



NDI Final Report

GUYANA: MORE RESPONSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW USAID Grant No. 504-A-00-00-00110-00 January 2000 to July 2004

SUMMARY

In January 2000, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) received a Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with the Carter Center (TCC) and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) as sub-grantees, to conduct a program to achieve the Strategic Objective, “More Responsive and Participatory Governance and Rule of Law in Guyana.” The objective included the following Intermediate Results (IRs):

1. Improved and More Informed Law and Regulation-Making
2. Increased Capacity to Resolve Disputes in a Timely Manner
3. Sustained Institutional Capacity to Conduct Free and Fair Elections
4. Civil Society Influences Public Policy
5. Strengthened Local Governance

Operating as equal programmatic partners, NDI, TCC and IFES each agreed to take primary responsibility for achieving certain IRs. NDI agreed to work in the three areas of legislative strengthening of IR1, strengthened local governance of IR5, and the civil society work regarding the empowerment of women of IR4. TCC agreed to work in two areas: rule of law as described in IR2, and civil society work regarding the empowerment of youth/children and indigenous people as described in IR4. IFES took responsibility for strengthening the elections system as described in IR3.

The program depended in part on the terms of a bilateral agreement with USAID and the Government of Guyana, in which Guyana agreed to meet conditions precedent before USAID would fund certain activities. Due to the initial and periodically recurring reluctance of the Government of Guyana to meet some of the conditions, the program suffered from chronic implementation delays. All of the partners’ activities and schedules reflect these delays. .

In response, NDI, TCC and IFES designed a multi-year program to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase the capacity of Members of Parliament for lawmaking and engage opposition parties in the process;

- Support the development of a legal system that provided just and timely enforcement of rules;
- Encourage the institutionalization of fair and transparent electoral processes that passed the test of transparency and supported democratic governance;
- Strengthen civil society's capacity to advocate on behalf of its own interests and open spaces in the political system for public participation; and
- Support the devolution of power to local and regional authorities to increase citizen participation in decision-making.

BACKGROUND

Political Context

Guyana's conflict-ridden politics have interfered with its development. These divisions are largely due to the close alignment of ethnic communities with political parties: the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) is widely perceived as representing the interests of Indo-Guyanese, the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) enjoys the support of most Afro-Guyanese, while Amerindians have aligned themselves with the Working Peoples Alliance (WPA), and more recently the Guyana Action Party (GAP). Even under the new electoral system, which combined proportional and geographic representation, feelings of exclusion were common among the ethnic groups whose party was out of power.

The 1992 elections, the first free and fair election process in a generation, resulted in the peaceful transition of power from the PNC to a coalition of the PPP and a grouping named 'Civic'. The first administration of the PPP/C was led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan and was seen as a period of political and economic progress for Guyana. Dr. Jagan died before the 1997 election, and his wife, Janet Jagan succeeded him as leader of the PPP, and President. The results of the 1997 election in which the PPP/C was re-elected, were not accepted by the PNC. As a result, Guyana was gripped by riots, destruction of property and violence. The government was paralyzed. The intervention of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders led to the acceptance by the major parties of the Herdmanston Accord that mandated the creation of a Constitutional Reform Commission (CRC), charged with addressing "measures and arrangements for the improvement of race relations in Guyana".

The 2001 election included elements of geographic representation (25 of 60 seats) and gender balance (parties were required to fill one-third of their lists with women candidates). This resulted in a significant increase in representation by women in the National Assembly, from 19 percent to 31 percent of elected members. The PPP/Civic was re-elected for a third time, over a coalition of the PNC and a 'Reform' group (now PNC/R), in an election judged by international observers to have met international benchmarks and marked by limited civil disturbance. Amerindian interests coalesced in the Guyana Action Party (GAP), which won two seats in alliance with the WPA.

Following the election, the President and PNC/Reform leader jointly committed to a dialogue at the top levels of the two major party coalitions. The goal of these discussions was "inclusive organization of government within which the majority and opposition political parties will both be involved in the leadership of parliamentary standing committees and the selection of leaders to fulfill

major responsibilities of governing and management ... [including] the Chief Justice and Chancellor, the Auditor General, members of a strong human rights commission and an ethnic relations commission, the allocation of land and housing, the tendering of contracts, a permanent committee on constitutional reform and a permanent Elections Commission ... [as well as] appropriate representation from other political and civic organizations, including the Amerindian community and women.” Provision was made for joint task forces on the bauxite industry, local government reform, border and national security issues, the media, land and house lot distribution, and depressed communities. Government and opposition also agreed in principle to set up parliamentary committees on foreign affairs, natural resources, economic services and social services. The political stalemate exacerbated other weaknesses in the enabling governance and economic frameworks and placed in doubt the short to medium effectiveness of all development efforts in Guyana. Real progress in implementing these various initiatives was difficult to measure due to the constant breakdown in productive engagement between the main parties. The minor parties represented in the Assembly were not part of the dialogue process.

In spite of the agreements that were achieved shortly after the 2001 election, a political stalemate continued for 14 months, compromising the role of parliament and other areas of governance. Criminal elements took advantage of the power vacuum to increase the levels of violent crime, including direct attacks on the beleaguered Guyana police service. A total of 142 murders occurred in 2002, an increase of 56 percent over 2001. Attempts at political rapprochement reached an impasse and in late 2002 the Commonwealth Secretariat offered to provide a mediator. A civil society project called the Social Partners Initiative (comprising of representatives of the trade union movement, the legal profession and business) developed proposals for ending the deadlock. The leader of the official opposition and former President Desmond Hoyte passed away suddenly during the Christmas period of 2002.

On May 5, 2003, the President of Guyana and co- leader of the governing People’s Progressive Party-Civic (PPP/Civic) coalition, Bharrat Jagdeo, and the leader of the main opposition People’s National Congress Reform (PNCR) coalition, Robert Corbin, announced a process of “constructive engagement” between the government and the opposition. This agreement, which emerged after weeks of negotiation, allowed the opposition to end its boycott of parliament, thereby reducing political tensions in Guyana.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.0: IMPROVED AND MORE INFORMED LAW-MAKING AND REGULATORY PROCESS

RESULT NAME: SUB-I.R. 1.1 INCREASED TECHNICAL CAPACITY FOR LAW-MAKING AND REGULATIONS

IR 1.0 Development of Baseline Data

In 2000, NDI conducted a baseline data assessment of the Guyanese law-making process with respect to the number of bills that were passed by the National Assembly involving public input. Of the 17 bills passed in the 2000 parliamentary session, 7 involved public input. All were constitutional amendments. Similarly, in 2001 twelve bills were passed, the 6 that involved

public input were also constitutional amendments. Public input was the exception, rather than the rule. Bills did not go to public hearings either before or during debate in the Assembly. In order to better understand how bills originate, to measure how long it takes for an issue of public concern to become law and what kind of public input is sought, NDI tracked the traffic law reform process.

The Ministry of Home Affairs conducted a nation wide consultation aimed at gathering community recommendations for revision of the 1940 Traffic Act. The consultation process began on November 16 and ended on December 1, 2001. A civil society group known as Mothers in Black, so named because each member had lost a child or children in traffic accidents, conducted a weekly silent protest across from the parliament since early 2002. They submitted a comprehensive proposal to the ministry with recommendations for changes to the traffic laws. Upon completion of the consultation process, their recommendations were incorporated into a final report and submitted to the Attorney General and the Minister of Home Affairs. Very few of the Mother's in Black recommendations were reflected in the Minister's amendments. With rare exception, there was little formal public input. This is the rule rather than the exception. Neither the public nor the opposition is included in the process of legislative development or regulation.

SUB-I.R. 1.1 INCREASED TECHNICAL CAPACITY FOR LAW-MAKING AND REGULATIONS

Based on the assessment, NDI found that the timeliness and quality of legislation was dependent on several factors including the role of parliamentarians and their capacity to draft legislation, the availability of research support in parliament, the urgency of government initiatives, the customs and traditions of parliamentary democracy in Guyana and an exclusively executive-driven parliamentary agenda. Over the course of the program, a number of initiatives were launched to improve the technical capacity for law-making.

The Institute implemented a strategy to improve the legislative drafting capacity of parliamentarians, including an analysis of the process of developing legislation; the training of parliament and Ministry of Legal Affairs staff and members of the private bar in drafting methods; the development of procedures to share standing orders, Bills and Acts in electronic format involving the Parliamentary Clerk's Office, the National Printer and the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel; and the development of a legislation drafting manual for members of parliament. Unfortunately, NDI was unable to train members of parliament on how to draft bills because of the number of prior conditions that could not be met within the time period of the program.

In addition to legislative drafting, the development of a parliamentary resource center was considered a priority. This concept was built around a previous initiative, the Parliamentary library, which was based on the premise that good legislation depends on the availability of relevant information. In this regard, a parliamentary website¹ was developed and launched along with a Guide to Parliament, a survey of members of parliament was conducted to determine what kind of information and services were thought necessary, staff of the Parliament office were trained in parliamentary management and administration, a parliamentary internship program

¹ The Parliamentary website is www.parliament.gov.gy.

was developed, and the laws of Guyana were converted to electronic format and made available on compact disk. At the launching of the website, Speaker Ralph Ramkarran said that “for us in Parliament, and in Guyana, this is an innovation of vast importance...we will rely on critical analysis of what we do in order to improve what we are doing.”

