finalized the draft of a customized OCA tool for review and adoption. Currently, the tools are under review and are being updated with questions and strategic approaches that are expected to thoroughly examine the different domains of each organization. With a customized tool that is suitable for the context of the LAVI project, a preliminary self-assessment will be conducted to determine the capacity deficits of each of the organizations following the selection of the sub-grantees. The LAVI team will also conduct an OCA of each organization to provide points of comparison between the self-assessment and the project assessment which will serve as the basis from which the Capacity Development Plans will be drafted in conjunction with the CSOs. This assessment process will also be supplemented with a stakeholder's analysis of the CSO grantees partners to enable LAVI to gauge the number of institutions, their relationship and the existing power dynamics among and between the stakeholders. Progressively, a middle-line and end-line assessment of each organization will be conducted within an acceptable interval (semi-annually or annually) to establish the trend and impact of the capacity development services being provided by LAVI.

C. RESULT III: Development of Ongoing Capacity Development Services in the Local Market Promoted

Establish the 'Capacity Development Service Provider Pool'

To set the basis for promoting the development of an on-going capacity building service provider pool on the local market, LAVI embarked on the identification of organizations and/or institutions that have experience and potential for providing capacity development services in Liberia. The team adopted a two-prong approach in the identification process including 1) the visitation to institutions already in the capacity development service delivery and 2) a random identification of institutions and individuals who are known to provide capacity development services.

On 23rd February 2016, the team visited Building Markets Sustainable Marketplace Initiative Liberia (SMI-L), a former USAID funded project that is working on championing local entrepreneurs and connecting them to new business opportunities, to share experiences and explore the possibilities of linkages to

service providers. The visit helped the team learn from the online platform available at the SMI-L that host and provide easy access to different service providers on the Liberian market. The SMI-L approach of working across sectors, and with small and large companies to support local business and strengthen supply chains between companies was highlighted as a strategy that could be replicated during the development of LAVI's capacity development service provider's pool. As a result of the visit, SMI-L shared a list of service providers for possible linkages, including companies specialized in human resources, logistics, finance and project management, data base development and management, and IT support.

Additionally, the LAVI Capacity Development team also visited the Liberia Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) and the University of Liberia (UL) on February 22 and 24, 2016, respectively to ascertain the possibilities of available service providers and or consultants at these institutions. As government-run institutions, the possibilities for consultants were considered high over the provision of services as an institution. In Quarter Three, these institutions will submit to LAVI a full list of potential consultants who could be recruited to form part of the LAVI service provider pool.

In Quarter Three LAVI will complete its market diagnostics of the demand and supply of capacity development services in Liberia. The team will hold a consultative meeting with CSOs and other actors to understand the capacity development needs. The market diagnostic will inform the content of an Expression of Interest (EOI) that will be published to identify interested partners who will be a part of LAVI's Capacity Development Service Provider Pool.

D. RESULT IV: Learning and Methodologies Shared and Applied by Other Development Actors

G.1 – Develop knowledge management, learning, and communications plans and coordination mechanisms

The meetings LAVI has held with key partners have served as learning events for LAVI. During these meetings, local partners who have worked in the NRM sector for years shared their experiences in the sector, and the challenges they believe are affecting the NRM sector. These meetings have provided vital lessons for LAVI project activities.

Also, as part of its knowledge management efforts, the LAVI team held consultative meetings with the Liberia Strategic Analysis (LSA) program on March 1 and a follow up meeting on March 29, 2016. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain guidance on the drafting of LAVI's Knowledge Management Strategy and Learning Agenda. USAID/Liberia required that LAVI should liaise with the Mission's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Advisor in designing its learning agenda. Consistent with this requirement, LAVI requested a meeting with the CLA Advisor in Quarter Two. However, the CLA Advisor recommended that LAVI meet with the USAID Liberia Strategic Analysis (LSA) project since the LSA was providing CLA and knowledge management support to the Mission

Key issues discussed during the meetings with LSA centered around the development of LAVI's KM strategy with focus on the establishment of the community of practice. It was discussed during the meeting that the LSA will inquire from its COR, guidance on how the DRG community of practice will be set up, and whether LAVI's community of practice could represent civil society engagement under the DRG portfolio. LSA agreed to discuss this subject further with its COR. Also, LSA shared a link with LAVI which contained knowledge management resource materials that could be used to guide LAVI in formulating its Knowledge Management Strategy. LAVI will use the information gathered to draft its Knowledge Management Strategy in Quarter Three.

