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# LIMYE AK OGANIZASYON POU KOLEKTIVITE YO ALE LWEN (LOKAL)

FINAL REPORT



JANUARY 2012

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Tetra Tech ARD

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Cover photo: Participatory planning in Limbé. All photos courtesy of Haiti LOKAL project.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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# ACRONYMS

ASEC	Communal Section Assembly
BNC	<i>Banque Nationale de Credit</i>
BRH	<i>Banque de la République d'Haïti</i>
CASEC	Executive Board of the Communal Section
CDC	Commune Development Council
CDSC	Communal Section Development Council
CFPB	<i>Contributions Foncières sur les Propriétés Bâties</i> (Property Tax)
CFT	Government Finance Officer
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIVITAS	Association of Mayors of the Metropolitan Region
DEED	<i>Développement Economique pour un Environnement Durable</i>
DGI	<i>Direction Générale des Impôts</i> (Local Tax Authority)
FENACAH	National Federation of Haitian CASECs
FENAMH	National Federation of Haitian Mayors
FENASECH	National Federation of Haitian ASECs
FGDCT	<i>Fonds de Gestion et Développement des Collectivités Territoriales</i> (Local Government Management and Development Fund)
FY	Fiscal Year
GOH	Government of Haiti
GRIDE	<i>Groupe de Recherche et d'Intervention en Développement et Education</i>
HIGHER	Haiti Integrated Growth through Hurricane Emergency Recovery Program
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ISC	<i>Initiative de la Société Civile</i> (Civil Society Initiative)
LG	Local Governance
LOKAL	<i>Limye ak Òganizasyon pou Kolektivite yo Ale Lwen</i>
MCI	Municipal Capacity Index
MEF	Ministry of the Economy and Finance
MICT	Ministry of the Interior and Local Collectivities
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MRP	Municipal Recovery Program
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PAPH	Haitian Parliament Support Program
PERC	<i>Perspective Citadelle</i>
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
RDM	Risk and Disaster Management
SRA	Systems Research and Analysis International
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report on the experience of *Limye ak Oganizasyon pou Kolektivite yo Ale Lwen* (LOKAL) was prepared to analyze its impact and to provide recommendations for USAID/Haiti and the Government of Haiti (GOH) based on lessons learned in the field during four years of implementation.

LOKAL was designed to improve local governance and support the decentralization process. The project implementation period from December 2007 through January 31 2011, evolved in an environment characterized by waves of optimism and forward progress as well as by political instability and devastating natural disasters. These factors significantly affected the program and its outcomes.

LOKAL specifically targeted 15 municipalities for technical assistance and training interventions among the country's 140. However, some of the project's activities (e.g., decentralization legal reform and support to the associations of local officials) were national in scope, thereby affecting the entire set of local government units.

The LOKAL results framework focused principally on:

- Improving decentralization policy and the legal framework;
- Increasing the capacity of local governments to effectively govern and provide basic public services; and
- Enhancing transparent local governance through citizen participation and public information.

Other elements of the results framework, notably the design and implementation of municipal support projects and information management and dissemination contributed to the project's three principal results.

In its efforts toward reform of the *legal framework for decentralization and local governance*, LOKAL performance targets fell short of expected outcomes. Nevertheless, several positive impacts resulted from LOKAL activities in this area, notably:

- Increased popular consensus for decentralization of governance and the need for reform;
- Improved capacity and recognition by local officials of their authority to enact local regulations through the issuance of municipal ordinances;
- Increased familiarity with the existing legal framework for local governance through preparation and dissemination of a compendium of legal texts related to local government powers and responsibilities; and
- Enactment of several policy reforms to improve transparency in the allocation of inter-governmental transfers to local governments.

In the early months of the project, an assessment of local government capacity to establish baseline data for measuring project performance and to design a program of capacity building revealed that after a year in office, most local government bodies lacked struc-

ture, organizational capacity and basic materials and equipment. The resulting *Plan de Renforcement des Capacités des Collectivités Territoriales* established the framework for this major project component. Within this framework, training and technical assistance modules were designed and implemented in municipal budgeting, participatory planning, organization and management of meetings and public assemblies, conflict resolution, project design and management, revenue mobilization, municipal ordinances, document management and infrastructure maintenance.

Overall, the impact of LOKAL-sponsored training and technical assistance in the areas described above was significant, producing enhanced individual skill levels and improved institutional capacity. LOKAL training and technical assistance was distinguished by the application of interactive adult learning techniques, an emphasis on training of trainers in both technical content and facilitation skills and the preparation of detailed trainer and participant manuals. These features contributed largely to the success of LOKAL capacity-building interventions.

*Participatory planning, municipal budgeting and revenue mobilization* were among the most important and effective areas of intervention where major breakthroughs were obtained. For example, following consecutive years of support in *municipal budgeting* carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Local Collectivities (MICT), an institutionalized capacity for preparation of annual budgets and a process for their review and approval is now well established.

LOKAL's contribution to *municipal revenue mobilization* was significant. A working model of technical assistance was developed and tested; a pool of technical assistants were trained and gained practical experience on the ground; tools and templates including software programs were designed and tested; institutional issues between the municipal governments, the tax authority and the banks where tax revenues are deposited were analyzed and strengthened as a result of negotiations and practical problem solving. Most importantly, increases in revenues collected were realized. In Saint-Marc, which served as a pilot for support in this area, property tax revenues increased by 159% in FY 2011 (over FY 2010 baseline of \$57,664), and business tax receipts increased by 123% (over FY 2010 baseline of \$10,636). The initiative was pursued in the municipality of Carrefour and Cabaret in the final year of the project.

This auspicious beginning of a systematic approach to assisting municipal governments to increase their own-source revenues has laid a solid foundation for future support directly by the GOH and/or through donor-funded initiatives in this critical arena.

*Participatory planning* for the preparation of multi-sector development plans and municipal investment plans were hallmarks of LOKAL's efforts to instill a culture of good local governance and provide important tools for promotion of local development. LOKAL's work in local development planning resulted in:

- Increased visibility and importance of municipal government as perceived by citizens;



### Participatory mapping in Limbé.

- Improved relations among local authorities and civil society actors;
- Increased awareness and understanding by citizens of local development issues, problems and potential solutions;
- Increased focus on funding municipal investments with local resources and budgeting for those investments; and
- The availability of fundraising tools for use by municipal authorities.

*Municipal support projects* were a mechanism through which LOKAL contributed to the management and governance objectives of the project by providing practical experience in the design and implementation of public service improvement initiatives. In most cases, municipal support projects were identified through the participatory planning process. In total, five important projects ranging from local public service infrastructure to community public health initiatives to improve hy-

giene were implemented. Beyond their impacts in improving public services, important skills in project design, implementation and monitoring were gained by local officials and community members alike.

In the weeks following the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010, LOKAL assessed conditions on the ground and in response designed the *Municipal Recovery Program* (MRP). Earthquake zone municipal governments' capacity was stretched beyond their ability to react effectively, revealing intrinsic weaknesses and the need for immediate assistance. MRP was both responsive to the urgent post-earthquake needs of local governments, as well as compatible with LOKAL's broader transparent and effective local governance objectives. The rapid design and implementation of MRP clearly demonstrated the flexible, responsive capacity of the LOKAL project team.

MRP interventions were implemented over a nine-month period with the following notable results:

- Several affected municipalities were able to restore operational capacity.
- Local civil protection committees were able to expand coverage and strengthen their response capability.
- Citizen awareness of relief efforts, available public services and disaster management and response increased.
- Approximately 6,000 displaced students were able to complete their school year.

At the conclusion of LOKAL, the project team reflected on its collective experience in support of decentralization and local governance and identified the following key lessons that can serve to inform future efforts in this area.

***Lesson 1: Institutional strengthening and capacity-building efforts are more effective and more likely to produce sustainable results when supported by national policies and tied to central government programs and directives.***

This lesson suggests that future programming focus resources in support of key GOH policies and national programs.

***Lesson 2: Understanding and acting on the broader institutional framework for local governance is a non-negligible factor in project success.***

Central government services represented at the local level have important roles to play in support of local government services. To ensure the full cooperation of these national agencies in local governance initiatives, a holistic approach is needed whereby technical assistance and financial resources are channeled directly to these entities.

***Lesson 3: Achievement of sustainable improvements in local governance and municipal management capacity is dependent on performance-based selection (or de-selection) of partner local government units.***

LOKAL faced serious obstacles to achieving expected outcomes in several communes due to location-specific factors such as the qualifications, discipline and work ethic among the municipal staff; the political dynamics within the community; and the popularity and leadership of the mayor. Therefore, a more discerning selection process and the use of protocols allowing for withdrawal of program support in cases of non-performance or non-cooperation are advised.

***Lesson 4: The limited and often irregular financial resources of municipalities can***

*compromise their ability to take full advantage of project-provided technical assistance and training.*

Transparency and regularity of intergovernmental transfers to municipalities is essential to their ability to fully benefit from capacity building interventions.

***Lesson 5: Conflict among political actors and communities is an inherent part of working at the local level in Haiti and can undermine sustainable results of local governance programming.***

Local-level conflicts and rivalries among key municipal actors often disrupted planned activities and attainment of project outcomes. A systematic and thorough approach to this persistent problem should be an important consideration in future local governance programming.

***Lesson 6: The absence of a coherent legal framework and practical tools for land use planning are serious constraints to the exercise of critical local government functions and the achievement of local development objectives.***

Local government must have a clear mandate and technical support for addressing land use issues within their jurisdictions. Without proper zoning authority and the capacity to enforce land use regulations, Haitian municipalities will continue to experience chaotic land occupation patterns and the myriad social and economic problems that result. This complex arena should be a major focus of future development assistance efforts, and include reforms in land titling and land administration policies and systems.







# 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Originally named Transparent, Effective Local Governance (TELG), the project was re-baptized *Limyè ak Òganizasyon pou Kolektivite yo Ale Lwen* (LOKAL) at the outset of implementation. In Haitian Créole, the new activity title denotes local government development through transparency and improved management. LOKAL was a four-year USAID-funded project to improve local governance and support the decentralization process in Haiti. It was designed as an element of USAID/Haiti's 2005-2010 strategy under the *Governing More Effectively and Democratically* Strategic Objective (SO) with the more focused objective of making local governments more democratic, transparent and effective in providing services to their communities. The project began field operations in December 2007 and continued through January, 2012, with a total cost of \$13,683,091. During the first year of the project, major assessments and analytical reports laid the groundwork for design and initial activity implementation of all program components, the establishment of baseline data for performance monitoring and impact measurement, and the design of the

Year 2 Work Plan. Considerable progress was made toward the achievement of planned results and performance targets. However, these outputs were achieved in a socio-political environment characterized by great uncertainty and human catastrophe. Following the resignation of the Prime Minister in April 2008, almost five months passed before a new nominee was ratified by Parliament and a new government formed. During the last quarter of Year 1, a major humanitarian crisis resulting from the damage caused by successive tropical storms turned the country's attention to disaster relief. Most of the project's target communes were affected by these storms, some sustaining severe damage.

LOKAL intensified activities in its second year, supporting Parliament and civil society in the review and appropriation of new legislation on decentralization, and initiating implementation of the local government capacity-building plan prepared during Year 1. The general atmosphere in the country was relatively stable and there was an optimistic outlook with regard to local governance and decentralization due to several factors.

**Opposite: Spring protection project in Limbé.**

- In its early months, the new government of Prime Minister Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis emphasized decentralization reform as a major public policy priority.
- Basic decentralization framework legislation had been drafted and was included in the Parliament's 2009 legislative agenda.
- The Ministry of Interior and Local Government (MICT) began assuming an increasing role in the coordination of decentralization reforms and in support of local government capacity building.
- Increased dialogue and coordination among international donors in support of decentralization and local development pointed toward programmatic synergies and improvement in the effectiveness of foreign assistance.

