



Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development Program

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Implementing Organizations:
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SUMMARY

The VEGA AMED project faced the challenge of visa restrictions during the last quarter of 2006, resulting in the inability of U.S. staff and volunteers to travel to Southern Sudan for most of the reporting period. The project's strategy was to rely on local staff and regional volunteers to the extent possible, remote work for staff who could not travel to Southern Sudan, and to reschedule planned U.S. volunteers for the first quarter of 2007. There was also intense fighting in Malakal and subsequent UN security advisories which led to a decision to delay the arrival of two long-term business advisors (LTBAs) who are now tentatively scheduled to start their assignments in July 2007; their placements will depend on a reassessment of security during the second quarter of 2007. Despite the challenges posed by security and travel restrictions, the project made a number of administrative achievements, including the finalizing of office and housing facilities in Juba and Wau to enable the placement of volunteers and staff there during the first half of January 2007. The guest house in Juba is expected to reduce the cost of volunteer accommodation in Juba by fifty percent. Peter Lominit de Karl joined the VEGA/AMED team as Senior Field Operations Manager in October. VEGA succeeded in finalizing registration with the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), which provides legitimacy to the organization within South Sudan and is required for access to utilities and other administrative functions, as well as being a requirement for registration with OLS (Operation Lifeline Sudan) and for access to World Food Program (WFP) flights. Additionally, VEGA staff worked with USAID to redesign the project to be consistent with the new USAID/Sudan Operational Plan. Details on program achievements by objective and task are below.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE QUARTER

AMED has two primary objectives: (1) to strengthen market and enterprise development in selected urban areas as a means of increasing private sector employment; and, (2) to build the capacity of local community, county, and state level government and civil society organizations to provide effective support to livelihood development and employment generation initiatives with a focus on the reintegration of IDPs. Each objective is briefly described below.

Objective One: Increased Private Sector Opportunities in Urban Areas

AMED will improve the environment for increasing private sector employment opportunities in the selected urban areas through small business development, skills and asset building, improved governance, and increased business productivity. Activities will focus on selected urban areas of Juba, Malakal and Wau that serve as market centers for areas absorbing returning IDPs. Other urban areas may be selected on a limited basis due to strategic considerations. Four related tasks support the achievement of Objective One:

- 1-1 Support and Strengthen Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations
- 1-2 Promote Business Skills Training
- 1-3 Provide Business Advisory Services
- 1-4 Develop Public-Private Partnerships

In carrying out the above tasks, AMED will work in partnership with local government authorities and civil society, responding to requests for assistance to build programs and markets and to provide services in response to needs of the emerging private enterprises. Key partners are expected to include: chambers of commerce, associations, training institutions, cooperatives, businesses and other organizations. Although efforts will be directed at building the capacities and technical competences of local private sector organizations, VEGA will also work in partnership with the GOSS and local governments to support targeted efforts to establish market-friendly policy and regulatory systems that enable and give greater voice to the private sector. All activities of the AMED program will build on efforts of other projects and institutions to leverage resources, avoid duplication, and promote sustainable policy and program development.

Objective Two: Enhanced Capacity of Local Institutions to Support Reintegration of Persons Affected by Conflict with Emphasis on Livelihood Development and Employment Generation

AMED will support local partners (state governments, NGOs, or others) to build the capacity of local (community, county and state level) government and private institutions to provide effective support to reintegration of persons affected by conflict, with special emphasis on livelihood development and employment generation. AMED will work with local level institutions whose actions have immediate impacts on livelihoods and the reintegration of persons affected by focusing on four tasks: prepare/revise reintegration strategies; strengthen the capacity of local government agencies; support local government initiatives to strengthen markets, and; develop agricultural cooperatives and associations; and strengthen agricultural training centers. Objective Two is implemented through five tasks:

- 2-1 Strengthen Capacity of Local Government Agencies.
- 2-2 Prepare and Revise Reintegration Strategies.
- 2-3 Support Local Initiatives to Strengthen Markets
- 2-4 Support Agricultural Marketing Associations and Cooperatives
- 2-5 Support Agriculture Sector Training Centers

AMED will continue to utilize a collaborative approach, working with local partners from government, civil society, and the private sector. By partnering with other NGOs, local government organizations, and other donor organizations, AMED will leverage resources for broader impacts. The knowledge and resources of Sudanese Diaspora will be especially important to achieve this objective. Assistance will focus on areas of Southern Sudan receiving or expected to receive high numbers of IDP returnees. In many cases, AMED will work at the State level to build capacity in county and community level institutions.

