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CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Background:

Civil society has reached cross-roads in Haiti. After years of support for organizational capacity development, civic education and advocacy, new laws and policies are finally on the national agenda. This achievement will require Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to shift toward more targeted advocacy, stronger public awareness campaigns, and to monitor the development, adoption and implementation of specific legislation. USAID will continue to support proactive civil society and community organizations, along with a more capable and independent media as they increasingly apply the skills they have learned through workshops, training, and direct technical assistance provided for the past ten years. These organizations will now be supported to play an even more active role in advocating for continued governance reform, monitoring policy implementation, and bridging the gap between citizens and their elected officials in order for Haiti's burgeoning democracy to succeed.

Objectives:

The objectives of the CSA program are: (1) Establishment of a legal framework to protect and promote civil society, (2) Increased citizen participation in policy processes, implementation and oversight of public institutions, (3) Increased institutional viability of civil society organizations, (4) Enhanced free flow of information, (5) Strengthened democratic political culture and gender equity. .

Activities: The PACT Consortium implements four mutually-supporting activities:

Community Initiatives and Conflict Resolution:

Activities under this component, implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), promote civic engagement through community-driven initiatives. Since the program was launched in 1999 over 117 Community Initiative and Conflict Resolution groups (CICRs) have been established throughout Haiti's ten Departments. The program focuses on increasing the capacity of CICR members, each of whom were elected by community-based organizations and grass-roots associations to identify and analyze priority community needs and develop strategies to meet those needs in collaboration with elected officials. With support from 10 expert Coordinators, each CICR then implements the strategy selected, which may include engaging with local and national officials to obtain the resources and policy change needed. A complementary *Democracy for All* program teaches youth in 78 secondary schools in four departments about their rights and responsibilities and gives them the opportunity to become more involved in concrete initiatives to strengthen democratic governance and improve life in their communities.



Debate on citizens' rights and responsibilities in Petit-Goave

Civil Society Advocacy:

Activities under this component, implemented by PACT, strengthen the ability of CSOs to identify, articulate, promote and defend citizens' interests. The CSOs are also assisted to influence public policy development and to monitor the implementation of new laws and policies by the government. CSO's also receive training on advocacy techniques that allow them to engage in constructive dialogue with state institutions to request basic service delivery. Sub-grants are provided to CSOs to advocate for institutional reform on issues such as women's rights, access to justice, juvenile delinquency and citizen's responsibility. The program also supports *Observatoire Citoyen de l'Action des Pouvoirs Publics*, a new national citizen watch dog group which monitors and reports on the government of Haiti's performance in such areas as justice reform, anti-corruption initiatives, economic growth and media freedom. A key activity under this component is USAID's support to the local chapter of Transparency International, *La Fondation Heritage Pour Haiti*, (FH) to combat corruption and to promote ethics, integrity, probity and accountability in the public and private spheres of Haitian society. A successful campaign against kidnapping was also conducted by FH in 2008

Communications and Media. Activities under this component, implemented by Internews, help to increase the relevance, quality of reporting, and reach of 41 community radio stations, 22 local radio and 7 regional journalist associations. USAID provides expert journalist training, materials, and logistical support to each station individually as well as support for the associations. Finally, USAID promotes community radio sustainability by

providing durable equipment, financial management training and support for a national network to generate new revenue sources. As a result of this assistance, Haiti's first national association of community radios was launched in 2008 known as RAMAK.

Civil Society Organizational Capacity Building.

Activities under this component, implemented by PACT, focus on improving the performance of local civil society organizations and community based organizations through training and mentoring. Specific training modules for CSOs include leadership and governance, advocacy and community mobilization, and project and financial management. The objective is to ensure that these organizations become effective and sustainable organizations capable of ensuring the delivery of quality community services.

USAID Support: \$15,334,686

Life of Program: August 2007 to August 2010

Geographic Focus: West Department (Port-au-Prince, Saint Marc, Gonaives, Petit Goâve), North Department (Cap Haitian), the watershed areas of Acul du Nord (Montrouis and Limbe)

Implementing Mechanism & Partners: Cooperative Agreement implemented by PACT through a Leader Associates with the National Democratic Institute and Internews. The GOH stakeholders are the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security

FY 2008 Program Results:

In FY 2008, support focused on capacity-building and helping CSOs to develop their external advocacy skills. As a result, 75 CSOs improved their internal democratic practices. Citizens were also equipped to participate more broadly in public policy-making. By improving these skills, these targeted CSOs gained the capacity to exert pressure peacefully and constructively on local and national government officials for targeted reforms. They successfully implemented 21 advocacy campaigns resulting in policy change. At the same time over 9,177 participants were informed of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. USAID support further increased citizen monitoring of public authorities in order to promote more responsive governance. For example, a new oversight group, Government Barometer, was formed to monitor government performance while proposing constructive forms of civic engagement. The 41 community radio stations participated with civil society activists in building consensus for change and fostering dialogue on development goals. The regional journalists' associations also raised revenue and revised their internal statutes to become internally democratic.



Women leadership skills being reinforced by fostering greater participation in community affairs.

USAID support also addressed the specific needs of women by reinforcing their leadership skills and fostering greater participation in community affairs. The media program specifically expanded its outreach to women throughout Haiti; as a result women journalists now constitute 30% of all participants in civic advocacy training programs. The first women journalists' association was created as well as the first radio station run by and for women, which started broadcasting in Grand Goave, an area with high levels of violence against women. A local women's non-governmental organization was supported for its campaign against gang violence. Finally, the Community Initiative/Conflict Resolution program, in collaboration with the Minister of Agriculture, supported 117 community radio stations to resolve conflict and implement programs such as one for the eradication of destructive ants killing crops and infants in the village of Limbé.

Expected Results Over Life of Project:

USAID anticipates that over the life of the project, the CSA will provide support to 20,000 citizens to complete USG assisted civic education programs and launch 40 advocacy campaigns through 16 civil society organizations and two national watchdog organizations. Over 41 community radio stations, which are non-state news outlets, will be self-sustaining as members of a financially viable national network. In the long-term, these initiatives will build the capacity of Haiti's citizens and institutions to participate in and demand accountability from government at all levels and will provide avenues for greater public participation in governance.