Toward the end of Year 2 in August 2009, the LOKAL Statement of Work was expanded and an additional \$1 million was allocated to the Task Order to carry out work under the Haiti Integrated Growth through Hurricane Emergency Recovery (HIGHER) program. This program expansion was focused on disaster preparedness and mitigation at the local government level.

The propitious environment for local governance and decentralization was short-lived. Early in the second quarter of Year 3, the unimaginable horror of January 12, 2010 radically altered the situation in Haiti and the operating conditions of the project. Accordingly, LOKAL redesigned its work plan to offer partner municipalities the technical and material resources they needed to fulfill their role effectively in planning, coordinating and managing aid and recovery operations in their ju-

risdictions. As such, much of the second quarter of FY2010 was dedicated to conducting rapid assessments of conditions on the ground, analyzing the pertinence of pre-earthquake activities and revising the work plan to deliver the most appropriate response to the emergency situation. LOKAL launched activities set out in the new Municipal Recovery Program (MRP), while pursuing work on several initiatives under way outside of the areas directly affected by the earthquake. Appropriately, the funds previously allocated to the HIGHER program were redirected to the MRP.

While the massive humanitarian aid effort provided millions of Haitians with the emergency food, water, medical care and shelter they have needed to survive, the reality of a slow, costly and politically contentious recovery and reconstruction process began to emerge. At the end of June 2010—six months after the quake—an estimated 1.5 million persons inhabited over 1,300 spontaneous settlement sites in metropolitan Port-au-Prince and other affected areas. Efforts to relocate tens of thousands of displaced persons from settlements deemed most vulnerable to flooding or landslides to more secure and better-equipped camps were thwarted by a variety of obstacles including difficulty acquiring land and internally displaced person's (IDP) concerns about the availability of jobs, schools, transportation, etc. in the new settlement areas. Nonetheless, over a 10-month period, LOKAL was able to provide a variety of services and material goods in support of municipal-led relief and recovery operations in targeted areas.

Having completed the post-earthquake MRP with notable impact, LOKAL entered its fourth year of execution. The period from October 2010 through the project completion date of January 31, 2012 saw a renewed emphasis on much-needed activities and results in municipal planning, revenue mobilization, and municipal service projects that were delayed in 2010. Despite significant obstacles

resulting from the first and second rounds of the presidential and legislative elections and the cholera epidemic that turned the attention of national and local public officials and the international community on a new humanitarian crisis, LOKAL was able to complete most planned activities and achieve performance targets.



# 2.0 RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

## 2.1 RESULTS FRAMEWORK

LOKAL was designed as part of USAID/Haiti's 2005-2010 Strategic Plan under the Mission's SO 13, *Rule of Law and Democratic Governance Improved*. Three principal programmatic results provide the underlying orientation for the project:

- Result 1: *Completed Decentralization Legal Framework in Place and Implemented;*
- Result 2: *Local Government Authorities Have Increased Capacity to Govern More Effectively and Efficiently;* and
- Result 3: *More Transparent and Accountable Local Governance.*

The main objective of Result 1 was the enactment and application of decentralization laws and public policies that provide the basis for clearly defined roles, authorities and responsibilities in relation to citizens and other public entities. Activities in support of this result were implemented as part of a legal framework component.

The objective of Result 2 was better planning, resource management and administration by local government officials to strengthen their legitimacy in the eyes of citizens, and to improve quality of life through economic development and the provision of public services.

The objective of Result 3 was improved local governance through strengthened interactions between civil society and their local governments translating into increased and better informed demand by citizens for public goods and services and increased responsiveness by local officials to citizen demands.

Activities designed to achieve Results 2 and 3 were combined under a single local governance capacity-building component targeting both public sector and non-state actors.

Two additional components were included in the project design: *Municipal Support Projects* and *Information Management*. Municipal Support Projects were a programmatic mechanism to improve local public services and thereby contribute to Results 2 and 3.

Information Management focused on project performance monitoring and evaluation and on dissemination of information and best practices in local governance, thereby contributing to the achievement of Results 1, 2 and 3.

## **2.2 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Based on the above-described results framework, the LOKAL performance monitoring plan (PMP), in its final iteration, used 15 indicators to measure project outputs and outcomes. In the absence of current and reliable data from other sources, baseline and performance data collection relied totally on primary data generated by project staff and consultants. Several methods were employed to collect this data ranging from basic lists of participants in project-sponsored events to more involved survey instruments. Overall, performance for eight of the 15 indicators met or exceeded targets, while the remaining seven failed to attain expected levels. Several reasons account for these variations. For example, the indicators demonstrating strengthened local governance capacity (e.g., number of sub-national government entities, number of associations and number of individuals receiving assistance from the US government) exceeded targets largely due to the geographic expansion of LOKAL interventions in municipal budgeting to the entire country, rather than being limited to the 15 LOKAL-targeted municipalities. These output measures, while good indicators of project performance, do not necessarily demonstrate outcomes or impact. For this reason, LOKAL used a tailor-

made instrument, the Municipal Capacity Index (MCI) to measure incremental progress in building municipal capacity in management, governance and service delivery. MCI data was collected via interviews with municipal officials combined with direct field-level observation.

In project Year 1, MCI data was used for the dual purpose of establishing a baseline, as well as for determining training and technical assistance needs and developing the capacity-building action plan. In Year 2, when the MCI evaluation was carried out for the second time, data showed great progress with 85% of target municipalities significantly increasing their scores for improved management and 62% significantly increasing their scores in transparent governance. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake and the new focus on the MRP, MCI data was not collected in Year 3. Resources and time constraints prevented MCI data collection again in Year 4. While time-series data over the life of project including a control group would have been the most reliable measure of increased local government capacity, the experience with the MCI did demonstrate that LOKAL training and technical assistance was having impact. It also gave municipal officials an introduction to the use of performance measurement tools as a means of tracking their progress in municipal management and governance.

On the other end of the spectrum, the indicators dealing with decentralization reform legislation fell significantly short of expected results—largely due to political dynamics beyond the control of the project. As discussed later in this report, despite great efforts to

provide technical assistance to the executive and legislative branches of the GOH in drafting new legislation and to build consensus and support among civil society actors for decentralization reforms, only one bill prepared

with project assistance—out of an expected five—actually reached the floor of Parliament. Unfortunately, the absence of a quorum prevented a vote in the final days of the legislative session.



# 3.0 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

## 3.1 GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The original selection of 15 target communes in 2007 aligned with fundamental elements of USAID/Haiti’s 2005-2010 program strategy, specifically, stabilization of highly volatile zones and development of the Limbé and Montrouis watersheds. Within this strategic focus, the targeted communes were:

- **North Department:** Cap-Haïtien, Limbé, Bas-Limbé, Acul-du-Nord;
- **Artibonite Department:** Gonaïves, Marmelade, Verrettes, Saint-Marc; and
- **West Department:** Arcahaie, Cabaret, Petit-Goave, Port-au-Prince, Cité Soleil, Delmas, Carrefour.

While the majority of capacity-building interventions were concentrated in the selected communes located in three of Haiti’s 10 departments, LOKAL activities in support of the decentralization legal framework, the associations of local officials and information dissemination on local governance best practices were national in scope.

For a variety of reasons, project activities in the country’s three largest municipalities—Port-au-Prince, Delmas and Cap-Haïtien—proved difficult. Part of the problem was simply the sheer scale of the issues confronting these large urban centers and their needs that dwarfed the resource capacity of LO-

KAL. Nonetheless, these municipalities were invited to participate in LOKAL-sponsored training events and did attend some of them on a sporadic basis.

As will be discussed in the lessons learned section of this report, the selection of local government units for governance support based solely on geographic criteria in relation to a general development strategy—without taking account of local political dynamics and the character and receptivity of local officials—needs to be balanced with other selection criteria and/or implementation strategies.

## 3.2 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, OUTPUTS AND RESULTS

### 3.2.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

#### RESULT 1: COMPLETED LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE AND IMPLEMENTED

##### *Legislative Reforms*

Under Result 1 on the legal framework for decentralization, the original program design focused on technical assistance to the MICT for the preparation of new legislation, and to mayors associations and civil society groups to support them in advocating for reform. At the outset of the project, Tetra Tech ARD broadened the scope of action to include national consensus building on decentralization re-

forms through consultations with multiple stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels. What was initially planned as a one-year effort turned into almost two years of intense activity with changing strategies to adjust to political dynamics, both favorable and unfavorable to the passage of new decentralization laws. While the critical importance of a revised legal framework for decentralization as a foundation for strengthening local governance was—and still is—undeniable, the diversity of opinion on the details of the reforms was an unanticipated obstacle to passage of new legislation.

When LOKAL began implementation in December 2007, the legal framework for local governance existed in the form of five Presidential Decrees made during the transition government (2004-2006) and in the absence of a national legislature. In principle, as these decrees were never abrogated, they had at the time and still have the force of law. Nevertheless, they have been the object of much debate and contestation, and have not been implemented to any extent since their publication in the official gazette in February 2006.

As a first step in the process of building broad consensus for revised decentralization legislation, LOKAL carried out a critical analysis of this existing legal framework. This analysis was submitted for review and comment by a select group of Haitian decentralization and local governance experts. A revised report integrating feedback from the group of experts and indicating points of consensus and divergence as well as recommendations was then circulated to a larger group of civil society stakeholders. A two-day retreat was held to solicit their input and validate the report's

recommendations. The final synthesis report, "Analysis and recommendations for the improvement, completion and implementation of the legal framework for local governments in Haiti", was finalized in February 2008 and transmitted to MICT, Parliament, mayors associations, USAID, other concerned donors and a range of civil society organizations.

At the same time, LOKAL's Deputy Chief of Party was invited to become a member of a newly formed Presidential Working Group on Decentralization Reform that was mandated to prepare new legislation to present to the Parliament. Following several months of regular working sessions that produced draft legislation in both French and Creole, the Presidential Working Group's efforts were suspended without explanation.

At this point, LOKAL technical assistance shifted from the executive to the legislature. Support for deliberations and refinement of the draft law continued with the Senate and Chamber of Deputies "Interior and Local Government Commissions" beginning in September 2008. A promising interim result of this effort was the inclusion of the bill on the 2009 legislative agenda.

Soon after, the Commissions requested support from LOKAL in organizing a series of public hearings to present and debate the draft legislation and further build consensus for decentralization reforms among citizens around the country. LOKAL joined forces with the National Democratic Institute, USAID-PAPH and the Canadian-funded Haiti Local Development Project to hold public hearings in all 10 departments of the country and to conduct a media campaign to promote

better understanding of the decentralization law and build popular and political support for reform. In conjunction with these initiatives, over 3,000 copies of the draft law were distributed to civil society organizations, political parties, professional organizations, women's organizations, associations of elected officials, universities and the press.

Ultimately, despite considerable efforts to mobilize members of Parliament and galvanize public opinion in favor of the new legislation known as the *loi cadre* or Framework Law, the 48th legislature was unable to organize a vote by the end of its final session in September 2009.

#### **Thematic workshop during a public hearing on the Decentralization Framework Law**



#### ***Other Policy Initiatives***

In addition to providing assistance for the promulgation of new decentralization legislation, LOKAL supported efforts to promote policy reforms within the existing legal framework. A notable example is work done to raise awareness on the need to decentralize the national budget. To this end, a partnership was established with the *Initiative de la Société Civile* (ISC) that formed a coalition of a dozen

civil society organizations, engaged an expert to prepare a baseline reference document and launched an advocacy campaign in December 2008. The coalition's reform agenda sought the following:

- Inclusion of specific line items in the national budget for municipal capital investments;

- Line item allocations of the local government management and development fund (*Fonds de Gestion et Développement des Collectivités Territoriales* [FGDCT]) for all communes and communal sections;
- Establishment of an entity to manage the FGDCT in which local authorities would participate; and
- Opening of bank accounts for communal sections.