In Quarter Two, LAVI began to draft its Communications and Outreach Plan. The LAVI Communications and Outreach Plan is intended to capture and highlight program achievements and disseminate accurate information on positive impact and/or results to LAVI stakeholders and the general public, including donors, partners, CSOs, community and faith based organizations, women and youth groups, trade unions, and academic institutions. The plan, when finalized, will outline LAVI's approaches for effective outreach and strategic communications to reach and improve messaging for wider audiences.

LAVI also held a number of meetings with ILab Liberia and Accountability Lab to discuss the potential for collaboration on establishing the Learning Lab. The Learning Lab is a key component of LAVI's knowledge management strategy to be used as a platform for engagement, information gathering and sharing. Once established, it will be used to host ceremonies, events, trainings, and workshops. The Learning Lab will also contain a resource center fitted with a computer lab and printed materials. In Quarter Three, LAVI will continue discussions with ILab Liberia and Accountability Lab to determine if their concept of an information platform correlates with LAVI's Learning Lab concept. If appropriate, , LAVI will collaborate with Accountability Lab and ILab to establish the Learning Lab and seek approval from USAID

3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

H.) DEVELOP ACTIVITY MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN (AMEP)

During Quarter Two, USAID/Liberia approved LAVI's Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (AMEP) plan. The LAVI AMEP was approved following two meetings with the LAVI COR, A/COR, and the Mission CLA Advisor to review and discuss LAVI project indicators, and the various measures for data collection. The LAVI team, LAVI's COR and A/COR also jointly reviewed LAVI's performance indicators reference sheets. After the meetings, the LAVI AMEP was revised and submitted to USAID, and it was subsequently approved by USAID on 17 February.

Following the approval of the plan, the LAVI Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (ME&L) team embarked on the design of a LAVI Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Procedures manual (MELP). The MELP is intended to document in detail the processes and procedures involved with data collection, analysis and reporting. Maintaining standard data collection, analysis and reporting procedures across LAVI will lay the foundation for increasing and maintaining the validity, reliability and integrity of the data being collected and reported. The procedures manual is critical to ensure a common and consistent approach to data collection, analysis and reporting among all project and ME&L staff, across thematic windows and across regions in which the project will be implemented. This manual will serve as the instrument for implementing the AMEP.

The MELP will include data collection tools and procedures for collecting data on all LAVI indicators. LAVI staff roles and responsibilities for data collection will be clearly established to avoid confusion. The MELP will also include guidelines for handling potential data limitations, or any other data management issues that may arise as the project implementation unfolds.

In Quarter Three, the MELP will be finalized and validated by the LAVI staff during our first in-house ME&L training. During the ME&L training, the LAVI staff will review and discuss the MELP manual. The staff will also have the opportunity to pilot the data collection and verification tools which are an integral part of the MELP. Once adopted, the MELP will be submitted to the COP for review and approval for use as a ME&L handbook within LAVI.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

In quarter two of the project, DAI continued to complete start-up activities at a steady pace. These activities focused on achieving smooth operational and programmatic start-up of LAVI. The following activities were implemented during the inception period:

A. Continuation of Start Up Activities

LAVI conducted a one-day training on DAI's Procurement Procedures. The training was conducted by Aaron Sheldon, DAI's Program Start-up Specialist. LAVI staff was introduced to the various procedures and policies for procurement of goods and services in compliance with both USAID and DAI rules and regulations.

DAI Start-up Specialist Rekha Lal also joined the team to develop the LAVI Grants Manual and customize the LAVI Field Operations Manual. LAVI staff was also introduced to the Field Operations Manual as a resource for looking up project policies, procedures and work instructions. She also initiated a large number of operational procurements, including vehicle insurance, health and medical insurance, and office supplies, among others.

DAI began the IT set up for the office immediately after the LAVI IT equipment was secured. DAI IT Specialist Zia Stanikzai oversaw the completion of the network cabling of the office, installed the project server and backup power source, and set up a shared drive for staff to create file records. His assignment will end with a basic IT training and overview of how to use the Lotus Notes system.

DAI/LAVI project also received two (2) transferred cars from USAID funded Global Communities project ALERT. These vehicles will be used to facilitate LAVI project activities as activities increase.