A brief description of these activities follows:

- LINE MINISTRIES’ PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING PROCESS.

An assessment completed by NDI in February 2001 found a lack of systematic elaboration of legislation by Ministries prior to its introduction in parliament. Drafting can begin either in the affected ministry, in the president’s office or one of the state entities. Drafting may be done within a ministry, the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel (OCPC) or by a non government expert. Consultation within ministries or externally happens haphazardly. In the case where line ministries draft the first version of a bill, it is then sent to the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel. The Chief Parliamentary Council is an officer of the Assembly, and theoretically operates without political interference, but with heavy guidance from the executive branch. The OCPC is involved in the drafting or review of virtually all bills and amendments in Guyana. Legislation is often delayed by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel who must sign off on each bill before it is tabled in the National Assembly. Drafts are often substantially rewritten by the OCPC, without the benefit of consultations with the policy analysts who prepared the original draft. The Clerk of the National Assembly and the National Printer are each involved in correcting drafts as the bills make their way through the preparation stage. Bills are often unavailable for tabling due to administrative mismanagement. The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, acting as the de facto Government House Leader, introduces all government bills for first reading, often without the assistance of any staff support.

- IMPROVE THE DRAFTING CAPACITY WITHIN MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Eighteen staff from the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Parliament Office participated in a two week *Legislative Drafting for Democratic Social Change* training course conducted by Professor Bob Seidman and Professor Ann Seidman of Boston University’s School of Law. Participants selected four draft bills supplied by the Attorney General’s office to use as models for developing research reports, analyzing the implications of the proposed legislation and suggesting changes and amendments. Participants were divided into teams to interview the bill’s drafters and policy experts within the Government of Guyana and to undertake additional research to support the analysis. Both the Deputy Clerk and the Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel participated in the course. Neither the Clerk nor the Chief Parliamentary Counsel were available to attend.

- DEVELOP PROCEDURES WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY CLERK’S OFFICE, THE NATIONAL PRINTER AND THE OFFICE OF CHIEF PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL, TO SHARE STANDING ORDERS, BILLS AND ACTS IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

The Clerk of the National Assembly, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and a representative of the National Printer's office, along with several staff, participated in an assessment of the procedures involved in routing draft legislation through the system. It was clear from the assessment that the offices involved were unfamiliar with the scope of work that each did in relation to processing drafts through the system. A streamlined system of exchanging drafts electronically was developed to ensure greater accuracy and to save time. This system also facilitated the management of electronic files for placing the laws of Guyana on compact disk.

- LEGISLATION DRAFTING MANUAL

A draft manual was completed based on materials used in the *Legislative Drafting for Democratic Social Change* course, and information from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the United Kingdom parliament. The manual was written for MPs with little or no experience in drafting, and contains prescriptive information for MPs to critically analyze legislation, as well as to understand how to read draft bills. The manual tracked the development of the *Guyana Trade Union Recognition Act 1997* for illustrative effect, and devoted sections to standardization of language, format and layout. The manual is intended to benefit back bench government and private members, as well professional organizations, the Bar Association and civil society groups. The final draft manual was completed in the final months of the program. Training modules were not developed due to time limitations.

- SURVEY TO ASSESS THE USEFULNESS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCE CENTER

A survey was conducted by NDI in collaboration with the Clerk of the National Assembly to determine the utility of the Parliamentary Library facilities and to identify areas for improvement. The Survey was distributed in August of 2003. 38 of the 65 members in the National assembly completed the survey.

Those who participated generally reflected the party and gender distribution of members in Parliament with the majority (77 percent) of respondents being from Region 4, the area around the capital of Georgetown. Most MPs were aware that there was a parliamentary library and 4 out of 5 private members had used it at least 3 times over the course of their parliamentary careers.

MPs felt that the Library needed upgrading and modernizing with more books, a documentation center, periodicals, internet access, records of parliamentary debates and proceedings, law reports, equipment such as computers, printers, photocopiers, telephone, trained staff and extended hours. There was also strong support for a professional librarian. Most respondents felt that the current collection was inadequate to meet their needs. Service was seen as inadequate because of poorly trained staff, lack of researchers and a qualified librarian. The results of the questionnaire were shared with all parliamentarians.

- PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCE CENTER

One of the proposals presented by NDI was the opportunity to establish a Parliamentary Resource Center that could contribute to informed decision making and to legislative development. A broad set of activities were proposed to better inform MP's, line ministries, members of the bar and the general public about the work of parliament, the status of legislation in debate, in committee or awaiting assent and implementation, online access to the Laws of Guyana and online access to the Official Parliamentary Gazette. The official Gazette is a record of various acts passed by the legislature. The Gazette represents the end of the legal production process. Lawyers rely on the Gazette to research existing, amended and valid laws. It was difficult to conduct research using the Gazette as it lacked a well-organized, accessible index. NDI worked with the publisher of the Gazette to develop a catalog of the Gazette.

NDI brought a technical expert to prepare a proposal for digitizing the Laws of Guyana, which the Attorney General accepted. As a result, NDI worked with the technical expert to convert all laws passed since 1998 and laws previously digitized under the Guyana Justice Improvement Project to compact disk format. NDI also improved local capacity building by providing training on Basic Windows Desktop navigation, file management, Aldus PageMaker, Adobe Acrobat, as well as CD use and management. A Technical Procedures Manual documenting the required tasks was written to provide guidance and support to the Ministry of Legal Affairs over the long term.

Following a UNDP/NDI assessment of the Parliamentary website, program staff calculated the costs of upgrades, reconfigurations and restorations. Discussions were scheduled with the Speaker, and Minister of Legal Affairs regarding the input and support for the ongoing costs to maintain the website. The assessment indicated that with minor revisions to the site, a launch of the website would be possible.

- THE PARLIAMENT GUIDE & WEBSITE

The Parliamentary Guide developed by NDI was designed to meet the needs for information and guidance for citizens, teachers, students, research personnel, government officials and members of parliament whose duties and interests require knowledge of the operations of the National Assembly. The Guide was organized to present a concise yet comprehensive step-by-step account of the history of the public buildings, the composition of the assembly, the functions and procedures of the National Assembly and the Committees Division. The Guide also outlines the function of the Legislative Branch of Guyana's system of government and describes the Parliamentary Library facilities and the Official Records of Parliament.

The Parliamentary website was designed to make available research and reference services to the members of parliament, parliament office staff and members of the public. The Website provides links to various resources for parliamentary researcher staff, government officials, members of parliament, university students and the general public. The site contains the parliamentary guide, information about members of parliament, the government and the services provided by the parliament office.

Parliamentary staff traveled to Trinidad to learn first hand about how the Trinidad and Tobago parliamentary website was developed, its uses and potential. The information from this study mission and information based on NDI's experience in other countries formed the basis of the strategic IT plan for the National Assembly of Guyana. Once completed, the official Parliamentary website would contain the Constitution of the Republic of Guyana, general information about parliament, Acts of Parliament from 1993 to 2003, Standing Orders, biographies of Members of Parliament, historical information on previous parliaments, the Parliamentary Guide, staff contact information, and links to a variety of key sites including:

- Caribbean Parliaments
- General Political Resources
- Legislative Resources
- Ethics Sites
- Budget Resources
- Public Accounts Committees
- News Resources

The potential development of the website includes:

- Access to a wide cross section of information on the World Wide Web from various Commonwealth countries on Parliament matters;
- information readily available to the public about parliament and its activities;
- information from other websites with similar parliamentary structure as Guyana;
- MP requests for information on background pertaining to legislative debates and issues; and
- research services and the provision of information to the various Committees and Sub-Committees.

Since the development of these resources, the Parliamentary Library staff and assistant researchers are able provide internet research and e-mail services to Members of Parliament, government officials and citizens.

- **STAFFING STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

The National Assembly currently has a staff of 50 persons who do not, in many cases, have a full-time workload, and others whose jobs are tied specifically to the meeting schedule of the Assembly which meets at the discretion of the government. With the establishment of Standing Committees, the need for additional personnel and skill sets became apparent. NDI proposed to assist the Speaker and Clerk in a formal review of staffing structure and requirements with a view to making recommendations that take into account the current type and level of skill, future priorities, transitional training needs, updated job descriptions, reporting relationships and an organizational development scenario. The Clerk approached NDI for assistance in writing new position descriptions. Information was collected from parliaments in other jurisdictions where NDI has worked, and adapted to the Guyana context. Seventeen new

staff were hired to fill research, information technology, coordination, logistics, scheduling and filing needs.

- **ASSISTANCE TO THE CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Assistance for the Clerk of the National Assembly was intended to improve staff skills in areas such as computer literacy to more effectively communicate with other areas of government. Training also made it possible to understand the needs and benefits of new positions such as information technology management. Training was provided by the UNDP's technology assistance program, where the Clerk received 6 weeks of orientation and training on basic computer literacy and an introduction to the resources of the World Wide Web. With NDI's assistance, a web master position was developed to manage the parliamentary web site.