Following a major press conference and media campaign supported by LOKAL, the coalition met with the president of the Finance Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, the Minister of Interior and Local Collectivities on several occasions, as well as the Prime Minister. Subsequently, a series of measures were announced by the Minister of Interior, notably:

- Allocation in the 2009 national budget of 1 million gourdes to each municipality and 250,000 gourdes to each communal section for capital investments;
- Involvement of local authorities in the preparation of the 2010 national budget with regard to inter-governmental transfers;
- Creation of an interim commission on the FGDCT made up of representatives from the relevant parliamentary commissions and the representatives of local elected officials' associations;
- Launch of a technical assistance program to standardize the 2010 fiscal year budgets for all communes; and
- Opening of bank accounts for the communal sections.

In a further effort to promote reform related to the national budget, LOKAL supported the Association of Mayors of the Metropolitan Region (CIVITAS), led by the mayor of Port-au-Prince that circulated a petition signed by 73 mayors calling for the FGDCT to be specifically included in the national budget. CIVITAS organized a meeting between Parliament and the presidents of the associations of mayors to discuss this issue just prior to the submission of the Finance Commission's report on the 2010 budget.

The actions supported by LOKAL in budgetary decentralization were largely successful in bringing the issue to national attention and in instituting some reform measures. Nonetheless, at the end of the project, it remains to be seen if the reforms will be sustainable. It is clear that management of the FGDCT still lacks transparency.

### ***Compendium of Legal Texts on Municipal Management***

In light of the disappointing conclusion of efforts to enact comprehensive decentralization reform legislation and in the absence of a sitting legislature, another major initiative was launched in 2010 to improve local and national actors' familiarity with and ability to apply the law within the existing legal framework. Recognizing that local authorities need to have a good grasp of the texts that define the attributions and powers of other public institutions to exercise their own mandates properly, LOKAL and the MICT agreed to collaborate on creation of an annotated collection of the legal texts relevant to municipal governance. This is an excellent example of the strong partnership that developed between the MICT and LOKAL.



Ministère de l'Intérieur  
et des Collectivités territoriales  
de la République d'Haïti

# Recueil de textes normatifs entourant l'action locale

*Vannotés*



Compendium of legal texts—a collaboration between the MICT and LOKAL

This work involved a team of LOKAL-sponsored consultants who worked with ministry staff over a 12-month period to compile relevant legislation (87 legal texts in ten domains); organize eight thematic shops<sup>1</sup> with representatives of the municipalities, central government agencies and subject matter experts; draft annotations to explain important concepts; and illustrate practical applications in areas such as environment and natural resources, local finance, economic activity, and public land and expropriation. The 640-page compendium, *Recueil de textes normatifs entourant l'action locale*, was published in April 2011 and distributed widely to local, regional and national public, private, nongovernmental and educational institutions.

Based on the enthusiastic response to the *Recueil* provided by participants at a May 2011 workshop organized in the Artibonite Department to familiarize municipal officials and representatives of deconcentrated state technical services with the use of this new reference guide, LOKAL and the MICT decided to extend the activity to the other nine departments. These workshops, organized from August to October 2011, attracted nearly 300 participants, providing elected officials with a rare opportunity to share information on the difficulties they face in responding to the needs of their constituents, to assess their own knowledge and application of basic legal texts governing local matters, and to discuss improved collaboration with state institutions

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<sup>1</sup> Environment and natural resources; Local public finance; Social and economic development; Public/private lands and Expropriation; Public services and community facilities; Land-use planning and urban development; Municipal administrative police and Enforcement ; Public institutions and administration.

based on a clearer understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.

In November 2011, in response to a strong demand by national and international institutions for copies of the *Recueil*, LOKAL designed and produced electronic versions that the MICT has begun to distribute on CDs and intends to make available for consultation on its website.

### ***Associations of Elected Officials***

The original design of LOKAL placed assistance to associations of elected officials within the context of Result 1, focusing on the reestablishment of the National Federation of Haitian Mayors (FENAMH) and its role in advocating for decentralization reforms. When LOKAL emerged on the scene 10 months after the inauguration of most local officials (mayors, *Conseils d'Administration de la Section Communale* [CASECs], *Assemblées de la Section Communale* [ASECs]), the departmental mayors' associations had been reestablished and were receiving support from the MICT. They were meeting regularly and had set up a *Conference of Presidents* to represent them at the national level. LOKAL believed that the Conference could easily serve as the springboard for the reconstitution of the FENAMH. Initial consultations with the Conference of Presidents indicated a need for support to both the departmental associations as well as the FENAMH. However, there was a diversity of positions among the departmental associations regarding their commitment to reestablishing the FENAMH.

The logic of strengthening the departmental associations as the constituent parts of the FENAMH made ultimate sense. So, it was

decided that LOKAL would provide technical assistance to the 10 departmental mayors' associations for institutional strengthening, and at the same time, work with the Conference to reestablish the FENAMH. During the first year of the project, LOKAL assisted the associations with the preparation or revision of their statutes, internal operating rules, action plans and the organization of general assemblies to elect officers and adopt the statutes. Simultaneously, the project organized a series of planning workshops with the Conference of Presidents to prepare an action plan to reestablish the FENHAM and set a decentralization reform agenda. After finalizing a 100-day plan for the nascent FENHAM, the Conference leadership appeared to lose interest and took no initiative to follow up on any of the planned activities. Consultations between LOKAL and the mayors revealed that certain members of the Conference of Presidents were unhappy about the fact that financial assistance offered by the project fell significantly short of their expectations. As a consequence, the mayors' associations, as represented by the Conference of Presidents, began to show a noticeable lack of interest in the technical assistance offered by the project, such as the organization of thematic workshops to discuss and formulate unified positions on important policy issues.

Taking the example of the mayors' associational movement, elected officials at the communal section level—both CASECs and ASECs—began the process to establish their own departmental and national associations respectively and requested financial and technical support from LOKAL. The project responded favorably by providing assistance to

several departmental associations of ASECs and CASECs as well as the two national associations, the *Fédération Nationale des ASECs d'Haïti* (FENASECH) and the *Fédération Nationale des CASECs d'Haïti* (FENACAH) to hold their general assemblies, adopt formal statutes, elect officers and set an agenda for promoting decentralization and local development.

### ***Component Results***

Overall, while the legal framework component fell short in terms of seeing the Haitian Parliament pass major decentralization reform legislation into law, several positive impacts resulted from LOKAL activities, notably:

- Increased popular consensus for decentralization of governance and the need for legislative reform;
- Improved capacity and recognition by local officials of their authority to enact local regulations through the issuance of municipal ordinances and the necessity to involve the public and other state actors in defining local regulations and their promulgation; and
- Enactment of several policy reform measures to improve transparency in the allocation of transfers to local governments.

The compendium of legal texts constitutes a valuable tool and an important step toward improving the legal framework for local governance. However, much more needs to be done to reinforce the understanding of local officials of the legal framework in which they operate, including expanding the compendium with more illustrations and guidelines on how to apply the law in specific cases and begin to

establish jurisprudence in this area. Eventually, with new legislation in place, there will be a continuing need to review the legal texts found in the compendium and enact amendments to ensure more coherence among laws affecting different levels of governance.

In addition to passage of new decentralization and local government framework legislation, priorities for legal reform include amending the existing laws pertaining to local finance, and new legislation for the establishment of a local government civil service.

### **3.2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING**

#### **RESULT 2: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES HAVE INCREASED CAPACITY TO GOVERN MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY**

#### **RESULT 3: LOCAL GOVERNANCE IS MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE**

The original LOKAL design included capacity-building activities to improve the administrative and technical skills of local government authorities and staff and a distinct set of activities to increase transparency and accountability in local governance. This distinction was premised on the existence of executive councils and oversight assemblies at the three levels of local government: communal section, commune and department. The indirect elections necessary to establish municipal assemblies, departmental councils and departmental assemblies never took place, however. Therefore, major elements of the institutional infrastructure set forth in Haiti's 1987 Constitution did not exist. In adapting to this institutional void, Tetra Tech ARD brought Results 2 and 3 under a broad capacity-building component that focused on the administrative and technical roles of the councils and their staff while

attending to transparency and accountability in local governance through systematic involvement of non-state actors in project-sponsored activities.

Two major activities occupied much of Year 1 under this component: 1) organizing orientation sessions for local government officials; and 2) assessing the training and technical assistance needs of local government bodies, and designing a capacity-building program based on the assessment. In conjunction with the assessment, baseline data on municipal capacity was collected and organized in the framework of the municipal capacity index (MCI). As described above, this tool established the basis for measuring future progress in improving municipal performance.

#### ***Orientation Sessions***

The objectives of the orientation sessions were to:

- Clarify the mandates of different local government bodies;
- Enable elected officials and municipal staff to understand their roles and responsibilities better as leaders, managers, communicators, and facilitators;
- Establish the partnership terms between LOKAL and target local governments;
- Channel elected officials' efforts toward good local governance;
- Allow local officials to exchange experiences, share best practices and promote a sense of common purpose and solidarity; and
- Assess the training needs of elected officials and municipal staff.

Materials for the orientation sessions were adapted from the UN Habitat Local Elected Leadership series and focused on leadership, management, communication, facilitation, mobilization and public policy formulation. Overall, the objectives of these sessions were achieved and fundamental in setting the stage for project interventions over the following three years. However, this first experience with local officials and their staff from the targeted communes revealed that after a year in office, most local government bodies lacked structure, organizational capacity and basic materials and equipment. Overt conflict among many of the three-member councils further contributed to disorganization and fragmentation of local government units.

### ***Capacity-Building Plan***

Based on the initial needs assessment, the *Evaluation des Besoins en Formation et Assistance Techniques pour le Renforcement des Capacités Municipales* was prepared in June 2008. This document set out the principal technical areas on which LOKAL would base its capacity-building plan—finalized in August 2008 (*Plan de Renforcement des Capacités des Collectivités Territoriales*). In keeping with the LOKAL results framework, training and technical assistance modules addressed both transparent, participatory local governance (Result 3) and municipal management (Result 2). As such, training and technical assistance modules were designed and implemented in municipal budgeting, participatory planning, organization and management of meetings and public assemblies, conflict resolution, project design and management, revenue mobilization, municipal ordinances, document management and infrastructure maintenance. In addition, some

physical assets were provided by LOKAL in the form of materials, office furnishing, equipment and town hall rehabilitation to improve the working environment and the capacity of municipal governments.

During Year 2, guides, manuals and other didactic support materials were prepared and used to deliver training and technical assistance to LOKAL target communes and communal sections. Most of this work was carried out under contract through local consultants and subcontractors, with technical quality control and logistic support ensured by the LOKAL core team. The model used in most cases consisted of training of trainers in the subject matter, adult learning techniques and facilitation skills, followed by the organization of training sessions bringing together several local government teams at a common location. Training sessions were followed up by onsite technical assistance in which the trainers worked in each target location on practical applications of new skills and methods with municipal officials and managers.

Also in Year 2, LOKAL was invited by the MICT to help design a national training program for elected officials from communes and communal sections, joining a team of other institutions associated with decentralization and local governance in Haiti. Initially, this collaborative effort did not produce any tangible results. However, it did set the stage for establishing a partnership with the ministry on capacity building that evolved over time. The first joint undertaking by the LOKAL/MICT partnership was in municipal budgeting that continued and strengthened for the remaining years of the project.

### ***Municipal Budgeting***

Without the benefit of systematic research on municipal budgeting in Haiti, it is safe to say that at the outset of the LOKAL project, municipal budgets were prepared (or not) in an ad hoc fashion and were not used to any degree as a management tool. While *a priori* expenditure control was exercised by the Court of Accounts and the MICT, the majority of municipalities operated with little to no advanced knowledge of the resources available to them, making any attempt at budget preparation and management a vain effort. Following the initial training needs assessment, LOKAL saw a clear opportunity to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of municipal

management through training and technical assistance in budgeting.