B. Manuals and Guides

DAI submitted and received approval for a number of manuals, guides, many of which are contract deliverables. The Grants Manual was submitted to USAID and approved on 30 March 2016. The Branding Implementation and Marking Plan was approved on 02 February, 2016. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan was approved on 17 February, 2016. Additionally, the work plan was approved on 11 January, 2016. The Field Operations Manual was also customized and all Human Resources guidelines and templates were developed and approved for use.

C. Staffing

During this quarter, recruitment efforts were a main priority. By the end of March 2016, the LAVI team was fully staffed with 21 people, including 19 local staff and 2 expats. The Key Personnel positions have been filled, including Chief of Party, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Director, and Capacity Development Director. COP Kelley Jones arrived in country on 28 January 2016 and was immediately introduced to the USAID team and key LAVI partners. A list of all staff and positions is attached in Annex V.

TECHNICAL PROGRAM SUPPORT

A. TECHNICAL TRAINING

In Quarter Two, LAVI staff attended and participated in a series of Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops geared toward improving the team's capacity in preparation for the implementation stage of the program. The trainings were conducted by a number of DAI STTAs. At different schedules, the below trainings were delivered:

- **The ICT4D Training:** From February 23-24, 2016, STTA Anand Varghese conducted ToT training with the LAVI team on ICT4D. The LAVI staff learned methodologies for identifying appropriate ICT tools to advance the work of LAVI objectives. The training provided staff with opportunities to apply technology in development, and it also enabled all staff to be able to identify and manage tech-enabled solutions, which will allow greater innovation and effectiveness at the project level.
- **The Social Network Analysis and Depth of Partnership Training:** On March 8, 2016, Rebecca Lawrence from home office conducted a training of trainers for LAVI staff on Social Network Analysis, particularly focusing on mapping local networks, identifying the strengths of ties and linkages within networks, and identifying typical challenges in networks. This training will help the LAVI team to facilitate cohesive, pro-active coalitions of diverse stakeholders.
- **Political Economic Analysis Training:** From March 10-21, 2016, Melissa Thomas, Political Economy Analysis Expert, launched the Political Economy Analysis training to provide LAVI staff with the tools to conduct further PEA exercises throughout the life of the project. The PEA will provide the LAVI team and key stakeholders an understanding of the broader civil society system in Liberia, as well as NRM/concessions-specific issue areas or 'trigger points' for concern.
- **Gender and Social Inclusion:** On March 11 and 14, 2016, Naomi Akpan-Ita, Gender/ Social Inclusion Specialist, conducted Gender and Social Inclusion training for the LAVI staff. The Social Inclusion training provided the LAVI team and partners with tools to design and tailor program activities to incorporate gender and youth issues unique to Liberia and identify other groups that are typically excluded in the Liberian context. All LAVI staff are expected to contribute to inclusiveness and develop suggestions for gender, youth and other excluded populations related activities to ensure equitable participation in the project activities. The consultant held a separate session with a select team of LAVI staff to discuss key elements that will form part of the LAVI's Gender Strategy. The consultant also developed a Capacity Development Gender Strategy for LAVI as a guide for ensuring gender inclusiveness in all its project activities.

B. TECHNICAL MEETINGS AND REPORTING

On March 10, 2015, LAVI held its first Project Advisory Council meeting at the LAVI Office. Four of the five council members (See Annex 1) attended the meeting along with seven LAVI staff and four USAID staff. The council member representing the donor partners was absent due to conflict in schedules. The LAVI Advisory Council was established to perform the following roles:

- Advise on thematic priorities, linkages, and funding strategy;
- Review LAVI's annual reports and annual work plans;
- Review criteria for grant making and core funding;
- Identify issues that are important to a range of local CSOs and other actors, and make suggestions on priorities for future LAVI activities;

- Provide technical guidance on changes which maybe appropriate in procedures, selection criteria or any other aspect of project implementation;
- Make recommendations on issues and reforms of national and local interest related to accountability, participation, and inclusion that can be incorporated into LAVI;
- Advise LAVI and grantees in order to build consensus and achieve high levels of commitment to coordination, networking and cross-learning among LAVI grantees;
- Provide guidance to LAVI and grantees on strategic communications; and
- Identify contextual changes relevant to LAVI thematic interventions, with a focus on both threats and potential challenges and opportunities, and provide guidance to LAVI on addressing and mitigating these risks and challenges in program implementation.

The meeting started at 10:00a.m. With a welcome remark by the USAID Deputy Mission Director, Barbara Dickerson followed by self-introduction of all the council members, LAVI staff and other USAID staff present.