Additional training related to the management of the new committee system was not implemented due to the lack of support of the government. A study mission to Canada and the United States. was abandoned at the last minute because the government would not authorize the travel of either the Clerk of the National Assembly or representatives of the governing party outside of the country.

**RESULT NAME: SUB-I.R. 1.2 LAW/REGULATION-MAKING PROCEDURES REGARDING
PUBLIC INPUT IMPROVED**

Improving the law-making procedures is a constant challenge because Guyana has lacked a tradition of public input and accountability. The political parties select the candidates in a closed process, therefore candidates are loyal to the parties that choose them not to the citizens that elect them. Consequently, opportunities for public input into governance are few. However, during the program period, several important developments impacted the political process, which led to opportunities for public input. The constitutional reforms resulting from Herdmanston accord directly addressed the need for inclusiveness and accountability. The accord also contributed to the formation of standing committees and constitutional commissions.

The adoption of these reforms begged the question of the level of resources that would be needed to make them work. As part of the accords, members of parliament would be taking on an expanded role. With six out of ten members elected for the first time in 2001, it was safe to assume that most MPs lacked a basic understanding of parliamentary processes. Furthermore, the long process of dialogue and engagement following the 2001 elections resulted in several agreements that provided the opposition with an increased role in parliament. These factors provided possibilities for the development of parliamentary democracy. A balance between the governments' right to govern and the public's right to know provided challenges and opportunities. However, changes to the internal structure of the legislature were shaped and controlled by cultural and political environments.

- **PUBLIC EDUCATION ON THE CONSTITUTION**

With recent constitutional changes, there was a concern that citizens were not very familiar with the revised electoral system. To increase public education on the Guyanese

constitution, prior to the elections in 2001 NDI provided a subgrant to the local organization the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL). The association agreed to collaborate with the Voter Education Unit of The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) in conducting voter education forums. At the forums, GECOM personnel fielded questions after presentations on the electoral system by GAWL's representatives. The first forums targeted women voters. For example, a large number of women's organizations participated in a forum that was held at City Hall in Georgetown.

In total, eight forums were conducted prior to the elections of March 2001. Topics covered by the forums included the Constitution of Guyana; Fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution; Human Rights Commissions; the electoral system; the powers of the President, the Judiciary and the Parliament.

▪ PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In 2001, NDI designed a parliamentary internship program to provide research support to the sectoral standing committees. The proposal was circulated in the 2001/02-program year to parliamentary leadership. Unfortunately, the opposition boycott of parliament from March 2002 to May 2003 made parliamentary input and implementation difficult to attain.

In December 2003, the Parliamentary Management Committee, made up of representatives of the major political parties, agreed to support the implementation of an intern program to begin in September 2004. The program would provide up to 10 interns to work under the direction of the Committee Division Secretariat. Internships would be open to anybody who expressed an interest, and would be selected through the University of Guyana continuing education program or through its degree programs. Participating students would receive academic credit for their internship. A management board made up of representatives of the UNDP, the University of Guyana's Department of Social Sciences and the Parliament Office would be responsible for managing the program and supervising the interns. The initial six months of the program would be considered a pilot phase, and following a satisfactory evaluation, a more formal program would be established.

▪ SECTOR STANDING COMMITTEES

Building on assistance provided in 2001-02 regarding the creation of standing committees, NDI conducted a multi-faceted program that included written materials, web resources, linkages with international organizations, sponsorship of legislative experts to guide Members of Parliament through the early stages of the committee work and sponsoring a Mission of committee chairpersons to study functioning committee systems in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. A study mission to Ottawa and Washington planned for early September 2003 was cancelled because the government would not approve the travel of its representatives outside of Guyana.

The establishment of the sector committees was repeatedly delayed due to disagreements between the parties regarding the composition of standing committees, choice of trainers and the lack of accordance on the role of the National Assembly in governance. By the end of 2003, the committees were in place.

A manual on the organization and functioning of parliamentary, congressional, and other oversight committees was prepared by NDI and distributed to the Speaker and members of the ad hoc parliamentary management committee. Drawing on the experiences of other transitional democracies, Commonwealth parliaments and legislatures, these materials covered topics such as the distribution of responsibilities between the Assembly and its committees; political party representation; the authority of committees; the appointment and powers of committee chairs; public participation; and information on motions, the rules of debate, and other procedural issues.

The Parliamentary Management Committee requested NDI's assistance in developing training sessions to help members with their new responsibilities. A questionnaire was sent to committee members to solicit their preferences regarding training topics. The results of the survey recommended training in rules and procedures, management of committees, use of information technologies, and staff support. By the end of the program, NDI assisted members of the Parliamentary Management Committee in the preparation of a training schedule. Approvals for the training were being sought from the leadership of the parties late in the program. However, a second boycott of parliament by the main opposition party prevented any further work from being implemented.

- PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

Shortly after the March 2001 election, NDI organized a meeting with a group of women MPs to discuss the establishment of an Association of Guyanese Women Parliamentarians. At the meeting, the structure of the association and a draft agenda were developed. Agreement was reached that the Association would be made up of all women parliamentarians and the chair would rotate between parties represented in the National Assembly. The association agreed to focus on the issues of domestic violence, reproductive choice and issues related to traffic law reform as well as developing a resource library and a directory of past and present women parliamentarians.

At the first meeting, an opposition minority party, the WPA/GAP, was tasked with developing a Mission Statement. This statement would be presented to all women parliamentarians for input. A workshop at the conference on *Increasing Women's Political Participation* in June 2003 focused on how to create networks, caucuses and coalitions. The objectives of this conference were to discuss how to increase public debate on issues affecting women and to develop the capacity of women to advocate for improvements in the status of women in the region. While the primary audience was women, men were also invited to attend as their participation is crucial for developing strategies that address male resistance to women in politics. The workshop was chaired by a government representative who is one of the most influential women in Guyana, Mrs. Indra Chandarpal. There was general agreement amongst the women parliamentarians at the conference of the merits of establishing a caucus. Events surrounding the implementation of the agreements reached through the Joint Communiqué prevented the women from negotiating the final modalities of creating a women's caucus.

As a result, the women's caucus was a victim of the breakdown of the Dialogue Process. Despite the acrimony between the parties, support for a women's caucus remains strong. Women

from all parties represented in the assembly have pledged to create a woman's caucus when a normal political environment has been restored.

- **NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

The National Youth Parliament of Guyana is an organization that brings together young people from across Guyana to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues related to their welfare. The Youth Parliament is a forum where young leaders can express themselves on important issues in an environment that promotes reasoned and informed debate. The International Youth Parliament, has two representatives from Guyana who are promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and rural women's issues.

NDI provided support to the Guyana Youth Development Association to conduct a study tour and exchange between youth parliaments in England and Scotland where they met with representatives of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the National Youth Parliament of the United Kingdom. They also attended sessions of these youth parliaments, and were able to meet the parliamentary staff, and the Clerk of Westminster.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2: INCREASED CAPACITY TO RESOLVE DISPUTES IN A JUST AND TIMELY MANNER

SUB I.R. 2.1 MORE EFFICIENT JUDICIAL PROCESSES DEVELOPED

The following is a brief description of the key activities undertaken by the Carter Center during the program, specifically related to IR 2.1. Refer to IRs 2.2 and 2.3 for additional information relevant to the development of more efficient judicial processes, such as Alternative Dispute Resolution, but more directly connected with those IRs.

- **CRIMINAL LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Early on in the project, a Criminal Law Review Committee and a Civil Rules Revision Process were established. Ultimately more focus was placed on the civil rules revision process (described below) given resource constraints, the crime situation in Guyana, and other issues explained in more detail in the RP 2 evaluation section of this report.

The Criminal Law Review Committee was given a mandate to examine existing laws, practices and procedures of the criminal justice system and to make recommendations for its improvement. The Committee was chaired by Rex McKay, Senior Counsel, and comprised of representatives of the Guyana Bar Association, the Police and Prison Services, the Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Attorney General's Chambers, the Human Rights Association, Justice of Appeal Ian Chang and the acting Chief Magistrate, Juliet Holder-Allen.

An assessment was produced in July 2002 (summarized in IR 2.1 Results section). For the duration of the project, work with the civil rather than the criminal side of the judicial system proved more feasible and productive.

- CIVIL RULES REVISION PROCESS

At the Chancellor's First Annual Judicial Conference in 2001, sponsored by TCC, amending the Civil Rules of Court was identified as a priority. The rules governing all the procedures related to filing, handling and disposition of civil cases in the Supreme Court had not been amended since 1954. It was agreed that new rules would reduce delays in the system and ensure that the administration of justice proceeded in a more efficient and effective manner.

A revision of the Civil Rules was initiated in early 2002. The Carter Center contracted the services of Chancellor Kenneth George to provide recommendations on the necessary revisions. Consultations were held with members of the Judiciary and legal practitioners, including one in February, 2002 supported by the Carter Center.