In 2008, under a subcontract with the *Groupe de Recherche et d'Intervention en Développement et Education* (GRIDE), LOKAL prepared training materials on municipal budgeting that introduced a number of important innovations in the way municipalities prepared and presented their annual budgets. In the course of delivering this training to target communes for the preparation of their fiscal year 2009 budgets, staff members of the MICT Local Finance Service were invited to participate and intervene on the role of the ministry in the budgeting process. This initial involve-



**On December 14, 2008, the municipal council of Carrefour made a public presentation of its FY2009 budget. The event, widely covered by the media, was attended by other local elected officials, representatives of the central government, the private business sector, political figures, and representatives from civil society in the commune. This presentation followed on the heels of LOKAL's technical assistance on budget preparation and presentation. The session drew many positive reactions from a range of sectors, and was hailed as "a major first in the history of Haiti's communes".**

ment of the ministry in the LOKAL training effort led to the adaptation of the project's budget training materials to eventually produce the MICT *Guide to Municipal Budgeting*. In 2009, the ministry took up the leadership role and launched a nationwide training and technical assistance effort to support all 140 Haitian municipalities with the preparation of their FY2010 budgets. LOKAL, along with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), provided technical, financial and logistic support for this major initiative.

In June 2009, the MICT-LOKAL-MINUSTAH partnership began planning a nationwide intervention on municipal budget preparation for fiscal year 2010. The plan comprised a three-stage strategic approach, to:

- 1) Train municipal accountants and local government finance officers on the MICT guide to municipal budgeting;
- 2) Provide direct technical assistance to prepare municipal budgets; and
- 3) Analyze and validate the draft budgets once submitted to the MICT.

The plan was implemented with the initial training of municipal accountants and finance officers from across the country held in Port-au-Prince. This was followed by a series of two-day workshops held in all 42 *arrondissements* (districts) of Haiti in August, each attended by an average of three communes. In this highly intensive, logistically complex operation, up to 14 workshops were held simultaneously each week over a three-week period, attended by a total of more than 1,639 individuals—including mayors, municipal director generals and secretary generals, accountants, finance officers,

municipal administration officials and members of civil society—who were trained on new national standards for municipal budgeting. In September and October, the process was completed with LOKAL providing additional technical resources to assist the MICT in the review-validation-correction process to produce the final FY2010 municipal budgets. This was truly a major breakthrough toward standardizing municipal budgeting and establishing a solid foundation for using the budget as a real management and governance tool.

In Year 3 of the project, LOKAL continued to support the MICT with municipal budget preparation. This provided an opportunity to apply the lessons learned from the intensive support delivered in 2009 and to consolidate the achievements in the introduction of new budget standards. In lieu of the more costly use of Port-au-Prince-based consultants to lead the budget preparation workshops provided in the previous year, local government finance officers who had received intensive training in 2009 were able to assist the municipal teams to apply the new budgeting techniques and standards. During this campaign, 1,109 persons participated in 43 workshops covering all communes throughout Haiti; following validation by MICT staff, 140 FY2011 municipal budgets were officially adopted.

In June 2011, the MICT launched the third consecutive year of support in municipal budgeting with the retraining of local government finance officers and municipal accountants. This ongoing initiative demonstrates the ministry's commitment to fully institutionalizing the new budget process and standards and improving municipal finance

overall. The emphasis must now be placed on transparent budget management including expenditure control mechanisms, public consultations with citizens, preparation and publication of annual financial statements and a more open process for allocation of FGDCT resources. All of this will require ongoing technical assistance and training to ensure new processes and tools become routine.

### ***Revenue Mobilization***

Beginning in Year 3 of the project, LOKAL expanded the collaborative effort with the MICT in local finance to tackle the difficult and complex area of municipal revenue mobilization. The commune of Saint Marc was chosen as the initial focus of this effort. The tax base of Haitian communes relies on income from two main municipal taxes: the property tax (*Contributions Foncières sur les Propriétés Bâties* [CFPB]) and the business license tax (*patente*). Increasing revenues from these taxes holds great potential for allowing municipal governments to fulfill their service delivery and public investment responsibilities. Since the 1990s, sporadic efforts by central government and various donor projects to improve municipal revenue mobilization have not produced sustainable results. With a few exceptions, Haitian municipalities neglect to update and manage their tax rolls, with the result that only a small fraction of properties and businesses are actually being taxed. This deficit is mainly due to poor information management, the absence of tools to manage tax rolls easily and reliably, poorly trained municipal staff and lack of coordination between municipal governments and local tax authorities (*Direction Générale des Impôts* [DGI]).

Recognizing and understanding these basic weaknesses in the management of municipal taxes, LOKAL prepared a methodology and supporting tools for an integrated approach to revenue mobilization. The focus of these tools was to institute sustainable capacity within the municipal administration of Saint Marc for fiscal management and tax collection. The Saint Marc experience would then provide a model of assistance that could be replicated in other communes, hence the critical importance of the partnership with the MICT for this initiative. The integrated approach to revenue mobilization in Saint Marc developed by LOKAL included the following components:

- Sensitizing key actors and taxpayers on the link between local revenues and public services and investments;
- Training municipal officials and staff on fiscal management including the relevant laws governing municipal taxation;
- Conducting a census and valuation of properties;
- Computerizing tax rolls and management systems;
- Providing technical assistance to strengthen tax service's operational capacity; and
- Providing technical assistance to establish effective coordination mechanisms between the municipal administration, the DGI and the *Banque Nationale de Crédit* (BNC).

While LOKAL ensured all technical aspects of this pilot intervention, the MICT provided funding for the property census. When problems emerged in the relationship with the DGI, the ministry gave support at the national

level to resolve them. Once the operation was well underway and beginning to show results, a large Open House forum was organized, attended by national and municipal officials to share the experience and inspire replication by other municipalities. Initial results in early calendar year 2011 were promising. With over 20,000 properties included in the tax rolls, tax revenue increased by 159% in FY 2011 over the 2010 baseline. Toward project end, an informal evaluation of the intervention revealed that while the municipal administration was deemed capable of continuing operations, ongoing technical support was recommended to ensure the sustainability of new tools and practices and institutional relations.

With the intervention in Saint Marc well underway, a similar initiative was launched in the communes of Carrefour and Cabaret. The model and tools employed were those that

had been tested and refined in Saint Marc. In Carrefour, however, another partner was brought in to design a new software program for fiscal and budget management. Under the USAID Integrated Financial Management Systems project, the U.S. firm Systems Research and Analysis International (SRA) and their Haitian software design subcontractor, Solutions S.A., had put in place computer programs and a network linking GOH ministries and agencies for national budget management and other e-government applications. To build on their expertise and experience in this area, SRA and Solutions joined with MICT and LOKAL to support improved revenue mobilization in Carrefour. LOKAL provided assistance through GRIDE as had been done in Saint Marc, and Solutions, with information and guidance provided by LOKAL, designed a software program for management of the tax rolls and municipal budget.



**Mayor of Saint Marc speaking at the Open House event on revenue mobilization.**

In Saint-Marc, a combination of technical and material assistance provided in the final year of the project solidified the foundation for sustainable tax mobilization in that commune. 20,643 taxpayers' hardcopy files were classified according to location, and stored in file cabinets provided by the project. IT equipment (server, computers, and printers) was purchased and installed to ensure that the data collected during the survey of buildings and commercial activities could be recorded and stored securely and to support the various functions of the automated tax management program (SYGTAM), notably the emission of tax bills. To ensure a safe and reliable power supply for the automated system, LOKAL also contributed to an overhaul of the town hall's electrical system which included repairs to its generator and inverter.

A significant effort was required in the final year to clear up data quality issues affecting the property tax roll and to reconcile business tax data with the DGI. At the close of the project, Saint-Marc boasted a corrected, automated property tax roll of 18,943 (compared to 6,000 properties on a "paper" roll at the outset of the project), and a verified business tax roll of 840. Business tax receipts increased from a baseline of \$10,636 in FY 2010 to \$23,693 in FY 2011,

Organizational assistance provided by LOKAL throughout the final year resulted in clearer definition of the responsibilities and operating procedures for different sections of the municipal administration's tax service, improving efficiency and reducing the possibilities for tax fraud. A more advanced version (1.1) of the fiscal software was finalized in

November 2011 and fiscal service staff oriented in its use in December.

Throughout the year, LOKAL supported the mayor's office in broadcasting information to the public regarding tax procedures and deadlines, relying on several local radio stations.

A number of factors (including the time taken to clean up tax data, inadequate resources of the local DGI office, and an unsettled political context) contributed to delays in the production and distribution of tax bills in the final quarter of 2011. Saint-Marc now has the fundamental elements of a functional municipal tax system in place, however, and will become more proficient with experience.

No doubt the most significant breakthrough of the final year for Saint-Marc (and other communes attempting to improve revenue mobilization) was the agreement that LOKAL and the MICT facilitated, by which the DGI accepted that the CDI of Saint-Marc will use the municipality's tax data as the basis for establishing property tax liability, and will share with the municipality essential information that it did not receive previously concerning taxpayer payments.

Despite the support garnered from the Director General of the DGI in 2011 for the application of penalties against 18 recalcitrant taxpayers (selected to serve as examples), only 11 writs were issued and only 3 had yielded payments by year's end. Establishing a legitimate threat of penalties for non-payment of annual tax bills is an essential component of a successful municipal tax system, and will require expanded cooperation among municipalities, the DGI, and the Haitian court system.

### ***Carrefour***

The experience gained by LOKAL with the initial pilot experience on revenue mobilization in Saint-Marc in 2010 and the dynamism of Carrefour's municipal council, enabled LOKAL to roll out its assistance much more rapidly there in the final year of the project, despite Carrefour's much larger size.

Beginning in late March 2011, LOKAL and its subcontractor GRIDE helped the mayor's office to launch a series of coordinated activities that included a public information campaign, training for municipal staff in fiscal management and mapping, the establishment of fiscal sub-services responsible for data control, property evaluation, and archives, and the recruitment and training of surveyors to conduct the property census. Twenty survey teams were deployed in mid-April, and by mid-June they had surveyed 43,283 buildings covering all the 61 districts targeted.

An intense effort undertaken in August, September and October resulted in the evaluation of property values by the fiscal service, the classification and archiving of hard copy taxpayer files and the entry of data from those files into the fiscal database program developed by Solutions S.A. To support the municipality in providing adequate office facilities for the expanded fiscal service, LOKAL provided office and IT equipment and contributed to the renovation of a municipal annex building.

During this same period, GRIDE assisted Carrefour in constituting a data base of 3,211 businesses and activities responsible for paying the *patente*, including 106 large-scale enterprises.

At the end of December 2011, nine months after initiating its tax mobilization effort, Carrefour had produced 21,780 tax bills (out of 45,000), and distributed 13,857 with LOKAL's assistance. The distribution of bills is the responsibility of a team of 21 persons specifically recruited for the activity and six supervisors, all fiscal service inspectors.

To encourage a strong tax recovery during this first year, the municipality adopted and published a tax amnesty ordinance on obligations incurred before 2010.

While it is still early to predict the impact of the fiscal mobilization initiative in Carrefour for 2011-2012, preliminary results were very promising with over \$117,154 in property taxes recovered in the first quarter of FY 2012, compared to \$40,376 during the same period in FY 2011 (baseline).

### ***Cabaret***

LOKAL's support to Cabaret in municipal tax mobilization occurred in the last four months of the project. Cabaret provided an opportunity to test the technical assistance model developed in the larger communes of Saint-Marc (21,000 residents of the urban center), and Carrefour (50,000 urban residents), to one of Haiti's many smaller communes (3,000 urban residents). Political disturbances in Cabaret delayed the launch of LOKAL's assistance until late September. Nevertheless, owing to the small size of the commune, LOKAL and subcontractor, GRIDE, were able to implement the full package of support activities according to the methodology developed and refined in Saint-Marc and Carrefour.

After meetings with representatives of various sectors of the population and large taxpayers to announce the tax initiative, the project trained 22 local officials in fiscal management followed by specialized trainings for property census surveyors and data entry personnel.