After the introductions, Mr. Michael Haines, LAVI’s Contracting Officer’s Representative and Secretary of the Advisory Council, explained the functions and importance of the council, and the critical role that the council will play during the life span of the project.

Following the brief remarks by Mr. Haines, LAVI’s ME&L Director made a presentation of the LAVI project activities to the Advisory Council. The presentation was intended to highlight LAVI’s key objectives and to list some of the key activities the project will be implementing. After the presentation, the Advisory Council held a roundtable discussion on the NRM sector in Liberia. The focus was to identify problems within the sector in general and to narrow them to specific manageable issues.

General problem on NRM	Specific broad based issues	Specific issues
Forestry Mining Fisheries Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem with fair sharing of revenues generated from concessions agreement - Conflict of interest amongst actors - Problem through the value chain of forestry, mining, fisheries and land resources - Problem with contract management and enforcing regulations - Lack of adequate laws to regulate the sectors - Lack of transparency in the sector - Concessions lack capacity to perform their duties - General livelihood affected by communities - Lack of civic participation 	<p>Lack of community involvement in awards of contracts appeared to be the issue of general consensus. However, one of the council members argued that the Government always involved communities in the negotiation and awarding of contracts</p> <p>. Another common issue of concern is the loss of land by local communities as a result of concessions activities</p>

The meeting ended with the selection of a chairperson of the Advisory Council who will lead the council for the next one year. Professor Weade Kobbah-Wureh was unanimously selected as chairperson of the

council. At the conclusion of the meeting, LAVI's COP Kelley Jones shared the basic grants eligibility criteria that would be used to screen potential grantees in the first thematic funding window.

LAVI started preparations this quarter for the Natural Resource Management (NRM) CSOs workshop to be held on Friday, April 1 at LAVI's Office. The workshop is intended to bring together three county-based civil society organizations and 14 national CSOs for the purpose of identifying critical issues, challenges and dynamics in the NRM sector. The meeting will be facilitated by LAVI's NRM expert, Ricardo Acosta, who is in country to conduct a focused PEA on the NRM sector in Liberia.

LAVI Quarterly Performance Review Meeting: February 4, 2016

LAVI held its first quarterly performance review (QPR) meeting on February 4, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was part of the project overall quality control measure to maintain quality technical programming and overall project management. The QPR was also intended to review implementation of LAVI project activities from November 25 through December 31. Even though the project was still in startup mode, the QPR helped to set the stage for ongoing QPRs to maintain quality control and improve organizational learning on the project. All LAVI staff attended the meeting. The exercise allowed staff to comprehensively examine the project work plan, budget, and ME & L plan to pinpoint implementation achievements, issues, challenges, and to document lessons learned. It also allowed staff to review technical, operational, and financial performance. Follow-up actions such as continuous monitoring of the program's critical assumptions to mitigate risks, review of the role of the Advisory Council in the grant management and arrival of STTAs were highlighted, scheduled and reviewed at the QPR meeting. LAVI will hold its next QPR in April 2016 to review Quarter Two implementation of project activities.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN QUARTER TWO

- Difficulty in attracting participation of the private sector such as the Liberia Business Association (LIBA) in meetings. This challenge may be due to the fact that non-traditional actors such as LIBA are not familiar with a broader donor approach to civil society and advocacy.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The frequency of meetings involving the CSOs and other partners could lead to early fatigue and loss of interest if nothing tangible is resulting from these engagements. To address this potential issue, LAVI is making all efforts to begin to roll out its grant implementation activities.
- The approach of exploring the local market for service providers which is new from the CSOs perspective has been welcomed and valued by many potential service providers contacted. Liberian service providers will welcome the realization of many donor efforts to build organizational capacity through LAVI's service provider pool activities.. What could potentially be a challenge is the inability of the recipients of these services to pay for the quality of services they will receive. This is critical to sustaining the functioning of the service provider pool.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR QUARTER THREE

In Quarter Three, LAVI will begin to implement key program activities, including:

Grants

- Roll out first wave of grants within the NRM sector
- Begin designing grant RFA for capacity development service providers