TCC distributed the draft rules, together with the summary of amendments, to stakeholders within the legal system. The Rules Committee conducted a detailed review of the draft. TCC assisted the Committee with several special events, notably the Case Flow Management retreat in June and a follow-up workshop for lawyers in November 2003, both facilitated by Master Christie-Anne Morris-Alleyne, the Court Executive Administrator from Trinidad's Supreme Court. The discussion and additional information enabled the Rules Committee to streamline the civil litigation process even further. The discussions outlined steps in the current litigation process (such as the Request for Hearing) that could be completely eliminated because they failed to add any real value to the process.

At a conference hosted by the Guyana Bar Association in May 2003, TCC was able to present the new draft of the Civil Rules of Court.

- JUDICIAL EDUCATION

Given the constraints imposed by the Bilateral Agreement regarding the wider scope of work in the judicial system, and the fact that there was no system in place for regular continuing education for judicial officers, the Carter Center initially focused on the area of judicial education. Key judges attended international educational events and conferences, while locally organized events allowed all judges (and in some cases magistrates) to benefit from the knowledge of Caribbean experts whose experiences resonated with the Guyana context. The events led to creating greater momentum for reform within the judiciary.

In August 2001, TCC sponsored the Chief Justice to attend a Court Technology Conference hosted by the National Center for State Courts in Baltimore, Maryland. This conference included sessions on aspects of court IT, including court web site design, case management, e-filing, and court reporting.

From November 30 to December 2, 2001, all members of the judiciary (Court of Appeal and High Court), with two Commissioners of Title, attended the Chancellor's First Judicial Conference dealing with the introduction of Case Management and Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Civil Proceedings. The key note address was given by Sir Dennis Byron, Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Court who was co-sponsored by TCC and the Government of

Guyana. Initiatives such as approval and implementation of a Code of Conduct (a committee was formed), moving forward on a revised Civil Rules and the commencement of a judicial education series emerged from this conference. The judges agreed to take a stronger role in defining the expected performance standards of attorneys seeking adjournments on demand which have tied up court time and have been a prime contributor to the backlog in the court system.

The second lecture in the judicial education series was held in April 2002, where the Deputy Dean of the University of West Indies, Jeff Cumberbach, presented on the subject of Promissory Estoppel, a key element of contract law. A follow-up meeting to the first Annual Judicial Conference was held in May 2002, with Guyanese-Canadian Judge Vibert Lampkin as the featured speaker. Papers were presented by Lampkin on the topics of hearsay evidence, civility, and burden of proof.

In August 2003, the Carter Center sponsored the participation of the Chancellor Fenton Ramsahoy, a Guyanese citizen who has become a leader of the legal community in Trinidad, to the 13th Triennial Conference of the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association in Malawi. The Guyanese Chancellor presented a paper on the Role of the Senior Judiciary in Assisting the Junior Judicial Officer in Combating Corruption, and was instrumental in drafting the Statement of the Heads of Judiciary outlining their recommendations for combating judicial corruption. The need for codes of conduct was emphasized in that document.

The third Chancellor's Annual Judicial Conference was held in November 2003, and was attended by a full complement of High Court and Court of Appeal judges. The guest facilitator was James Raymond, an acclaimed expert in legal and judicial writing. Dr. Raymond's assistance helped judges learn new techniques in writing judgments in a more understandable fashion. The judges were able to put those methods into practice by re-writing portions of their earlier judgments. The conference received excellent media coverage in the *Stabroek*, *Chronicle* and GTV newscast.

Additional judicial education activities, especially related to 2003, are reported under IR 2.2 pertaining to Case Flow Management and IR 2.3 pertaining to ADR.

- EDUCATION FOR MAGISTRATES

In March 2002, the first annual Magistrates Conference was organized by the Chief Justice and funded by TCC. Papers were presented by Guyanese judges dealing with a) Sentencing, and b) Bail and Forfeiture of Conveyance under the 1988 *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Control Act*. A report on the Magistracy by the Chief Magistrate was presented, and the draft Code of Judicial Conduct was discussed. An opportunity was provided for a discussion of issues that had been presented by the Guyana Human Rights Association.

In May 2003, the Carter Center sponsored the second annual Magistrates Conference on the theme of domestic violence. In a unique situation, Help and Shelter and two TCC civil society partner groups from Region 6 who worked on the issue spoke about the obstacles faced by victims of domestic abuse in their dealings with the judicial system. The conference raised

understanding amongst the magistrates of the complexity of domestic violence cases. The event was featured prominently in the following Sunday Stabroek News.

Keynote addresses were as follows:

- Chief Justice Byron of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court on “The Implementation of Domestic Violence and Family Law Legislation: Lessons from the OECS”
 - Chancellor Desiree Bernard on “Women and Violence: Legislative Issues”
 - Roberta Clarke of UN/ECLAC on “Legislation as an Intervention Mechanism to Stop Domestic Violence”
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/RESOURCES

Although the condition precedent prevented direct support for the Supreme Court Library, the Carter Center found creative ways to provide significant technical assistance to the court.

In 2001-02, the Carter Center assisted the Chief Justice in purchasing 21 basic textbooks which were made available to High Court judges and court staff. The texts included the Sourcebook on Contract Law; Probate Disputes & Remedies; Sourcebook on Tort Law II; Ley on False Imprisonment; Williams on Proof of Guilt; and Markose on Judicial Control. Other resources, including documents from the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for the Canadian Province of Saskatchewan were provided to the Attorney General, Chancellor of the Judiciary and President of the Guyana Bar Association.

In 2003, TCC facilitated a donation by Emory University of a full set of the hard copy and two CD-ROMS of the complete US Supreme Court Reports to the Supreme Court of Guyana. Other resources purchased and provided to key court personnel included the booklets “The Court Administrator”, “Media Guide”, and “Holding Courts Accountable: Counting what Counts” published by the National Association for Court Management.

TCC assisted in networking the new University of Guyana (UG) legal aid clinic with expert advisory services at University of Denver. These advisory services included providing pro bono long-distance advice on setting up a student-based clinic. TCC provided logistical support for the February 2004 visit of volunteer expert Paolo Annino of the Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA) to advise the UG legal aid clinic on start-up and procedures for an effective student-run clinic. He also presented a lecture at the university on the role of law school legal aid clinics.

At the conclusion of the program, TCC donated the justice-related books and other publications from the Resource Center to the University of Guyana Law Department and the Chief Justice’s Chambers, for access by all the judges, magistrates and court staff.

- SUPREME COURT WEBSITE

TCC provided scanning equipment and technical support for the development of an official Supreme Court website. The site includes background information on the court system

and links to lists of judges, court schedules, court notices, and court judgments. TCC also worked with the Chief Justice's office and the University of Guyana Law Department to scan and summarize key decisions of the court.

- **BUILDING AN ACTIVE ADVOCACY BASE FOR COURT REFORMS**

The Criminal Justice Review Committee was established by the Chancellor in January 2002 with support from the Carter Center. Given the challenges experienced in establishing the Core Judicial Advisory Group, the work of these two bodies was viewed as an important step toward building support for the formation of an Advisory Group that could focus on both criminal and civil law issues.

In 2003, TCC provided critical support to the formation of an Alternative Dispute Resolution or ADR Committee. The ADR Committee played a key role in planning, preparing, monitoring and guiding the pilot mediation project and the broader development of ADR in Guyana. The Carter Center assisted the Chief Justice and Chancellor in drafting terms of reference and proposed members for each of these committees. TCC also provided essential logistics for meetings, agendas, guest speakers and the distribution of information materials. TCC supported an extensive public relations campaign for the pilot mediation project (See IR 2.3 for more detail).

Throughout the life of the program, TCC worked closely with the Guyana Bar Association (GBA), Guyana Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL) and the Guyana Human Rights Association, as well as other civil society groups in the process of civil rules review and revision, the mediation pilot project, and the criminal law review process. Cooperation with the University of Guyana Law Department was also a priority.

The Carter Center provided funding for two issues of a publication by the Guyana Bar Association on current and other legal initiatives in Guyana for distribution to its members, stakeholders, opinion leaders, embassies and donor agencies. This was considered an effective mechanism to help build a critical mass for further change in the legal system. Unfortunately, the GBA failed to follow up and produce the newsletters. Similarly, discussions with the Bar Association regarding a proposed series of television programs on current legal issues floundered after the initial submission required revision, and the series was never funded or produced.

TCC facilitated linkages between women's groups concerned with domestic violence and national level NGOs such as GAWL and the Legal Aid Clinic regarding the general low level of access to legal services for women. TCC's IR4 strategy began with a series of Legal Empowerment Forums targeting women leaders and women's groups, including the TCC partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Grassroots participation in justice reform was further promoted by small grant support for three groups, as well as sponsoring the participation of two groups in the 2003 Magistrates Conference. More detail on these events and sub-grant projects is provided in IR 4.4.

In early 2004, the state television company GTV approached the Carter Center through NDI regarding production of a series on issues related to the administration of justice in Guyana.

TCC agreed to support this endeavor in the interests of promoting more informed media coverage and public debate on these issues and continuing to build support for reforms in the wider population of Guyana. The “Administration of Justice in Guyana” series, consisted of five programs broadcast during April and May 2004, and included the Chancellor, the Attorney-General, several Senior Counsels, the President of the Bar Association, and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The programs focused on:

- Code of Conduct for the Legal Profession
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Legal Profession
- Role of the State Justice Apparatus
- The Work of the Courts
- Public Perception of the Judicial System

At the request of USAID, the Carter Center made a presentation to the donor/government Thematic Working Group on Governance on the state of the judicial system in Guyana with recommendations for action and collaboration.