The property census of 3,854 buildings was completed in mid-November 2011 and data entry three weeks later. An adapted version of the fiscal management program (SYGTAM) developed for Saint-Marc was used in Cabaret. A new module developed to control the quality of data entry greatly reduced the number of errors that had slowed operations in the other communes. A partial census of larger, commercial buildings identified 113 of them with a rental value of \$340,000, comprising an estimated 25% of the total number of buildings of this type.

As in Saint-Marc and Carrefour, LOKAL provided furniture and IT equipment and assisted Cabaret with restructuring its fiscal unit to manage specialized functions associated with its tax initiative, updating its business tax roll – expanding the number of medium and large-scale enterprises from 20 to 82, and producing tax bills for 2011-12.

Despite Cabaret's small size, its fiscal potential is relatively important owing to the presence of a large number of commercial and industrial enterprises and private universities implanted in the zone.

Overall, LOKAL's contribution to municipal revenue mobilization was significant. A working model of technical assistance was developed, tested and refined; a pool of technical assistants were trained and received practical experience on the ground; tools and templates

including software programs were designed and tested; institutional issues between the municipal governments, the tax authority and the banks where tax revenues are deposited were analyzed and strengthened as a result of negotiations and practical problem solving; and increases in revenues collected in Saint Marc were realized. This auspicious beginning of a systematic approach to assisting municipal governments to increase their own-source revenues has laid a solid foundation for future support directly by the GOH and/or through donor-funded projects in this critical arena. However, the weak and often dysfunctional institutional relations between municipalities and the DGI, and the absence of relations between municipalities and the two banks through which their financial resources flow (*Banque de la République d'Haïti* [BRH] and BNC), remain major impediments to increasing own-source revenues and their availability to municipal governments. Resolving these institutional bottlenecks will require political will, strong leadership and interventions at the highest levels of the GOH and donor community.

### ***Participatory Development Planning***

For more than 10 years before the inception of LOKAL, many Haitian local governments had been preparing local development plans with support from the central government and donor/NGO projects. Planning methodologies were as diverse as the settings in which they were applied, and minimal effort was made to provide follow-up in terms of plan implementation. Nonetheless, development planning is an important mandate of local government in Haiti and when carried out in a participatory manner can be a power-

ful tool in strengthening transparent local governance. During the initial training needs assessment and introductory visits to target local governments, many mayors expressed a desire for assistance in preparing development plans for their communes. As a result, an approach was envisioned to help target communes prepare comprehensive development plans. Once the plans were complete, LOKAL would provide technical assistance in the preparation of projects, including those to be funded directly by LOKAL. This process was designed to strengthen local governance by providing a mechanism through which local officials and citizens could interact on the problems confronting their communities and together identify solutions in the form of projects and programs. As such, the participatory process for development planning formed a cornerstone of LOKAL's approach to strengthening local democratic governance.

In Year 1, as a first step in launching this activity, LOKAL prepared a report on the experience in participatory local development planning in Haiti. The report analyzed methodologies, institutional arrangements, outcomes and the perceptions of the key public and private actors involved. This analysis provided the basis for the preparation of a methodological planning guide finalized in Year 2 that included instruments for collecting and analyzing information to be used in preparing municipal development plans supported by LOKAL. A scope of work was drafted that, along with the methodological guide, served to solicit proposals from interested Haitian organizations to mobilize technical resources to assist the communes with the planning process. This resulted in the award of subcon-

tracts to the firm Intell Consult to provide a team of subject matter experts and facilitators to organize participatory planning in the communes of Acul du Nord, Limbé and Bas-Limbé.

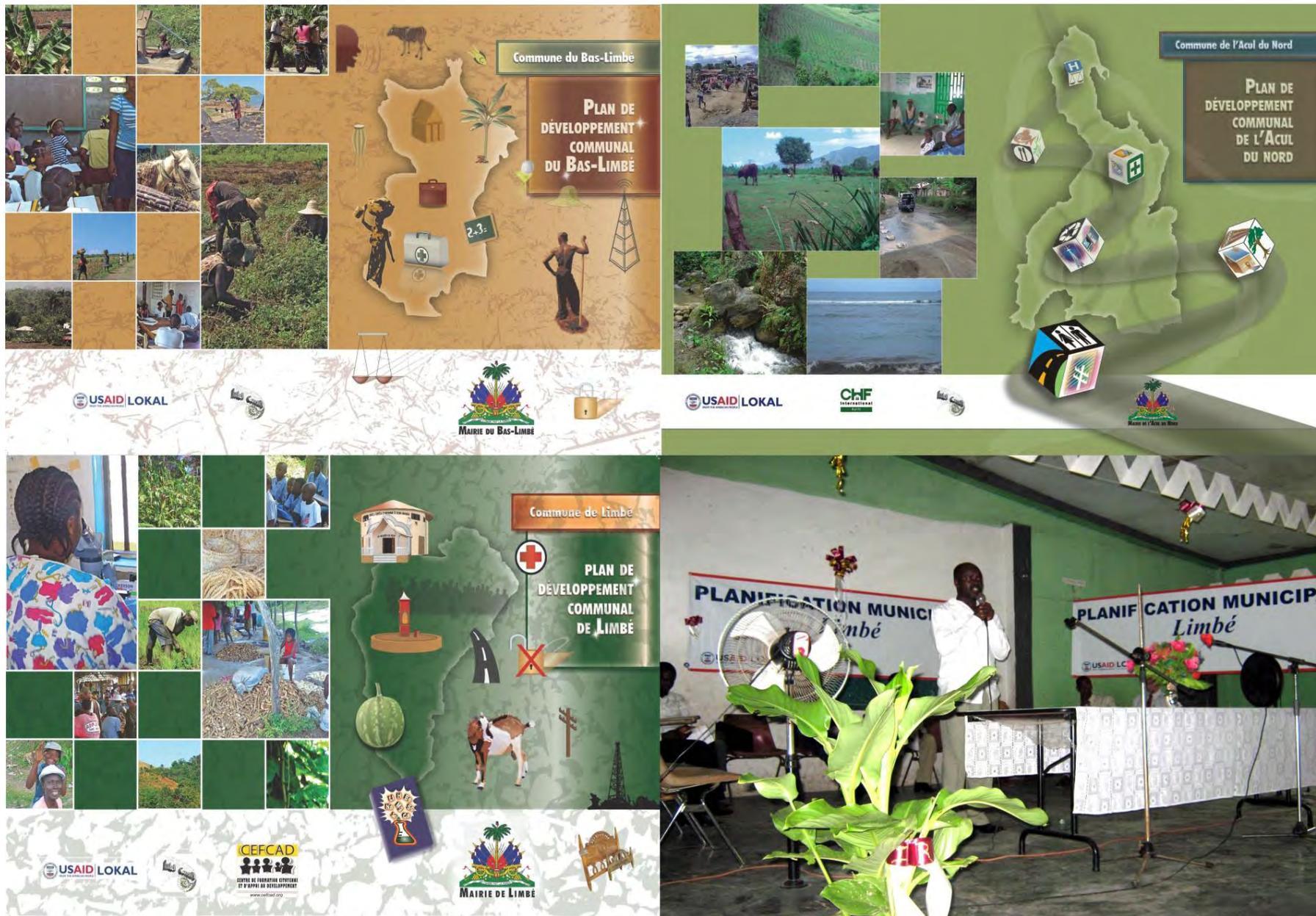
Field work in each of the three communes, most of which took place during Year 2 of the project, involved a three-stage process: information/sensitization, diagnostic and planning/programming. This took place in a series of workshops with local officials and community representatives in each communal section and the municipal center over a four- to six-month period depending on the size of the commune. By the end of the process, almost 4,000 people had participated in preparing the plans in the three communes, 35% of whom were women. Several hundred participants in each commune attended validation workshops during which community members presented different components of the plan they had produced. The culmination of this exercise was undoubtedly a high point in the civic life of each commune, giving participants a sense of accomplishment and identification as citizens of their communes. These plans serve to articulate the development vision and priority projects of their communities in key economic and social sectors and as a tool to solicit funding from central government and/or from international donors and NGOs.

To ensure that the fruits of this collective endeavor would serve its most important purpose, i.e., to promote development actions and implement planned projects and programs, LOKAL provided resources for a series of complementary activities that included:

- **Establishment of commune development councils (CDCs) and communal section development councils (CDSCs).** These councils are legally mandated to support the municipal and communal section governments respectively in plan implementation. To ensure these citizen-member structures function effectively, LOKAL provided technical assistance to draw up their internal regulations and organize technical committees to take on responsibility for different elements of their plan. The CDCs and CDSCs then become the principal mechanisms for citizens to participate in local development and governance.
- **Preparation, publication and dissemination of the plan document.** LOKAL invested in producing high-quality French- and Creole-version plan documents for each commune. This extra effort to publish an attractive, inviting color document with graphics, photos, charts and tables added value, generating further enthusiasm among officials and community members. Of equal importance is the value of such a document for fundraising purposes. LOKAL ensured printing and broad distribution of hundreds of copies among national government agencies, international organizations, politicians, media groups and civil society organizations.
- **Plan marketing and fundraising.** Through a subcontract with Caribbean Business Consulting (CBC), a Haitian firm, LOKAL provided technical assistance to municipal governments and development councils in promoting their plans and seeking funding from the na-

tional government and international organizations for specific priority projects. CBC prepared a database of potential sources of funding for local development activities, developed promotional materials in printed and electronic format, organized training seminars on fundraising for local development and prepared a fundraising guide for local governments.

Three additional communes—Saint-Marc, Cabaret, and Verrettes—were targeted for assistance in the preparation of development plans in Year 3. Proposals were solicited with awards pending when the earthquake struck in January 2010. As a result, this activity was put on hold while LOKAL resources were focused on the Municipal Recovery Program. When normal program operations resumed, time and resource constraints led the LOKAL team to develop a more rapid and focused planning methodology dealing uniquely with mandated municipal services in lieu of the broader multi-sector development planning undertaken previously. This adapted methodology provided many of the same benefits in terms of local government capacity building and citizen participation, but within a framework that achieved results more quickly. With the urgent needs of post-earthquake reconstruction and the potential availability of substantial resources from international donors, LOKAL's municipal investment planning was expected to yield a product that would help municipal governments tap these resources for the benefit of their communities.



Municipal Development Plans for Bas-Limbé, Acul du Nord and Limbé; Mayor of Limbé presents his municipal plan during a town meeting.

Capitalizing on the context, and using experience accumulated during the initial years of the project, LOKAL adopted a streamlined planning process, rapidly setting municipal priorities for investments in public services and preparing project documents for use in attracting potential funders.

As in the case of the broader municipal development plans, the *municipal investment planning* process that was carried out in Saint Marc, Cabaret and Carrefour strengthened the capacity of local officials to conduct formal public consultations and involve civil society and the private sector directly in the formulation of credible investment programs that reflect community priorities for the improvement of local public services. To further reinforce the local government/community nexus, joint technical working groups were established to prepare basic project dossiers for which they received practical training.

The process and resulting *municipal investment plans* served to complement and reinforce project activities in municipal budgeting, revenue mobilization and public service projects. In basic terms, the linkages among these LOKAL interventions can be described as follows:

1. Newly mobilized revenues are used in part to fund at least a portion of municipal investment projects identified through the planning process.
2. These own-source contributions to local development are inscribed in the municipal budget under capital investments.
3. Resources for future coverage of recurrent costs of these capital investments are budgeted to ensure sustainability.

4. The municipal investment plan and its component projects are used as a tool to solicit outside funding from various national and international sources (including LOKAL municipal support projects).
5. The entire process is carried out in full view and with the direct participation of the citizenry.

In sum, these mutually reinforcing components provided a holistic approach to transparent local public financial management, development planning and implementation.