- Begin designing grant RFA for Learning Lab
- Hold in-person public guidance meetings and disseminate information by phone, SMS, and printed guidebooks on LAVI, eligibility criteria, and application procedures
- Identify non-traditional partners from community, faith-based, women's, and youth groups; media; the private sector; universities; and government to participate in coalition activities
- Establish a Grant Review Committee to review submissions
- Develop grant mechanisms to allow for rolling grant applications from civil society and the government for the NRM/Concessions theme in April
- Support coalitions to develop collaboration and learning processes as well as develop transparency memoranda
- Support grantees to develop strategic plans and results framework before carrying out grant activities

Outreach

- LAVI will continue to engage with more partners to expand its pools of partners especially the non-traditional actors.
- LAVI will continue to support proactive outreach to government and legislative actors by civil society and the private sector to identify potential collaborative activities
- Most importantly, LAVI will engage with the private sector to ensure that they are actively involved in and included in the LAVI grantees' funded activities including identifying common problems and solutions as well as developing coalition strategies..

Technical Training and Analysis

- Finalize NRM PEA report and submit to USAID
- Finalize Social and Gender Inclusion Report and submit to USAID
- Conduct in-house ME&L training for LAVI staff
- Conduct TAMIS training for LAVI staff
- Conduct baseline survey for selected LAVI indicators
- Conduct FAS training for financial management for LAVI staff

Deliverables

- Develop Communications and Outreach Plan
- Develop Knowledge Management Strategy
- Submit Weekly Bullets to COR
- Hold USAID Monthly Briefings
- Submit Quarterly Financial and Accruals Reports
- Set-up the Technical and Administrative Management Information System (TAMIS)
- Set-up Field Accounting System (FAS)

Human Resources, Operations, and Finance

- Customize DAI's *Field Accounting System* (FAS)
- Develop Human Resources guidelines, recruitment and compliance checklists, and interviewing and testing templates to support fair and competitive recruitment and personnel management
- Complete procurement, delivery, and installation of all ICT equipment

Conduct orientation for all LAVI project staff to use TAMIS, FAS, and other systems, and training on the fundamentals of DAI and USAID policies, including a comprehensive ethics training **Key Upcoming Events**

- LAVI will initiate its first sets of grants under the NRM. thematic funding window
- LAVI will commence establishment of the Learning Lab in partnership with potential local partners.

Annex I: Participants at LAVI Project Advisory Council Meeting: March 10, 2016

#	NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	CONTACT
1	Michael Haines	USAID	LAVI COR	
2	Barbara Dickerson	USAID	Deputy Mission Director	
3	Weade Kobbah- Wureh	Advisory Council(AC)	Chair/AC	
4	H. R Cooper	AC	Member	
5	Admed Sirleaf	AC	Member	
6	T. Negbalee Warner	AC	Member	
7	Louise J.Fambulleh	USAID	LAVI-A/COR	
8	Katelin Maher	USAID	Deputy Team Leader/Democracy, Rights and Governance	
LAVI STAFF PRESENT				
1	Dominic DN Kweme	LAVI	Capacity Development Specialist	
2	Grariah Walker	LAVI	Network and Partnership	
3	James Whawhen	LAVI	M&E Director	
4	M. Sahr Nouwah	LAVI	Network and Partnership	
5	Kelley Jones	LAVI	Chief of Party	
6	Rebecca Lawrence	LAVI	DAI Staff	
7	Melissa Thomas	DAI	Consultant	

Annex II: Participants at LAVI PEA Roundtable Meeting: March 14, 2016

No.	Full Name	Sex (M/F)	Organization	Position	Phone#
1	Joseph S. Tamba	M	NAHUAL	President	
2	David D. Sackor	M	LLC	Secretary General	
3	S. Aaron WeahWeah Jr.	M	IREDD	Program Officer	
4	Christopher Wleh Toe	M	NCSCCL	Head of Secretariat	
5	KanieBaiGbala	M	Trust Africa	Program Specialist	
6	Jackson W. Speare	M	NRM	Coordinator	
7	Wynston Benda Henries	M	RRF	Program Assistant	
8	Melissa Thomas	F	DAI	PEA Trainer	
9	James Z. Whawhen	M	DAI	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Director	
10	Rebecca Lawrence	F	DAI	Network Analysis Trainer	
11	Kelley Jones	F	DAI	Chief of Party/LAVI	
12	Bertee Forlepabio	F	WONGOSOL	Project Staff	
13	Gradiah Walker	F	DAI	Network Building & Partnership Advisor	
14	Dominic D.N. Kweme	M	DAI	Capacity Development Specialist	
15	M. Sahr Nouwah	M	DAI	Coalition & Advocacy Officer	