Five areas of highest priority suggested by TCC were:

- Strengthened political commitment
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Reduction of Backlog
- Judicial Appointments and Incentives
- Legal Literacy and Legal Aid

SUB IR 2.2 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION CAPACITY OF COURTS STRENGTHENED, PARTICULARLY FOR CASE FLOW MANAGEMENT AND COURT REGISTRY

TCC assisted the Registrar to finalize job descriptions for the three required new court personnel (Court Manager, Deputy Registrar and Court Librarian) during 2000-2001, including engagement of former Chancellor George in the process.

During the 2001-2002 period, the Carter Center conducted activities with members of the judiciary, the legal community and “consumers” of the judicial system in an effort to create demand for reform and to create more efficient means of addressing case backlogs. TCC was notified formally in January 2003 that USAID considered the long-standing condition precedent related to appointment of a Court Manager to have been satisfied (a Deputy Registrar had previously been hired) and in April 2003 TCC submitted a supplementary work plan proposing activities in this area.

▪ TRAINING JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

TCC provided training opportunities to senior administrative judicial staff. TCC staff also provided the newly appointed Court Manager with documents on case flow and ADR. In May 2003, TCC sponsored a five-day study tour to Trinidad and Tobago where the Court Executive Administrator, Master Christie-Anne Morris-Alleyne, provided training on case flow

management, family court, court reporting, ADR, court websites, and court building facilities and made several recommendations for further capacity building, with an emphasis on court performance standards and court technology.

The Court Manager, Registrar and Deputy Registrar attended the Case Flow Management retreat. It was anticipated that the August 2003 technical assistance mission from the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago would generate recommendations for additional priority training. The report is expected to be delivered to the Chief Justice by end of June 2004.

Given the intention of the Rules Committee and court leadership to incorporate CFM in their new rules of procedure, TCC sponsored the Registrar's participation in a Case Flow Management (CFM) workshop conducted by the National Center for State Courts in Dallas, Texas in February 2004.

- CASE FLOW MANAGEMENT

The Rules Committee assessed the draft revision of the Civil Rules of procedure commissioned by TCC as a first step towards wide-ranging changes to improve efficiency in the courts, including but not limited to CFM. The Rules Committee is led by the Chancellor and consists of several judges, a representative of the Attorney-General, the Registrar, and selected senior practicing lawyers. Whenever possible, all members of the Rules Committee were engaged in educational and technical assistance activities related to CFM.

In 2003, nine judges of the High Court and the Court of Appeals of Guyana participated in a two day CFM retreat organized by TCC. The discussion was facilitated by Master Christie-Anne Morris-Alleyne of Trinidad and Tobago, who had been involved in the reform of court systems in several Caribbean jurisdictions. A detailed comparison of the new court rules of Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and OECS was presented, including references to the draft new rules presently under review in Guyana. The retreat also included a presentation on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

As a follow-up activity TCC organized a Case Flow Management roundtable involving over 200 attorneys in Guyana. The discussion was facilitated by Master Morris-Alleyne, who led sessions developed by the National Center for State Courts. The lawyers had an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Civil Rules.

- INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Case tracking or case information management - the way that a court records and keeps track of information on cases - is a fundamental aspect of Case Flow Management.

In December 2002, TCC engaged a computer consultant to update the Guyana Justice Improvement Project assessment of the computer capacities and needs of the High Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court Registry. The needs analysis was a priority of both the Chancellor and Chief Justice. Given resource constraints, as well as reservations about the

capacity of the Registry to optimally utilize existing computer resources, TCC decided not to actively promote increased investment in automation of the Registry.

Subsequently, TCC commissioned an assessment of the case information system of the Supreme Court Registry to help the court determine whether there needed to be a follow-up initiative to reform the current manual tracking system. Terms of reference included a detailed assessment of the existing system for managing case information and case flow, recommendations for appropriate adjustments to the manual case information system, recommendations regarding interventions described in the IT analysis, and recommendations on priority training for key Registry staff.

- **REMOVAL OF ABANDONED CASES FROM BACKLOG**

The Carter Center, the University of Guyana Law Department and the Supreme Court Registrar organized an audit of the Supreme Court case backlog to identify abandoned cases. Eight senior students of the Law Department and initially, volunteer members of the Bar Association, worked under the supervision of the Deputy Registrar during July and August 2003.

SUB IR 2.3 INCREASED CAPACITY TO ADDRESS CASE BACKLOGS THROUGH EXAMINATION AND APPLICATION OF PROMISING ALTERNATIVES SUCH AS ADR

While support existed for ADR, most legal professionals in Guyana agreed that further study was needed to determine whether an ADR program was viable for Guyana and if so, what mechanisms would be most useful in the specific Guyana context.

- **FEASIBILITY STUDY**

An assessment in September 2002 considered the full range of background conditions, what types of ADR might be useful in Guyana, and what activities should be undertaken. It focused on the potential for ADR mechanisms to increase capacity to resolve disputes in a timely manner, including addressing the issue of case backlog. Steve Weller from Policy Studies Inc. and Richard Moore from MDR Associates Conflict Resolution Inc., concluded that the problems of backlog and delay were affecting the quality of justice in Guyana and recommended the development of a process of reform without official involvement of the political parties. They also recommended a “backlog blitz” on civil cases, development of a pilot mediation program to encourage the settlement of civil cases, the development of plea bargaining for criminal cases, and a study of the backlog using students and faculty of the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Guyana.

Based upon those findings, TCC prepared a supplementary work plan. The following is a brief description of the key activities undertaken by the Carter Center during the program related to IR 2.3, after approval of the supplementary work plan.

- **ADR KNOWLEDGE AMONG A CORE GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS**

Following distribution of the Weller/Moore report, a meeting of senior persons in the legal and judicial community was convened by the Chancellor to obtain feedback and comments, and appoint a planning committee to provide a focal point for ADR initiatives in the country. The Planning Committee comprising of representatives of the judiciary, magistracy, legal profession, DPP, and Attorney General's chambers, was established under the direction of Professor Peter Britton, S.C. TCC participated as an ex officio member and provided information and logistical support.

The focus of the Planning Committee was on the legal or regulatory framework for ADR, and how the existing rules may need to be adapted to provide for court-connected ADR. The Committee delivered their recommendations to the Chancellor in June 2003, strongly favoring further development of ADR in Guyana, with an emphasis on mediation.

At a further meeting of a broader stakeholder group of judges and lawyers to consider the report, agreement was reached on the composition and terms of reference for an expanded ADR Committee which included an advisory role for the TCC. This permanent Committee was chaired by the Chief Justice and consisted of representatives of three lawyers' associations, a prominent consumers' NGO, the court registry, Court Manager, Private Sector Commission, the Attorney-General's Chambers, UG, and the Ministry of Local Government. The Terms of Reference for the Committee were to provide guidance and oversight to the process of developing and implementing new court-connected Alternative Dispute Resolution initiatives in Guyana, in collaboration with the ADR programs sponsored by the Carter Center and the Inter-American Development Bank, including (without limiting the generality of the foregoing):

1. Acting in a consultative capacity to the Carter Center and IDB projects, insofar as they relate to ADR;
2. Collaborating with the Rules Committee and other relevant entities in devising any necessary amendments to the laws of Guyana or the rules of court, as they relate to ADR;
3. Determining criteria for the qualification of ADR practitioners;
4. Formulating education and training programs related to ADR;
5. Developing rules of procedure for mediation and other ADR methods;
6. Exploring and debating the various options for the development of ADR in Guyana;
7. Developing strategies for the financing of ADR with particular reference to remuneration of ADR practitioners.

TCC technical support to the ADR Committee began with a consensus building and conflict management workshop facilitated by consultant Andrew Blum. TCC identified, edited and distributed ADR and mediation materials to committee members. TCC organized training and information sessions for the judges of the High Court and Court of Appeal with consultants Weller and Moore.

In January 2004, the Court Manager/Mediation Coordinator (terms are used interchangeably in this report as the Court Manager serves as Mediation Coordinator) attended training for mediation coordinators hosted by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court based in St. Lucia. Topics included the role of mediation in the context of judicial reform, the role of the court office in mediation, the role of the judge/master in the process, the experiences of a

mediator, use of computerized case management, and presentation of a procedure manual based on the ECSC rules. Publications and reports related to ADR and mediation were reproduced by TCC for use by the Chief Justice, Mediation Coordinator, and two other High Court judges. The original resources on ADR were donated to the Supreme Court library and to the University of Guyana Law Department at the end of the project.

▪ PILOT MEDIATION PROJECT

The first concrete step towards implementation of the Pilot Mediation Project was the training of mediators. Twenty-four attorneys (plus the Mediation Coordinator/Court Manager) participated in a training workshop in September 2003. A training manual included extensive materials on all major aspects of the mediation process. The presentations covered:

- Different approaches to negotiation
- The five stages of mediation
- Communication skills
- The role of counsel in mediation; and
- Mediator ethics.