Cross-Cutting Themes (CCT)

In addition to the above program objectives, AMED has four cross-cutting themes which impact on tasks across both program objectives:

CCT-1 HIV/AIDS Awareness

CCT-2 Young People with Focus on Former Combatants

CCT-3 Gender Equity

CCT-4 Long-Term Diaspora volunteers to support public institutions promoting economic development

Objective 1: Increased Private Sector Opportunities in Urban Areas

1.1 Support and Strengthen Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations

- Two volunteer assignments which had been planned for this quarter were rescheduled for the first quarter of 2007 as a result of the visa restrictions.
 - ✓ Field short-term executive director for the Southern Sudan Chamber of Commerce in Juba
 - ✓ Provide institutional capacity building for the Wau Women's Business Association.
- Capacity building activities for the Women's Self-Help Development Association in Juba continued, focusing on increasing upgrading equipment and services of the association.
- A grant for the South Sudan Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (SSCCIA) was drafted with disbursements expected to start during the first quarter of 2007. The grant will help strengthen SSCCIA institutional capability so that it can continue to undertake formation of chambers of commerce at the State level, perform arbitration services and conduct business advisory services to members.

1.2 Business Training

- Two small business training programs planned for this quarter were rescheduled for the first quarter of 2007 as a result of the visa restrictions.
 - ✓ Provide basic business training in Wau, working with the Western Bahr el Ghazal State Chamber of Commerce, formed with project support
 - ✓ Provide basic business training in Juba, working with the SSCCIA.
- Project management held discussions with JICA and UNIDO with interest expressed by both organizations for the placement of long-term diaspora volunteers as instructors in vocational centers in Juba (JICA) and Malakal (UNIDO).
- A grant application from the Nile Technical Institute in Juba, a private computer training center, is under process. The grant will provide financial support for building marketable computer skills of young Southern Sudanese.

1.3 Business Advisory Services

- In November, a regional volunteer experienced in honey production and marketing conducted eight-day training in basic business planning to a group of honey producers in Maridi who had registered their company as a corporation. Participants consisted of nine persons, including five from the Southern Sudan Honey Producers Association (SSHPA).
- In December, five long-term MBA business advisor volunteers conducted a survey of Southern Sudanese entrepreneurs in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya. The study assessed business and their owners' perceptions of obstacles to repatriating

and transferring their business models to Southern Sudan. The report including suggestions for reducing constraints to relocating business. A draft was shared with USAID; the final report is now being finalized.

- Three MBA advisors resumed their assignments in early January. Business advisory training is scheduled to start in February. See 2.1 for more information.

1.4 Develop Public-Private Partnerships.

- This task was added to the AMED program description in September, 2006 and no activities took place under it during the reporting period.

Objective 2: Enhanced Capacity of local Institutions (to support reintegration of persons affected by conflict with emphasis on livelihood development and employment generation)

2.1 Strengthen Capacity of Local Agencies

- In November, two regional volunteers completed an assignment providing institutional strengthening of the Mangala Development Association (MODA). 21 persons participated in the training program which aimed to enable leadership to better train community leaders.
- IT specialist volunteers were assigned to two GOSS ministries to maximize usage of computer equipment received from UNDP and to train Ministry staff in computer usage and perform related work.
 - ✓ Juke Mabior, a long-term diaspora volunteer, was assigned in October to the Ministry of Environment in liaison with the STEP Project. He has trained a total of 28 persons to date in basic computer skills and GIS operation and well as developed automated systems for the Ministry. He was the subject of a success story in the last VEGA newsletter (attached). The Ministry has requested that he continue for three more months, to which Juke and VEGA have agreed.
 - ✓ At the request of the Minister of Commerce, a regional Kenyan volunteer began a two-month assignment at the Ministry in December. Through the end of the month, he had provided training to 13 Ministry staff in addition to setting up a network and providing computer trouble-shooting and related services.
- A scope of work was developed for a volunteer with a background in human resource development to assist the SSCCSE (Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation). A volunteer is expected to be deployed during the first quarter of 2007.
- Five long-term MBA business advisor volunteers resumed their assignments in Southern Sudan, after a three-month absence due to visa restrictions.
 - ✓ Two are based with the SSCCSE in Juba and will complete their assignments in April, 2007.
 - ✓ One is based with the Ministry of Commerce in Juba, where he is working in institutional capacity building and plans to carry out business advisory services in conduction with the Southern Sudan Chamber of Commerce.
 - ✓ Two are based in Wau at the State Ministry of Finance, where they are working in institutional capacity building and will also carry out business advisory training.