A complementary, internal analysis of the structures and the human resources of the municipality with regard to planned investments is aimed at assisting local authorities in assessing the adequacy of the municipal administration to effectively support implementation, and serves to orient efforts to restructure and reinforce the municipal team as required.

Continued reinforcement and support to local development planning is certainly warranted as a key to improving local governance and economic and social development. Future efforts in this area would be well served by focusing on periodic participatory evaluations of plan implementation and preparing updated action plans based on the results. Municipal planning assistance should include an evaluation of local revenue potential and the part of own-source revenues to be used to fund municipal services projects and their recurrent costs. Another related activity would be to support detailed economic studies of high-value commodities or produce as a means to promote private investment.

### ***Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Maintenance***

An early assessment carried out by the LOKAL civil engineer noted the deplorable state of municipal infrastructure in most target communes and the complete absence of attention to routine maintenance by municipal governments. Two activities were developed and implemented to address this basic problem: training and technical assistance in infrastructure and equipment maintenance, and rehabilitation of selected town halls.

In Year 1, guidelines for management and maintenance of municipal infrastructure (*Guide de gestion et d'entretien des infrastructures administratives et équipements*) were prepared as the basis for providing technical assistance in this area. The illustrated guide was designed to help municipal staff conserve and prolong the lifespan of physical assets necessary for provision of public goods and services. It covers key elements of maintenance and outlines the organizational hierarchy, roles, responsibilities and specific tasks of municipal staff to maintain infrastructure, equipment and furnishings. A team of Haitian engineers was trained to provide hands-on technical assistance in target municipalities. Following an initial intervention in Year 2, they were deployed periodically in successive years to ensure that new practices and tools were being effectively used. The practical, user-friendly approach to infrastructure and equipment maintenance promoted by the project was valued by municipal staff, and in most communes this assistance resulted in the preparation of inventories of municipal buildings, equipment and office furniture and maintenance plans for their upkeep.

The initial assessment of the physical assets of target municipalities concluded that six town halls were potential candidates for major rehabilitation. LOKAL contracted with a local architect to prepare rehabilitation plans for a first lot of three town halls: Acul du Nord, Bas-Limbé and Cabaret. The cost estimates for the three projects provided by the architect proved well in excess of the funds available for this purpose under the project. It was therefore decided to proceed with the rehabilitation of Acul du Nord and Bas-Limbé town halls and to postpone the other rehabilitations pending the availability of additional funds. By Year 3 of the project, when the rehabilitation of the Acul du Nord and Limbé town halls were in the final stages of completion, funding constraints led to cancellation of any additional rehabilitation work, other than the renovation of a temporary office for the municipality of Cabaret after its town hall was irreparably damaged in the earthquake (see MRP below).

The before and after photos of the rehabilitated town halls on the following page show the remarkable difference in the stature of these buildings as a result of the investment.

By far the most attractive edifice in both towns, the upgraded infrastructure has certainly made a difference in terms of an improved working environment for the mayors and their staff and for citizens' use of available municipal services. While improved municipal office space is no guarantee of strengthened administrative capacity or improved public services, it is a motivating factor for those that work there and a contributing factor to enhancing citizen perception of their local government.



Before and after photos of Acul du Nord and Bas-Limbé town halls.

### ***Document Management***

The basic administrative function of filing, archiving and generally managing documents as a critical component of municipal management and service delivery was assessed as sorely deficient in the majority of LOKAL target municipalities at the outset of the project. For this reason, document management was included among the subject areas in the municipal capacity-building plan. In Year 2, staff from each of the target communes received formal training on the concepts of document organization. LOKAL followed that training immediately with hands-on technical assistance to help municipal staff design a filing system suited to their needs, and worked with them to complete a catalog of existing documentation. Over the succeeding two years of the project, the technical assistants were periodically deployed to the same municipalities to review progress, help resolve outstanding problems in document management within the municipal administration, and in general, ensure filing systems and document management protocols were being applied. Municipal staff and officials were appreciative of this assistance and the direct hands-on approach used. The results in terms of orderly filing and accessibility of official documentation can be observed in most LOKAL partner municipalities.

### ***Component Results and Sustainability of Capacity-Building Interventions***

Overall, the impact of LOKAL-sponsored training and technical assistance in the areas described above was significant, producing enhanced individual skill levels as demonstrated in pre-test and post-test evaluations and improved institutional capacity as demonstrat-

ed through other indicators. In contrast to many capacity-building efforts in Haiti, LOKAL training and technical assistance is distinguished by the application of interactive adult learning techniques, an emphasis on training of trainers in both technical content and facilitation skills and the preparation of detailed trainer and participant manuals. These features have been critical to the success of LOKAL capacity-building interventions and explain their popularity among most participants.

More specifically in the area of local finance, the LOKAL project can be attributed with:

- A significant contribution to the standardization of municipal budgeting;
- The existence of a technical assistance model and effective tools to support increased municipal revenue mobilization;
- An increased capacity of selected municipalities in fiscal management and revenue mobilization; and
- The improved capacity of the MICT to assist municipalities in budgeting and revenue mobilization.

Furthermore, LOKAL's work in local development planning resulted in:

- Increased visibility and importance of municipal government as perceived by citizens;
- Improved relations among local authorities and civil society actors;
- Increased awareness and understanding by citizens of local development issues, problems and potential solutions; and
- The availability of fundraising tools for use by municipal authorities.

The sustainability of these significant outcomes related to local government management capacity and the level of citizen participation in local governance is a critical issue. The low professional qualifications of many municipal cadres and the chronic instability of municipal administrations in Haiti undermine the prospects for sustainability. In the great majority of cases, staff are appointed by the incumbent mayor, and do not stay on beyond their mandate. Their departure represents a net loss of experience gained on the job and new skills that may have been attained through various training programs. Furthermore, recent history shows that Haitian politicians who are elected to office rarely come from a public management background and do not feel at ease delegating responsibility to their staff.

To address this situation, the MICT has begun implementation of a two-pronged strategy consisting of: 1) short-term training on management practices and good governance for current staff, and 2) broader reflection on establishing a genuine municipal civil service that would provide career opportunities with continuous training and stability for local government staff. LOKAL supported the MICT in these efforts with training on budget preparation and control for all local government finance officers (CFTs) and accountants, and participated in a symposium on establishing the municipal civil service. This is a nascent effort that will require many years of sustained policy reforms and institutional development initiatives. International donors are well advised to provide support to the GOH in this regard.

### 3.2.3 MUNICIPAL SUPPORT PROJECTS

#### RESULT 4: SUPPORT PROJECTS FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED

Municipal support projects were a mechanism through which LOKAL contributed to the management and governance objectives of the project by providing practical experience in the design and implementation of public service improvement initiatives. In most cases individual municipal support projects were identified through the participatory planning process, involving both municipal officials and community representatives. To ensure that municipal support projects proposed by target municipal governments were compatible with LOKAL broader governance objectives, a set of criteria set guidelines for participating municipalities. As such, municipal support projects were designed to:

- Address public services that fall within the legally assigned mandate of municipal governments in Haiti;
- Address needs prioritized by community representatives via a municipal planning process;
- Contribute to sustainable improvements in public service quality and/or quantity and/or cost recovery;
- Be fully implemented within a four-to-six-month timeframe; and
- Produce no significant negative impact on the environment.

In addition, agreements signed between the municipality and LOKAL included a commitment by the municipality to ensure recurrent cost financing, i.e., infrastructure and

equipment operations and maintenance, through their annual municipal budgets, and to invest a minimum of 10 percent of the total project cost in cash or in-kind for realization of the project.

Additional preferential, but not obligatory criteria for project selection:

- Addresses the needs of women, youth and/or other vulnerable groups;
- Includes service co-management arrangements involving public-private partnerships, community-based organizations or similar institutional forms; and
- Includes direct involvement and support of deconcentrated central government services where appropriate.

LOKAL designed an application form and detailed guidelines to help the communes plan a coherent project with a realistic implementation plan and budget, and to analyze the development problem and objectives in more detail to support their applications for funding. The municipal support projects component provided municipal officials and members of structures such as CDCs and civil protection committees with practical opportunities to strengthen their capacities in various domains, including project design and management, community organization and communication.

Completing the applications not only strengthened capacity in these areas, but also complemented other skills acquired during LOKAL's training activities on municipal development planning, municipal investment planning, revenue mobilization, etc.

While the underlying strategy for municipal support project applications was to place responsibility on the municipal governments, the generally low level of technical skills of officials, staff and community members required LOKAL staff and consultants to directly support preparation of applications as well as a number of fairly complex tasks such as identifying and mobilizing consultants to conduct preliminary studies; preparing detailed engineering studies and plans; preparing tender documents and selecting service providers; preparing environmental mitigation plans; and procuring and delivering material and equipment.

Nonetheless, to the extent possible, these tasks were carried out with the direct participation of concerned municipal actors, thereby exposing them to important skills required for successful project implementation.

Overall, five municipal support projects were completed as shown in the following table.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Public Service Management Structures</b>
Acul du Nord	Public market infrastructure and equipment	Co-management by municipality and merchants association
Cabaret	Training and equipping sanitation brigades	Communal civil protection committee in collaboration with local (communal section) civil protection structures)
Carrefour	Training and equipping sanitation brigades	Communal civil protection committee in collaboration with local (communal section) civil protection structures)
Limbé	Spring protection	Local spring management committees
Saint-Marc	Street lighting and traffic signals	Road maintenance service



**Top left: Acul du Nord marketplace before the new market construction; top right and bottom: new Acul du Nord marketplace**



**Spring protection project in Limbé**

### **3.2.4 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

#### **RESULT 5: LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRACTICES DISSEMINATED**

Result 5 relates to information management and reporting including dissemination of lessons learned of importance to the local governance sector. Tetra Tech ARD approached this result through three interrelated activities. The first was the project team’s active participation in the multi-donor Decentralization Sector Working Group; the second was the preparation and publication of a newsletter with articles on best practices in local governance; and the third was ad hoc contributions to a variety of public events organized under GOH and international community auspices dealing with decentralization, local governance and local development issues. These activities included a lessons learned and best practices workshop organized by LOKAL in May 2011.

In 2008, the Office of the European Commission in Haiti took the initiative to invite a number of key donor organizations working in local governance and local development to

join the Decentralization Sector Working Group. The initial intent of the group was to share information on their respective activities, present a consolidated “mapping” of internationally sponsored projects in decentralization and local governance to the GOH and eventually to engage the government in a coordinated dialogue on decentralization policy reforms. Interestingly, more effective coordination began when the MICT took a more active role in the group’s agenda. As of 2010, the ministry was organizing regular meetings that provided a forum for the different parties to share information and focus their efforts on the vision and programs of MICT. The ministry’s initiative should receive continued support and participation from the international community. As discussed in the lessons learned section of this report, leveraged policy reform dialogue and support in the implementation of national programs hold greater promise for sustainable impact and forward progress than one-off donor programs conceived and implemented in relative isolation.