The training was provided by Deborah Mendez Bowen from the Trinidad-based Dispute Resolution Center, consultants Moore and Weller, and four Guyanese attorneys who volunteered to review role plays that had been used in other contexts, revising them to reflect disputes that actually occur in Guyana.

TCC worked closely with the Mediation Coordinator, ADR Committee and Chief Justice to prepare materials on a code of conduct for mediators; evaluation forms for litigants, lawyers and mediators; media briefing papers; a step-by-step guideline for how cases would proceed through the mediation system in relation to the wider court system; and notices and forms to be completed or sent out at each stage. It was determined that seven types of civil cases would be eligible for the mediation pilot. Criminal and family cases were excluded at this stage.

In October 2003, the Chief Justice referred the first three cases to mediation. The official launching took place with a ceremony attended by over 50 people, including the Chancellor, other judges, the President of the Guyana Bar Association, and 15 mediator-attorneys. Good media coverage was achieved with prominent articles in the *Stabroek News and Chronicle*, and one TV newscast. In late November, the first cases went to mediation.

In January 2004, a meeting of mediators was co-chaired by the Mediation Coordinator and TCC country director to review the progress of the mediation project to date. While the feedback was positive, there were concerns expressed about the apparent lack of enthusiasm of some lawyers and some litigants. It was recommended to increase public education initiatives targeting the legal profession. Mediators all received copies of Getting to Yes by Roger Fisher and Bill Ury.

Material support for the operation of the Mediation Center included the following (some items were Carter Center property not purchased with USAID funds):

- A prominent electrically lit sign locating the Mediation Center at the High Court.
- For the mediation room: two tables, eight chairs, whiteboard, and two fans
- For the waiting room: sofa, coffee table, two armchairs, bookshelf, and kettle
- For the Mediation Coordinator: small filing cabinet, mobile phone, printer, fax machine
- For the mediators: a modest honorarium to recognize their impressive commitment to the project up to April 2004, and encourage their ongoing participation

- PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

In order to lay a strong foundation of public awareness, TCC developed educational and promotional materials before any ADR strategies could be expected to succeed on a broad and sustainable basis. This fact was emphasized by all informants in the initial feasibility study, and re-emphasized by many others. The emphasis was on the key benefits of mediation – saving time, effort and money – and on the consensual nature of the process.

Specific strategies for public outreach were worked out in collaboration with a subcommittee of the ADR Committee. The Mediation Centre brochure and logo were circulated to ADR Committee members, court staff and judges, lawyers' associations, USAID-GEO project, Justices of the Peace Association, Guyana Human Rights Association and TCC partner NGOs. A broader public information campaign including newspaper, TV and radio spots was launched in January 2004. TCC promoted linkages between the Mediation Centre and the UG legal aid clinic, as well as the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic.

In order to further raise public awareness about the mediators and enhance the prestige of their role, TCC placed full-page advertisements in two major newspapers in April 2004 featuring photographs and contact information for all 25 mediators (one was approved for inclusion in the roster based on training previously undertaken outside of Guyana).

- MARKETING OF ADR TO LEGAL PROFESSION

With the cooperation of the Guyana Bar Association and Guyana Association of Women Lawyers, TCC coordinated a number of workshops targeted to the legal profession to inform them about the benefits that could be gained by both clients and lawyers. The University of Guyana Law Department introduced a new course on ADR for senior students in the Spring 2003 semester. Based upon the success of this initiative, TCC donated to the department educational books and videotapes on the topic of ADR, along with the use of a TV and VCR. The course was offered for the second time in the Spring 2004.

The primary objective of the July 2003 mission of TCC Consultants Weller and Moore was to inform the legal profession about ADR and to provide Guyanese lawyers with an opportunity for input into the pilot mediation program. Almost one-third of the entire Bar of Guyana attended the first meeting. A follow-up mission in September 2003 was primarily aimed at training lawyers as mediators. Information packages were prepared and delivered to all attorneys practicing civil law, inviting them to volunteer cases for mediation.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3: SUSTAINED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO CONDUCT FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

IFES' Pre-Electoral Assessment of GECOM's Institutional Capacity

IFES' first step toward building "Sustained Institutional Capacity to Conduct Free and Fair Elections" capacity in Guyana was to participate in a pre-electoral assessment. In March 2000, a two-member IFES team met with a two-member team from the European Union (EU) and officials from the US Embassy and USAID.

After the EU team conducted its assessment, IFES staff met with the EU team, former election commission staff, and civil society organizations in order to develop a realistic strategic plan for technical assistance and to recommend ways to improve the implementation of future elections. The meeting focused in part on poll worker training, transmission of election results, and the distribution of voter ID cards.

By July 2000, the National Assembly had passed an amendment to the Representation of the People Act that established the Elections Commission as a permanent body. It also signed a MOU with the international community for elections assistance. Following a 2001 trip to Guyana and a meeting with GECOM's new Chairman Steve Surujbally, IFES began a working relationship with GECOM that focused on organizational management, acquiring new equipment, information technology, voter registration system assessment and public information in order to ready GECOM to conduct elections that could earn the trust of Guyana's citizens.

SUB-I.R. 3.1 ESTABLISH AND INSTITUTIONALIZE A PERMANENT ELECTIONS COMMISSION: STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF PERMANENT ELECTION COMMISSION (PEC)

IFES' first step toward building such capacity in Guyana was to participate in a pre-electoral assessment. In March 2000, a two-member IFES team met with a two-member team from the European Union (EU) and officials from the US Embassy and USAID in Guyana.

IFES staff subsequently worked with the EU team, former election commission staff, and civil society organizations to develop a realistic strategic plan for technical assistance and to recommend ways to improve the implementation of future elections. The meeting focused, in part, on poll worker training, transmission of election results, and distribution of voter ID cards.

The Guyana Elections Commission received IFES' assistance in its preparations for the 2001 elections. Though under a tight deadline, GECOM was able to conduct elections in 2001 more successfully and with less rancor than had occurred in 1997. However, GECOM's performance in 2001 revealed a number of technological and organizational areas that required improvement. In 2002, IFES sent a team to assess GECOM's readiness to successfully conduct future elections and to improve its organizational performance. The IFES team met with the Chairman, Commissioners and senior staff as well as other stakeholders in the field of elections. As a result of this assessment, IFES supported the Commission in the following areas:

- Organizational & Personnel Development
- New Equipment
- Information Technology Systems (including voter registration)
- IT Training
- Voter Information & Voter Education
- Reform of Electoral Law

Election Preparation (including election logistics)

▪ ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GECOM was cognizant of the need to reshape its organizational structure to better serve its changing needs, and to that end IFES provided support for the development of a revised Organigram. Following discussions with the Chairman and staff, IFES consultant Vic Butler integrated all positions within the organization into a coherent hierarchy and created a revised Organigram with lines of communication and responsibility. The Organigram provided clear, unambiguous lines of authority and reporting throughout the organization and sought to ensure a flow of information to the Chief Election Officer and a communications/reporting line between his office and the Chairman and Commissioners.

At the request of the Commissioners, further work on organization and staffing was carried out by private-sector consultants S. V. Jones Associates in late 2002 and early 2003, which led to a five-volume Job Evaluation Study. The consultants were asked to establish the relationships among GECOM's positions and to identify comparable jobs elsewhere in Guyana in order to establish a new salary structure for GECOM. The study went beyond the original scope, touching upon teambuilding, human resource management and development, internal communications, and participatory decision-making. In the course of their work, the consultants identified five priority issues for GECOM's attention:

- developing institutional memory;
- addressing poor public perception of GECOM's operational integrity;
- resolving a lack of strategic leadership;
- ending the subculture of mistrust, division and mutual disrespect at GECOM; and
- reviewing electoral legislation.

Communications between the policy makers and senior staff remain insufficient to move the work of GECOM forward. This difficulty is compounded by the failure of the Commissioners to set strategic goals and objectives, to make key policy decisions in a timely manner, or to fully appreciate the implications of delays on GECOM's work. By involving themselves inappropriately in day-to-day routine, they usurped the role of the Chief Election Officer.

While GECOM had been willing to adopt the new Organigram, it was important that they institutionalize the new lines of communication and responsibility the Organigram recommended. However, this was difficult to achieve and communication problems continued to hinder GECOM's work. In the areas of Finance and Human Resources, the Chief Election

Officer did not relinquish enough day-to-day responsibilities to give him the time necessary to oversee the Secretariat as a whole. The IT Division was not moved from the Operations Department to the Administration Department, as was strongly recommended by IFES consultants. In addition, the training capability of GECOM, vital to its performance in voter registration and polling activities, remained underdeveloped.

- PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to evaluating staff responsibilities and relationships, IFES also furthered the professional development of a number of GECOM staff members through educational trips. Mr. Gocool Boodoo, Guyana Elections Secretariat Acting Chief Elections Officer, traveled to the United Kingdom in 2002 to participate in the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Electoral Administrators. This trip helped the CEO acquire knowledge, skills and values consistent with international best practices for the organization, management and conduct of elections. Also in 2002, GECOM's Chairman attended a workshop in Mauritius on "Voter Registration and Electoral Systems" organized by the Election Commission of Mauritius, the Commonwealth Secretariat and IFES, Ltd.