- 2.2 Prepare and Revise Reintegration Strategies
 - A volunteer assignment will begin in January to assist SRRC and other partners in developing a strategy for reintegration of returning IDPS and returnees in Juba County. The strategy is focusing on the role of the recently established Reintegration Development Center (RDC) to provide training marketable job skills. The assignment will be completed at the beginning of February.
- 2.3 Support Local Initiatives to Strengthen Markets
 - Scopes of work were developed for this component for implementation starting in the first quarter of 2007.
- 2.4 Support Agricultural Marketing Associations and Cooperatives
 - Scopes of work were developed for this component for implementation starting in the first quarter of 2007.
- 2.5 Support Agriculture Sector Training Centers
 - A grant agreement with the Padak Fisheries Training Center was finalized. The first tranche of funds will be advanced early February 2007 following USAID approval to initiate disbursement in mid January. Similar grants for two additional training centers will be made in the coming months.
 - The program moved focus of operations to Juba, including posting of all program staff in Juba and establishing local banking and travel arrangements to offer support to the program. Nile Commercial Bank was selected as it will enable transfer of funds to all six program locations (project offices in Juba, Wau and Malakal as well as locations for the three agricultural training centers).

Cross-Cutting Themes

Add introductory paragraph as needed

1. HIV/AIDS Awareness
 - Meetings were held with ARC (American Refugee Committee), which has developed HIV/AIDS awareness materials under USAID funding for incorporation into volunteer training.
2. Young People with Focus on Former Combatants
 - Integrated into assignments described above, in particular the MODA and Juba Country reintegration assignments.
3. Gender Equity
 - A volunteer gender assessment assignment, which had been planned for this quarter, was rescheduled for the second half of January.
4. Long-term Diaspora Volunteers to Support Public Institutions Promoting Economic Development

- One long-term diaspora volunteer was assigned during the reporting period
- The project is coordinating with other implementing organizations towards a forum on the role of diaspora volunteers and returnees in Southern Sudan, tentatively planned for February 2007.

Problems Encountered/Addressed/To be addressed

Visa issues: Due to visa restrictions, volunteers were not able to travel to Southern Sudan until January. This has been resolved and support from the USAID Desk officer has facilitated the issuance of visas in Washington. To date the process has been seamless.

Training Centers (TCs): AMED management was directed by USAID to withhold grants to TCs since the TCs had not fully accounted for the advances they had received from CRS.

Security: Security incidents took place in Juba this quarter. Additionally due to fighting in Malakal and subsequent evacuations, plans for technical assistance and deployment of staff were canceled until the situation is fully improved.

In spite of these problems the AMED project continued to implement technical assistance with Diaspora and regional volunteers.

Planned Activities for the Next Quarter

Submission of work plan
Start the funding of training centers
Establish staff in Wau
Conduct impact assessments on completed assignments
Gender impact assessment

VEGA VOLUNTEERS HELP PREPARE SOUTHERN SUDAN FOR FIRST NATIONAL CENSUS

In January 2005, after more than 20 years of war, the governments of Northern and Southern Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). As a condition of this agreement, the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) will conduct a full-scale population census in conjunction with its Northern counterpart. The information gathered through this census will serve to help the nation in planning and distribution of key developmental elements such as educational facilities, road works, aid funds, oil revenues and other natural resources. Census results will also play a crucial role in laying the groundwork for the 2011 elections in which the people of the South will determine whether or not Sudan will remain a single nation or break into two autonomous countries.

Given the scale and sensitivity of such a major undertaking, it is imperative that the implementing organization, the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE) carries out this operation in as transparent a manner as possible. At the request of SSCCSE, VEGA fielded two recent MBA graduates, who are members of the MBA Enterprise Corps (MBAEC) – under the auspices of Citizens Development Corps (CDC) to serve as long-term consultants assisting in the implementation of office management systems. Their efforts are providing the institution's head office with the organizational and human resources methodologies it needs to better supervise and manage the many census activities that are already underway.

Alexandra Lepionka, is focusing on the organizational development side of the operation and has succeeded in creating a functioning organizational chart that will help guide SSCCSE as it expands from a 30-man operation to over 200 employees during the next several months. She has also conducted multiple training needs assessments and has coordinated the addition of technical assistance to address



MBAEC Advisor Kirk Manhein with SSCCSE Staff

constraints within the SSCCSE. Currently she is focusing on developing a medium-term strategic plan which will look at SSCCSE's staffing and equipment needs over the next three to five years.

Kirk Manhein has been working with the Finance Department to optimize their business processes, strengthen their risk management by identifying controls points in the SSCCSE's financial procedures, and assist with the implementation of a Financial Management Information System (FMIS). Much of his efforts have focused on documenting financial and operational procedures to promote standardized processes across the enterprise as well as to ensure

that there is a long-term sustainability after his assignment is complete. He has also advised the Commission on budget-planning.

In April 2007, Alexandra and Kirk will complete their 15 month assignment with VEGA. Until then, they both hope to continue creating a strong example for appropriate management practices, which will not only help SSCCSE employees as the census draws near, but will also shape their approach to future endeavors concerning surveys and other non-census related operations. MBAEC Advisor Kirk Manhein providing training relating to the Southern Sudan Census.