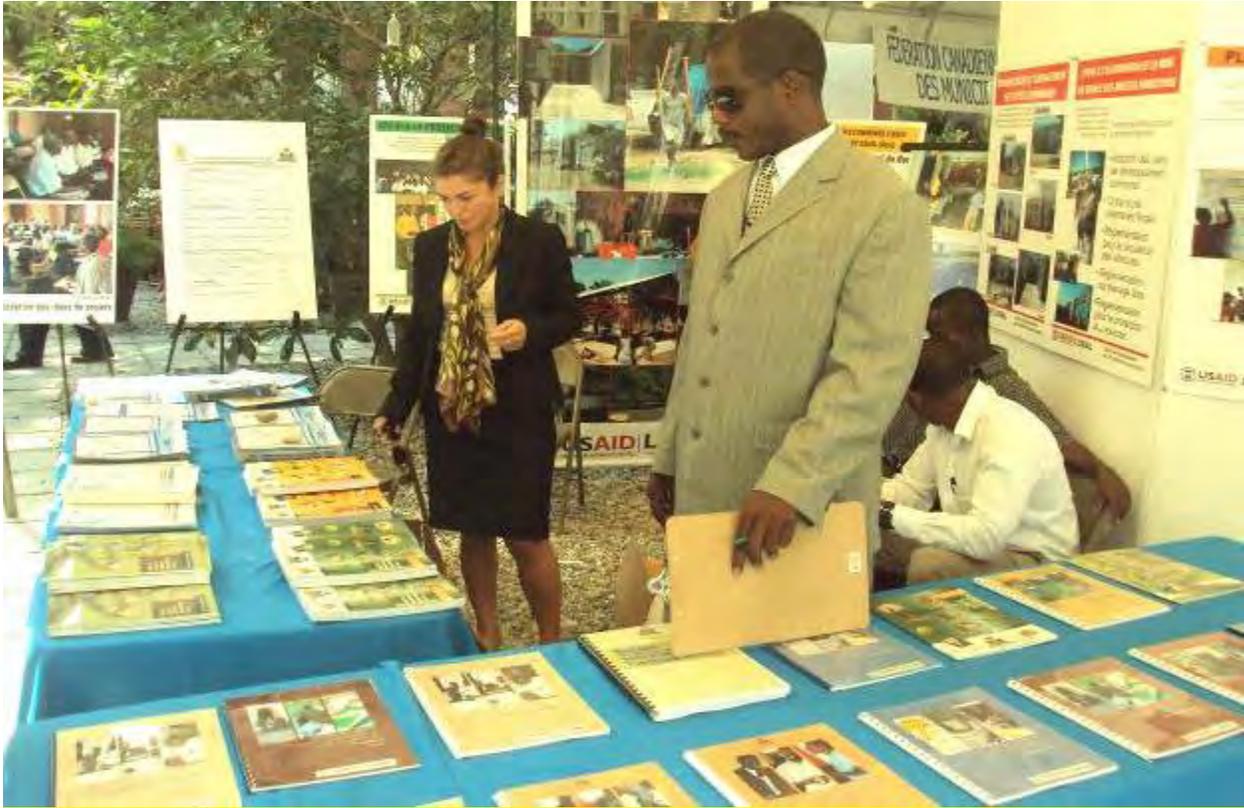
Early in Year 2 (January 2009), the first issue of the newsletter *Décentralisons* was published in both hard copy and electronic format. The

eight-page color document was conceived as a tool to disseminate practical experiences and best practices among Haiti's local government actors at the local, regional and national levels. The availability of such information was to serve as a platform to encourage more communication among local governments and as a source of inspiration leading to replication of best practices. It also served to provide information on LOKAL activities and notable achievements.

Over the remaining 2 ½ years of the project, five editions of the newsletter were published. While the response from readers was generally positive, overall impact was limited in relation to the established objectives. With each publication, readers were invited to contribute articles describing noteworthy initiatives undertaken in their communities. Journalists were invited to prepare articles for remuneration. But in the final analysis, the majority of newsletter articles were prepared by LOKAL staff and consultants based on their own experiences working in local governance. A few contributions were also solicited and received from cadres of the MICT.

LOKAL team members and consultants were active contributors at a variety of public events dealing with decentralization and local governance during the full tenure of the project. Each event provided an occasion to make presentations on specific topics, showcase LOKAL activities and achievements, and distribute project reports and informational materials. Examples include:

- Participation in the annual CIDA-sponsored *Local Development Open House*;
- Presentation on the experience of Senegal in local government capacity building by a LOKAL-sponsored consultant at the MICT-organized *Colloquium on Training and the Local Government Civil Service*;
- Presentation on municipal finance at a conference on local government transparency organized by the MICT and the MINUSTAH;
- Presentation on municipal action planning and local development at an event organized by *Perspective Citadelle* (PERC) and the *Comité de la commémoration Citadelle 2020*; and
- At the MICT National Decentralization Forum attended by an estimated 2,000 people, LOKAL set up a stand where project publications (reports, training materials, newsletters, etc.) were displayed and staff on hand to answer the public's questions about project activities. Approximately 500 of the forum participants, including local authorities and officials, representatives from civil society organizations, and international organizations working in the governance sector requested copies of these materials. At the same event, LOKAL's Deputy Chief of Party participated in a panel on local finance.



**LOKAL booth at the MICT National Decentralization Forum.**

In May 2011, LOKAL organized a workshop involving mayors and municipal staff from LOKAL's target communes and representatives of other decentralization projects, to promote an exchange of information and experiences concerning practices that they had found effective in improving public service provision and municipal administration. More than two dozen examples of good practices were identified covering such areas as budgeting, revenue mobilization, planning, environment, regulation of communal affairs, management of municipal employees, etc. While the workshop provided a sobering reminder of the entrenched obstacles facing local government in Haiti, including unclear legal mandates, inadequate human and financial resources, corruption, etc.), it also provided evidence of concrete progress made by municipi-

palities during the past five years and a growing awareness of the basic ingredients of good governance. Several participants highlighted practices adopted to improve communication and transparency and consultation with citizens, including public meetings to establish budget priorities, information campaigns accompanying tax mobilization initiatives, and publication of bulletins and reports summarizing activities and accomplishments of the municipal team. Other participants cited practices adopted to instill better collaboration between the mayor's office, the CASECs, and other state services, including the creation of a joint security committee involving the mayor, the national police and justice officials (Carrefour), and a similar joint committee to work with transport syndicates in regulating motorcycle-taxi services (Gonaives, St-Marc).

Many of the best practices identified and discussed by participants concerned efforts to improve the internal management and productivity of municipal administrations. They included the establishment and maintenance of registers in each municipal service to ensure better document management, and a variety of hiring and personnel management practices (systematic use of position descriptions, development and application of internal procedures) aimed at raising the quality and accountability of municipal staff and instilling greater discipline in an environment in which patronage, low pay, and morale issues have been endemic. To ensure wider dissemination of the best practices identified, LOKAL transmitted the report of the workshop proceedings to the MICT and the ministry's national and international partners (members of the *Comité d'harmonisation*) as well as LOKAL's target communes.

The interest generated among central and local government authorities and other Haiti decentralization partners by the LOKAL-supported pilot experiences in revenue mobilization and municipal investment planning in Saint-Marc, Carrefour, and Cabaret led the project to organize a national workshop to share those experiences in January 2012, just prior to LOKAL's closing. Participants included officials from the Interior and Finance ministries and the inter-ministerial committee on land management, mayors invited by FENAMH representing most of Haiti's 10 departments, and representatives of several key donors that support local government in Haiti including USAID, France and Canada. The agenda of the workshop, held at the Karibé Hotel, included presentations by municipi-

pal staff of Saint-Marc and Carrefour as well as LOKAL staff and subcontractors concerning the methodology and processes used in carrying out the revenue mobilization and investment planning initiatives, the tools developed, and how various obstacles were overcome. The presentations were followed by lively question-and-answer sessions which allowed participants to gain a better understanding, notably, of how municipal investment planning differs from other commune planning exercises undertaken in Haiti, and why the highly participatory MIP process is a critical component of an overall strategy to improve taxpayer compliance and achieve real gains in municipal service delivery. The day-long workshop concluded with demonstrations of the fiscal database programs developed for use by the three municipalities for more efficient management and administration of local property and business taxes.

### **3.2.5 HAITI INTEGRATED GROWTH THROUGH HURRICANE EMERGENCY RECOVERY**

Implementation of the pilot LOKAL/HIGHER activity to support risk and disaster mitigation in target communes began in the fourth quarter of 2009, enlarging the scope of the project to strengthen the capacity of 10 of the project's target communes to reduce the impact of potentially catastrophic events through better planning, especially land use planning.

The preliminary consultations organized by LOKAL's specialists had confirmed the relevance of the approach promoted by LOKAL/HIGHER, focused on risk manage-

ment and better spatial planning by communes. They had also revealed, however, that one of the main challenges in implementing the activity would be the municipalities' almost total lack of experience in land use planning and management, due largely to the absence of clear legislation, government policy and program initiatives in this area, and the concomitant absence of government-approved technical guidelines, tools or models adapted for use by municipalities.

As such, the approach defined by LOKAL involved assisting target communes to analyze major risks and to carry out a participatory mitigation planning exercise, with the support of state technical services and land use planning experts mobilized by LOKAL.

The communes of Limbé, Bas-Limbé, and Acul du Nord were selected as the first group to benefit from LOKAL/HIGHER assistance beginning in January 2010. The January 2010 earthquake that struck Haiti brought implementation of the LOKAL/ HIGHER activity to an abrupt end. In light of the massive destruction wrought by the earthquake and the urgency of recovery efforts to be mounted—particularly in the West Department—LOKAL's HIGHER funds were reprogrammed in February 2010 for use in implementing a nine-month municipal recovery program (MRP). As noted in Section 3.2.6 below (Post Earthquake Municipal Recovery Program), one of the most significant activities of the MRP concerned the support provided by LOKAL to three West Department communes to extend the national risk and disaster management system to the communal section level through the establishment of lo-

cal civil protection committees, and the training and equipping of their members.

### **3.2.6 POST EARTHQUAKE MUNICIPAL RECOVERY PROGRAM**

In the weeks following the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010, LOKAL technical staff visited all target communes in the affected zones, including those receiving significant numbers of displaced persons from the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area. Based on information gathered in the field, the LOKAL team prepared the MRP

MRP was both responsive to the urgent post-earthquake needs of local governments, as well as compatible with LOKAL's broader transparent and effective local governance objectives. Earthquake zone municipal governments' capacity was stretched beyond their ability to react effectively, revealing intrinsic weaknesses and the need for assistance. As such, MRP activities revolved around five principal areas of intervention:

- Management and dissemination of public information;
- Retrieval and preservation of municipal archives;
- Establishment and equipment of temporary municipal offices;
- Support services for displaced students; and
- Land use planning and disaster risk mitigation.

With hundreds of thousands of earthquake victims camped in well over 1,000 sites scattered throughout the affected areas, living conditions were extremely precarious. As crit-

ical food distribution, shelter, public health and social welfare issues affected so many people, the need for effective communication with the public was essential to their survival. To help LOKAL partner municipalities meet the need for public information, the project provided technical, material and financial assistance to formulate appropriate messages and disseminate them, mainly via radio broadcasts and sound trucks. As conditions on the ground evolved, so did the messages, engendering the need for successive information campaigns in most locations receiving this assistance. For example, as the hurricane season approached and difficult living conditions in the camps persisted, LOKAL assisted some municipal governments with design, production and distribution of leaflets and posters for hurricane awareness and response guidelines.

LOKAL also responded to the urgent needs of some of its partner communes where town halls were significantly damaged by providing technical and material assistance to set up temporary offices with equipment, furnishings and supplies; and to retrieve, relocate and organize important documents. LOKAL also engaged structural engineers to carry out damage assessments of municipal buildings.

Outside of the earthquake zone, the largest number of displaced persons relocated to the neighboring Artibonite Department. This included thousands of students whose school year was interrupted by the catastrophe. In Saint-Marc, Verrettes and Saint Michel de l'Attalye, the LOKAL team assisted municipal governments in conducting a census of students in need, inventorying available public and private schools able to receive them, re-

cruiting additional teachers, setting up a provisional educational services center and negotiating a GOH subsidy to cover the additional costs associated with these students. This effort resulted in obtaining over \$360,000 from the MICT to support approximately 6,000 students, allowing them to complete their academic year.

As mentioned above, post-earthquake conditions in many areas, combined with what was predicted to be a particularly active hurricane season created an urgent need to shore up the civil protection system that had been slowly evolving since 2005. While the municipal-level civil protection committees under the guidance of the MICT Civil Protection Directorate had been established and trained, the national program had not yet reached the majority of communal sections where isolated populations were extremely vulnerable to the effects of hurricanes. LOKAL worked with the national directorate and the West Department Civil Protection Bureau to establish, train and equip local civil protection committees in the 19 communal sections of Cabaret, Cité Soleil and Carrefour. Over 500 members of these committees were trained on the national disaster risk management plan and their roles and responsibilities in its implementation including technical training in first aid, emergency water and sanitation and damage assessment. As a result, these volunteer civil protection units had disaster management plans in place and were ready to respond to the needs of their communities in the case of a natural disaster. While the 2010 hurricane season did not bring any catastrophic storms to the region, LOKAL assistance was put to good use in some locations in responding to

heavy rains that caused flooding and mud slides.