Mr. Chung traveled to Quito, Ecuador to observe IFES experts providing technical assistance to the Ecuadorian Election Tribunal (TSE) in the areas of elections management, telecommunications, transmission of results and civil registry. Upon his return, Chung shared the wealth of knowledge he obtained with GECOM commissioners.

Commissioner Mahmood Shaw traveled to Vancouver, British Columbia, to participate in the meeting of the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties organized by the Organization of American States and Elections Canada. The meeting provided Shaw the opportunity to participate in a workshop with other election commissioners from the hemisphere.

- STRATEGIC PLANNING

GECOM staff developed a "Three- to Five-Year Development Plan" following GECOM's Strategic Planning Retreat in late 2001. IFES provided GECOM with significant feedback regarding the completeness and feasibility of the development plan, finding it to contain a large number of useful activities but with an insufficient sense of the organizational mission.

Since 2002, GECOM has produced annual work plans that seek to move forward aspects of its work, as articulated in the "Three- to Five-Year Development Plan," and has documented its progress through these activities. The senior staff of GECOM have consistently recognized the need for careful planning of electoral activity and produced specific operational plans that are appropriate to their needs, circumstances and resources as well as plans that would allow them to successfully complete those activities.

However, their carefully laid plans have often been hampered by obstacles, some internal and some external. As of early 2004, GECOM staff were working from a draft schedule of activities to prepare them for the implementation of local government elections, replacing an

earlier revised draft work plan for these elections. The draft contained activities tied to vital aspects of electoral operations—such as Voter Registration, Logistics, Training, Voter Education and Polling—and projected a timeline of 14 months starting at the end of March 2004. However, the draft assumes that the Government will set a specific date for the local elections and that Commissioners will sanction the opening of the IT database so that registration activities may commence.

- **NEW EQUIPMENT**

According to the signed Memorandum of Understanding, USAID committed approximately \$200,000 to procure equipment for GECOM. First, the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) helped GECOM to establish procurement procedures for purchasing equipment and materials for its offices as well as for tabulating and storing election results.

Second, IFES/USAID funded in collaboration with the CTA all items listed on an inventory developed by the Elections Secretariat Stores Division. The CTA worked with the Elections Secretariat Financial Manager to ensure that USAID and IFES procurement regulations were followed. He kept track of all deliveries made to the GECOM and received the Chief Election Officer's signature acknowledging receipt of all equipment. Purchased equipment included large and small photocopiers, desktop and laptop computers, printers, fax machines, file cabinets, reams of paper, toner cartridges and scanners. As GECOM identified additional needs, written requests with justifications were submitted to IFES and USAID. USAID approval was obtained to purchase additional photocopiers and scanners.

Finally, IFES/USAID purchased a generator that will be able to power the entire Elections Commission building. This generator will allow the commission to complete its work without being hampered by periodic power shortages which have disrupted work in the past. This is particularly important during highly contentious elections, when GECOM may be the potential target of violent attacks. GECOM's acquisition of a generator will avert problems that occurred in 2001, when a power outage severely compounded voter registration issues.

- **IMPROVEMENTS IN GECOM'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS**

IFES has been providing technical support to GECOM for over a decade, and since 2000 a significant portion of its support has focused on helping GECOM define an efficient strategy for its use of information technology. This task was important for GECOM not only to allow it to manage data more efficiently but also because IT problems were generating tension within the organization.

For the 2001 elections, different departments within GECOM and the elections process tended to blame each other for problems that were primarily due to system limitations and not human failure. For example, because the entire voter list process seemed to be hidden inside the Information Systems "black box," understood only by the "technology experts," the Information Systems Department (ISD) took the brunt of criticism from both inside and outside of GECOM.

The solution, proposed by IFES was a clear organizational structure, with well-defined roles and reporting systems, and tested and proven procedures for processing information.

Between 2000 and 2001, IFES helped GECOM's Information System Department develop several database systems, including a Logistics Tracking Database, a Preliminary Results Reporting Database, a Statement of Polls Processing System, Seat Allocation Programming and a Results Publication System. These database systems significantly improved the performance of the election authorities and reduced the amount of time election workers needed to perform tasks.

Following the 2001 elections, the IFES team produced draft recommendations for restructuring GECOM's IT functions in order to resolve some of the difficulties that developed during the elections. This restructuring demystified election processes, bringing them out of the IT "black box" and providing full accountability to the stakeholders who could then audit the processes by which voter lists and election results were produced. The restructuring also created a more attractive environment for recruiting and retaining IT staff, who could focus on designing new technology solutions, rather than on the mundane tasks of data entry and production of reports. In 2002, IFES' Information Technology expert met with representatives from Guyana's political parties to explain the need to make recommended changes within GECOM and prepared a draft timeline of the ISD's technical needs as it prepares for the 2006 national elections.

SUB-I.R. 3.2 STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO CONDUCT FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

▪ VOTER REGISTRATION

The Voter Registration database has been a contentious subject in Guyana, and this debate has had an impact on the effectiveness of the IT Advisor. In Guyana the registration of voters is part of registering all citizens over the age of 14. This is done by the Commissioner of Registration, who holds this statutory office separately from his appointment as Chief Election Officer. People over the age of 18 whose names appear on the National Register form the base from which the Official List of Electors (OLE) is prepared for any election. In order to ensure that all eligible people are registered to vote, the law requires that a Claims and Objections exercise be conducted to update the information held by the Commissioner of Registration prior to an election. Registration information is collected in a computer database at GECOM headquarters in Georgetown, with hard copy backup in the forms completed at the time of registration.

To update registration for election purposes, a Preliminary Voters List (PVL) is published with the names of people over the age of 18 at the qualifying date who appear on the National Register (this is in effect the OLE from the last election). This list is then published and displayed for the statutory Claims and Objections period, and people may visit the local registration officer to update the information. Following the addition of data from the Claims and Objections exercise, a Revised Voters List (RVL) is prepared and displayed to give a final opportunity for the correction of inadvertent errors. Following these steps, a new OLE is printed for use during the election. Only people whose names appear on that list are permitted to vote. Statutory provisions set the date and duration for claims and objections and display periods relative to the polling date.

Many Guyanese believed that the voters list used in the 1997 general elections was faulty, and as a consequence, the new list was under intense scrutiny in 2001. IFES' IT Advisor helped GECOM transfer the voter registry to a new server and develop a transparent and efficient mechanism to make changes. In an effort to include all eligible voters in the list, GECOM extended the registration period as well as the Claims and Objections period so that political parties had more time to correct mistakes. There were five versions of the voters list: the Provisional Preliminary List, the Preliminary List, the Revised List, the Final List and the Official List of Electors. All steps in the registration process were documented and approved by GECOM. The presence of an international election information technology expert was instrumental in providing objective, technical answers to GECOM's questions about processes and procedures.

GECOM has documented the preparation of the voters list in great detail in manuals and procedural guides. However, in preparing the OLE for the March 2001 polls, GECOM experienced considerable difficulty, much of it due (1) to inadequate time to train registration staff and conduct the exercise and (2) to extensions to the claims and objections period as a result of pressure from political parties. Despite attempts by GECOM to demonstrate the voter registration database's accuracy and freedom from unauthorized access, some political parties expressed doubts and these questions remain a source of contention to the present.

Following the 2001 elections, Mr. Yard helped the ISD develop an Information Systems Development Methodology Manual (ISDMM). In 2003, he returned to Guyana to reopen the voter registration database. Stakeholders from all parties and international observers were invited to be present as GECOM restarted the voter registration database at its offices. Mathematical comparisons between that registration database and the copy that had been in the custody of UNDP since the last election were made and they were found to be virtually the same. However, due to the controversy over the list, Commissioners have not yet agreed to permit work to begin in preparation for local elections (which do not yet have a firm date). This is despite the completion of a post-election audit and systems review by International IDEA, conducted at the request of GECOM in 2001, which found no "evidence of deliberate manipulation or electoral fraud," although errors were identified and remedies proposed.

GECOM has considered reforming the registration process to avoid the substantial activity and cost "spikes" that periodic registration generates, and more significantly, to avoid the errors associated with the time pressures of a periodically updated list. This issue of changing voter registration from a periodic to a continuous system has been actively considered within GECOM for two years, and the Chief Election Officer has produced both a legal brief indicating the changes required and a more detailed proposal for the legislative changes needed to begin this transition. GECOM senior staff have visited other Caribbean countries (Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica) to study such systems in operation and have reported their findings in detail and described how these systems might be adapted to best serve Guyana's needs. In October 2003, an IFES-supported workshop provided an opportunity for participants to further develop their preferences with regard to this matter. The Commissioners have recently indicated that this will be a priority for action in 2004, and this would also be an area for consideration in any electoral law review.

Since the electoral legislation forms the framework within which the Operations Department must carry out its registration and polling functions, the current level of uncertainty and the failure of the Commission to move this matter forward represents a considerable obstacle. Much of the well-documented organizational and procedural change which should be implemented to enable the Secretariat to improve its operational capabilities and performance depends upon changing the existing law. In the absence of such change, it is difficult to see how GECOM can make significant progress as an election management body, and progress is now badly needed.