Annex III: LAVI Staff training attendance Record

No .	Staff	ICT4 Development	Network Analysis and Depth of Partnership	Understanding Gender and Social Inclusion	Political Economy Analysis
1.	Ilan E. Ricks	X	X	X	X
2.	Weamie Z. Tahn	X	X	X	X
3.	Victor K. Boyar	X	X	X	X
4.	Dominic D.N. Kweme	X	X	X	X
5.	E. Chesty Gbongon		X		X
6.	James Z. Whawhen		X	X	X
7.	Gradiyah Walker	X	X	X	X
8.	Joshua S. Kpelewah	X	X	X	X
9.	Mercy Teah-Zarway	X	X	X	X
10.	M. Sahr Nouwah	X	X	X	X
11.	Prince G. Williams	X	X	X	X
12.	Kelley Jones			X	X

Annex III: Participants at LAVI Partners Meeting: January 28, 2016

#	NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	CONTACT
1	Marpue Speare	WONGOSOL	Executive Director	
2	Martha Karnga	BAWODA	Executive Director	
3	Louise T. Dartue	GRASS	Finance	
4	Du-Ben Cleon	GRASO-J	Lead-Advocate	
5	Luogon P.	ARS	Executive	

	Lah		Director	
6	Marline T. Jarwoe	CJPS	Field Supervisor	
7	Darius Dan Wehyee	EAR-SED	Executive Director	
8	Fred C. Johnson	MLME	Acting Director	
9	Prince D. Kreplah	CUPPADL	National Executive Director	
10	Gerald D. Hodges	SMART-Liberia	National Project Director	
11	Micheal Haines	USAID	COR	
12	Louise Fahbulleh	USAID	DRG Officer	
13	Myers W Saye	LEITI	Deputy Head	
14	Eddie Jarwolo	NAYMOTE	Executive Director	
15	Kate Cummings	ILAB	Executive Director	
16	Bolap Henri-Paul	Internews	Country	
17	Victoria Wollie	WANEP	Executive Director	
18	Harold Aidoo	IREDD	Executive Director	
19	Augustine SM Tamba	FLY	President	

20	Ozioma Y.E Zayzay	Internews	Strategic Partnership officer	
21	Frances R. D. Greaves	NCSCS	Chair	
22	Lancedell Mathews	NARDA	Executive Director	
23	Godo E. Kolubah	IBIS	S.P Officer	
24	Jallah Grayfied	PUL	Vice- President	
25	Jackson W. Speare	NRM	Coordinator	
26	Ali Kaba	SDI	Prog. Coordinator	
27	James Tellewoyan	DEN-L	Acting Director	
LAVI STAFF PRESENT				
1	Dominic DN Kweme	LAVI	ODS	
2	Grariah Walker	LAVI	NB/PA	
3	James Whawhen	LAVI	M&E Director	
4	M. Sahr Nouwah	LAVI	CAO	
5	Kelley Jones	LAVI	COP	
6	Milica Panic	LAVI	Senior Project Manager	

Annex IV: Current List of LAVI Staff

Staff Name	Position	Start Date
James Whawhen	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Director	05-Jan-16
Kemo Sheriff	Finance and Administrative Manager	05-Jan-16
Gradiyah Walker	Network Building and Partnership Advisor	18-Jan-16
Sahr Nouwah	Coalition and Advocacy Officer	20-Jan-16
Kelley Jones	Chief of Party	28-Jan-16
Randal Johnson	Driver	26-Jan-16
Dominic Kweme	Capacity Development Specialist	01-Feb-16
Eric Dehnue	Driver	01-Feb-16
Mercy Teah-Zarway	Grants Officer	01-Feb-16
Clarence Borbordee	Finance Officer	10-Feb-16
Ilan Ricks	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Assistant	10-Feb-16
Joshua Kpelewah	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Specialist	10-Feb-16
Momo Kpoto	Procurement and Operations Manager	10-Feb-16
Prince Williams	Grants Manager	15-Feb-16
Weamie Than	Grants Officer	15-Feb-16
Victor Boyah	Capacity Development Assistant	19-Feb-16
Banabas Nunoo	IT Officer	24-Feb-16
Adolphus Toe	Accountant	29-Feb-16
Gertietta Ross	Administrative Assistant	16-Mar-16
Erica Bonanno	Capacity Development Director	23-Mar-16
Chesty Gbongon	Communication and Outreach Specialist	01-Apr-16