MRP interventions were implemented over a nine-month period with the following notable results:

- Several affected municipalities were able to restore operational capacity.
- Local civil protection committees were able to expand coverage and strengthen their response capacity.
- Citizen awareness of relief efforts, available public services and disaster management and response increased.
- Approximately 6,000 displaced students were able to complete their school year.

Despite these positive results, the experience of assisting Haitian municipalities with their post-earthquake recovery needs underscored the persistently weak and under-resourced state of these local governments. Disaster preparedness and response is by nature local in scope and must be ensured by local authorities and communities. The establishment of the civil protection committees at the municipal and local levels is a positive step in building local response capacity, but with membership on a volunteer basis, resource constraints become even more of an issue. Under current conditions, resources are only made available to local authorities after the onset of a natural disaster and even then are woefully inadequate to meet urgent needs. Municipal budgets should include adequate provisions for RDM and the GOH should provide direct subsidies to fund these budget lines.

History demonstrates that Haiti is subject to frequent natural calamities. The January 2010

earthquake was surely an extraordinary event, but the risks associated with hurricanes are a yearly reality which the government has endeavored to address for many years. Despite these efforts, the country will continue to rely on international humanitarian relief efforts in case of disaster. This reality underscores another serious problem: the lack of coordination between local government and international NGOs. The often observed sidelining of local authorities by the international community undermines their purpose and legitimacy in the eyes of their constituents.

This was clearly evident in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. The relative efficiency and effectiveness of seasoned relief organizations is difficult to ignore in the face of human suffering. Nonetheless, it is incumbent on the international community to fully support national systems and build the response capability of local institutions before disaster occurs.



# 4.0 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LOKAL EXPERIENCE

As described in this report, the LOKAL team worked on numerous technical and governance issues with a variety of national government, local government, civil society and community-level actors over the three-and-one-half years of effective project implementation. This rich and varied experience has provided critical insights and important lessons learned based on the realities of working to strengthen local democratic governance in Haiti. The following discussion highlights the most valuable of these lessons, which should hopefully serve to inform future programs in this sector, both in Haiti and elsewhere.

***Lesson 1: Institutional strengthening and capacity-building efforts are more effective and more likely to produce sustainable results when supported by national policies and tied to central government programs and directives.***

Initially, LOKAL capacity-building activities in targeted communes were implemented solely by the project team and consultants in the absence of a national training program or policy that set out a framework and technical orientation for these efforts. While LOKAL training and technical assistance provided needed knowledge and skills to local officials

and their civil society counterparts, the broader institutional setting in which they were operating did not provide the context or ongoing support required to ensure that new systems and practices were sustainable. As the project evolved and the MICT began formulating a national policy for local government capacity building, LOKAL interventions became more effective by providing technical content and training methodologies in the context of a larger national initiative. As the relationship between LOKAL and the MICT was strengthened, most of the project's capacity-building activities were implemented with the direct involvement and support of the MICT, increasing impact and potential for replication beyond the LOKAL-targeted communes.

A prime example of this lesson is the work done on municipal budgeting. During the first year of the project, training materials were prepared, trainers trained and training and follow-on technical assistance were provided to LOKAL target communes. During the second year, the MICT developed a municipal budget preparation manual based in part on the LOKAL materials and joined forces with the project and the MINUSTAH to implement a national training program for all 140

Haitian communes that resulted in the first-time-ever standardized municipal budgets. This program was carried forward in Years 3 and 4, with a gradual reduction in reliance on external technical and financial resources.

This lesson suggests that future USAID programming focus some of its resources to support key GOH policies and national programs related to local governance in addition to working directly at the local government level. This combined top-down and bottom-up strategy holds the most promise for sustainable impact on local governance and development.

As a corollary to this lesson learned, the status of local government personnel is a critical policy issue that has direct bearing on the effectiveness of capacity-building programs. As in many developing countries, local government staff in Haiti are, for the most part, hired by elected authorities (mayors) to serve in various technical and administrative positions for the duration of their mandates. When they leave office, the great majority of these cadres must leave their jobs, resulting in the loss of their knowledge and skills to the local government sector. Recognizing this problem, the MICT has begun an initiative to classify key local government positions and determine their requisite qualifications with the ultimate objective of creating a local government civil service system and a national training program. If achieved, the end result of these dual objectives will be the establishment of an institutional framework in support of sustainable local government capacity building. USAID and other donors would be well advised to support this national policy and institutional development initiative along with

continued efforts to provide training and technical assistance to targeted local government units.

***Lesson 2: Understanding and acting on the broader institutional framework for local governance is a non-negligible factor in project success.***

Setting aside the component dealing with reform of the legal framework for decentralization, LOKAL worked primarily at the local government (communes and communal sections) level and with the MICT as its main national government counterpart. Recognizing the importance of a broad array of institutions in local governance, LOKAL systematically sought the participation of other actors such as the *Délégués and Vice Délégués*, the National Police, members of the judiciary, Ministry of Public Works, the DGI, etc. While one-off collaborative efforts produced interesting results, they fell far short of the institutionalization required for sustainable impact. The ability (capacity and resources) and willingness of these institutions to fulfill their roles in partnership with local governments were by and large unfulfilled expectations on the part of LOKAL. As different LOKAL technical interventions evolved over time, it became increasingly apparent that the support of a variety of other institutions was a critical factor in strengthening local governance and improving public services and that these entities would need direct assistance to ensure their full participation in project activities and to foster sustainable support mechanisms.

This problem was particularly important in the area of local government finance where the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the

High Court of Accounts (*Cour Supérieure des Comptes et du Contentieux Administratif*) and the DGI all play important roles in the financial operations of local governments. The multi-institutional systems on which local government finance rely cannot be improved without the cooperation of these institutions. Beyond local government finance, practically all of the central government services represented at the local level have important roles to play in support of local government services. Most often, their internal capacity and resources are inadequate for this purpose.

To ensure the full cooperation of these national agencies in local governance initiatives (often involving changes in management systems and the nature of inter-institutional relations), technical assistance and financial resources to these other entities are in many cases required.

Thus channeling resources mainly to local government units without providing direct assistance to other institutions can seriously compromise the achievement of sustainable results. A more holistic approach is needed. The starting point is an in-depth institutional and management systems analysis to determine which actors should be involved and an assessment of the additional resources required to secure their full cooperation and support.

***Lesson 3: Achievement of sustainable improvements in local governance and municipal management capacity is dependent on performance-based selection (or de-selection) of partner local government units.***

LOKAL's 15 target communes were determined based on their location within USAID-designated "hotspots" and targeted watersheds. Strengthened local governance was considered an integral component of the overall USAID development strategy for Haiti for the period 2005-2010. As such, it made ultimate sense to include the communes within these areas for local governance support that were also receiving USAID assistance in other sectors. Despite the soundness of this strategy and its geographic focus, it should be noted that LOKAL faced serious obstacles to achieving expected outcomes in several of its communes. The reasons are varied, but in most cases relate to several factors including the personality, attitude and willingness to cooperate of the principal mayor; the nature of the relationships among the three members of the commune council (principal mayor and two deputies); the qualifications, discipline and work ethic among the municipal staff; the political dynamics within the community; and the popularity and leadership of the mayor within the community.

While over time there was an implicit tendency to focus assistance on those communes with the most favorable conditions for success, it may have been preferable to follow a more explicit strategy of rewards and sanctions for those communes exhibiting varying degrees of cooperation and non-cooperation. This would have required a purposeful effort to pose conditions and to withhold assistance in the cases of non-compliance. For future programming in local governance, a more discerning selection process is advised with the ultimate choices for target communes based on a clear set of criteria and associated data

collection. Once selected, well-articulated performance protocols should be signed with each commune and include periodic reviews and the application of graduated sanctions or ultimately the withdrawal of assistance for non-performance or non-cooperation.

***Lesson 4: The limited and often irregular financial resources of municipalities can compromise their ability to take full advantage of project-provided technical assistance and training.***

Over the course of the project, there were many instances where municipalities were not receiving regular transfers from the MICT (central government subsidies) and/or the DGI (own-source revenues). As a result, they were not always able to meet their minimum operational expenses, including salaries. Under these circumstances, their ability to provide resources for materials and ongoing operations was an inhibiting factor in applying new skills and processes being promoted by LOKAL. Regular maintenance of infrastructure and materials is one example. While on-site technical assistance and training in this area was provided periodically throughout the term of the project, some municipalities were not even able to purchase the recommended cleaning products necessary to maintain their town halls, let alone the supplies required for more complex maintenance tasks. Of even more serious consequence was the lack of motivation by municipal staff who in several cases had been unpaid for as much as six months when asked to take on new and higher level responsibilities as the result of LOKAL training and technical assistance.

These cases of resource limitations among target municipalities also reveal that the processes for intergovernmental transfers from the national budget to the municipalities via the MICT, as well as the transfers from the DGI to the municipalities via the BNC or BRH are lacking in transparency. This not only leaves the municipal authorities in a perpetual state of uncertainty regarding their finances, but also leaves a project like LOKAL in a difficult position in promoting transparency and accountability at the local level.

***Lesson 5: Conflict among political actors and communities is an inherent part of working at the local level in Haiti and can undermine sustainable results of local governance programming.***

For a variety of historical, sociological and political reasons, conflict is a permanent feature of the relations among political and civil society actors at the national and local levels. As a foundation of its results framework, many LOKAL-sponsored activities promoted transparency, accountability and public participation. Local-level conflicts and rivalries among key municipal actors in many forms often disrupted planned activities and attainment of these basic project outcomes. Although LOKAL did provide training in conflict resolution and management, a more systematic and thorough approach to this persistent problem may have served the project better on many occasions and should be an important consideration in future local governance programming.

***Lesson 6: The absence of a coherent legal framework and practical tools for land use planning are serious constraints to the ex-***

***ercise of critical local government functions and the achievement of local development objectives.***

Spatial and land use planning is a key function of local governance and development, made more urgent by Haiti's high population growth rate and rapid urbanization. The existing legislation on land use and management in Haiti is entirely inadequate, and available planning tools are beyond the reach of most local government authorities and technical staff.<sup>2</sup> The assignment of responsibility among different levels of government and among administrative departments for urban planning, zoning, development of subdivisions and other land use problems is both confusing as well as a source of institutional conflict. The low number of current municipal staff with appropriate skills in this area severely limits local government capacity to deal with these important issues.

Local government must have a clear mandate and technical support for addressing land use issues within their jurisdictions.

Without proper zoning authority and the capacity to enforce land use regulations, Haitian municipalities will continue to experience chaotic land occupation patterns and the myriad social and economic problems that result. Without practical tools and clear, streamlined procedures for formulating and updating urban plans, municipal initiatives to improve infrastructure, create parks and green spaces for the public, and attract private developers and businesses, will be stymied. This vast and complex arena should be a major focus of future development assistance efforts.

Reinforcement of municipal capacity in land use planning and in the acquisition of land for various development needs will have to be accompanied by central government reforms in land titling and administration systems. The absence of reliable information on land and property rights and transparent, functioning systems to process transactions and adjudicate conflicts constitutes a major impediment to land use planning and management efforts at both the national and municipal levels.

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<sup>2</sup> The recently completed "*Guide Pratique du Maire*" (MICT, 2011) describes the legal framework for municipal control of land development and describes the principal planning tools approved by law and the procedures for preparing and adopting those plans, but adds that "*En 2011, aucune commune ne s'est dotée de plan d'aménagement tel que prévu par la loi.*" (p. 108)





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