It should be noted that all documents produced on this matter by the Secretariat advocate the establishment of permanent GECOM offices in each of the regions to facilitate continuous registration. This would benefit other aspects of the electoral process (such as voter education, poll worker training and polling preparations).

- NATIONAL ID CARDS

GECOM also prepares national identification cards, which are intended to be the sole means for voters to identify themselves at the polling station. Acting in response to stakeholders' concerns that the Preliminary Voters List be verified, the Commission decided that GECOM was to produce and distribute new national identity cards to all eligible voters in 2001. After consultation with IFES' IT Advisor regarding verifying the card production process and the collection of results, GECOM decided to produce the new cards using existing equipment (from De La Rue, a British company). Great efforts were made to distribute the cards before the 2001 elections, but there was insufficient time to achieve this goal.

GECOM has documented the activities needed to prepare cards in great detail in manuals and procedural guides. However, GECOM experienced considerable difficulty in preparing the OLE for the March 2001 polls, much of it due to inadequate time to train registration staff and conduct the exercise. Political parties and other stakeholders expressed strong doubts concerning the integrity of the original database, and despite attempts by GECOM to demonstrate its accuracy and freedom from unauthorized access, those doubts persisted following the March 2001 polls, and they remain a source of contention to the present.

- PARLIAMENTARY SEAT ALLOCATION

In 2000, IFES' IT Advisor examined the parliamentary seat allocation according to the new electoral law amendment. The consultant detected a flaw that could result in over-allocation of seats. The national top-off seats are allocated by applying the Hare formula, using the total number of votes nationwide divided by 65 seats. For each party, the number of geographical constituency seats won is then subtracted from the number of seats allocated at the national level, and the result is the number of "national top-off seats" awarded to that party. Using this method may result in allocation of more than 65 seats.

The easiest solution proposed by IFES was to clarify at the outset that the allocation of seats will stop when 65 seats have been allocated. Seats awarded on the basis of "integer division" would be awarded and subtracted from the seats won within the geographical

constituencies. This subtraction should occur before awarding any seats based upon fractional remainders. The number of seats awarded based upon fractional remainders would be 65 minus the number of seats already allocated.

- **REPORTING OF ELECTORAL RESULTS**

Delays and confusion regarding the release of election results are a flashpoint of election violence that plagued the outcome of 1997 general election. In 2001, the IFES IT Advisor helped GECOM develop a plan to transmit preliminary election results to the Elections Secretariat in the hours immediately after the polls closed. Due to the poor quality of telecommunications infrastructure in Guyana, to help facilitate the transmission of results, the election authority entered into an agreement with the telephone company to install additional telephone lines at GECOM headquarters and Georgetown - Region 4, the most populous region. In addition, IFES' IT Consultant helped the ISD to develop preliminary results reporting and results publication databases, and to obtain computers, faxes and printers for the task.

- **DOMESTIC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION**

Building on its success as a non-partisan, civic, election watchdog organization, the Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB) was supported by NDI to enhance Guyana's electoral system in 2001 by, firstly, ensuring public confidence in the national voters list and, secondly, by promoting the role of citizens in the electoral process through campaign and election day monitoring. As a citizen-based organization, EAB facilitated the active participation of the citizens at large in such critical electoral functions as polling day staff. Other monitoring functions conducted by EAB related specifically to the media and the vote tabulation process.

The final voters list was systematically analyzed through a battery of computer and field tests. A formal declaration was made as to the acceptability of the list. Computer tests included identifying duplicate identification numbers, voters without identification numbers and voters in incorrect divisions. Using a random sampling of persons on the list, field tests attempted to identify cases of multiple registration and determine the percentage of citizens not listed.

By election day, sixteen hundred citizens were recruited, trained and equipped to serve as observers. They were drawn from sponsoring organizations of EAB, from NGOs at large and from concerned citizens. Their presence was intended to deter electoral fraud. Observers were deployed countrywide and submitted standardized reports. A comprehensive account of the conduct and results of election day were gathered for compilation into EAB's final report. The data gathered by observers was intended to be used to resolve disputes prior to the compilation of the final report.

All programs and information were utilized to inform public opinion on the state of the electoral process and the results. EAB undertook a vigorous, pro-active media campaign geared towards the dissemination of program findings.

- **IT TRAINING**

In 2002, IFES began an IT training program for GECOM's middle and upper management. A local university professor and IT expert conducted training on Microsoft applications and on other basic computer operations. This program was designed to equip participants with the skills needed to use computers effectively. The training benefited employees and GECOM and, in addition, enhanced the functioning of the elections system. The program consisted of five components, one theoretical and four practical.

- The basic hardware components of a computer and other topics
- Windows NT
- Word 2000
- Excel 2000
- Project 2000

The course instructor gave periodic assignments in the form of reviews and evaluations of the applications, and these assignments were the primary mechanism he used to provide participants with feedback at regular intervals. In order to provide maximum hands-on exposure to the basic procedures and skills required by the software, the instructor provided structured tasks that ensured that students were competent in a range of skills.

▪ VOTER INFORMATION & VOTER EDUCATION

At the request of USAID, IFES contracted a Public Relations and Media Advisor to assist GECOM with the media preparations for the elections. The media center was set up approximately one week before the elections at the Tower Hotel and remained open until official results were announced four days after the elections. Election results were displayed at the center and updates to these results were broadcast nationwide. A presidential debate was also televised from the center.

For the March 2001 elections, voter education was conducted by civil society organizations with only limited input by GECOM, which was largely restricted to providing or confirming the details of technical and administrative procedures for registration and polling. Responding to the suggestions of IFES (and others) that voter education was part of GECOM's responsibilities, the Commission appointed a Voter Education Manager in late 2002.

In 2003, an IFES consultant advised GECOM about voter education campaigns and provided an Operations Manual and job descriptions as GECOM began to build this important department. The Voter Education Manager recently traveled to Trinidad and Tobago to study the that country's Elections and Boundaries Commission voter education methodologies and initiatives. As GECOM is likely to establish regional offices to facilitate continuous voter registration, it is anticipated that the Commission will use this infrastructure to deliver effective voter education in the future.

▪ REFORM OF ELECTORAL LAW

Electoral law in Guyana has its base in the pre-independence Representation of the People Act (1964). Over the years, the legal provisions have been amended on a number of

occasions to reflect changing circumstances or to deal with perceived shortcomings in the process. Relevant legal provisions include:

- Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, as amended;
- Representation of the People Act, as amended;
- National Registration Act, as amended, and subordinate Regulations;
- Municipal and District Council Act;
- Local Government Act, as amended;
- Local Democratic Organs Act, as amended;
- Local Authorities (Elections) Act, as amended; and
- Election Laws Act, as amended.

Together, these provisions outline the role of GECOM and how to register voters and conduct polling and counting for national, regional and local government elections.

The reports prepared by the main international observer groups regarding the 2001 elections (the Commonwealth, the EU and the Carter Center), and by Swedish-based International IDEA in its GECOM-requested post-election audit, suggested that existing election legislation must be reviewed, simplified, harmonized and consolidated. This topic was debated at the GECOM Retreat on Strategic Planning that took place at the end of October 2001. At that time, the GECOM Statutory Department Work Program included revising local government electoral law, but the removal of the Statutory Officer from his position altered this plan.

Reform of electoral law was also raised by IFES in early 2002 when it offered to provide GECOM with technical support to conduct such a review. At this time, IFES also indicated several areas where change would be beneficial. In addition, an IFES consultant report provided a review of election forms, specifically recommending that election forms not be prescribed in the revised legislation since this made them more difficult to adapt to changing requirements. IFES recommended that the number of forms used for election-related activity be reduced and rationalized. GECOM has yet to address these suggestions.

At the time of writing, it appears that the law review may again be deferred because of the inability of GECOM to find a local consultant willing to undertake this initiative, and the end of the funding opportunity provided in this USAID project. This represents a substantial setback for an improved electoral framework for Guyana and improved capacity and performance by GECOM.

▪ ELECTION PREPARATION

Election Logistics

In late 2000, the IFES Logistics Advisor reviewed GECOM's logistic preparations for the 2001 elections and was able to gather baseline information on the Commission's logistics plan. At that time, the conceptual plan was deemed acceptable and preparations were considered adequate.

The Logistics Advisor strongly recommended pre-packaging the election materials for delivery to the regions instead of delivering them in bulk. While this tactic would not prevent the Returning Officer and Presiding Officer from monitoring the materials, it would relieve them of the burden of assembling the materials in the regions, where resources are scarcer and quality control more difficult to maintain. The Logistics Advisor also proposed pre-packaging ballots and ballot boxes and using a database of polling stations and political parties to pre-print the distribution forms, the return forms, and the statement of poll and tally sheets. The latter suggestion would save time during counting and would reduce mistakes made after a long Election Day.

In 2001, the Logistics Advisor worked closely with Guyana Elections Secretariat Logistics Officer to develop and implement the logistics and communications plan. The advisor assisted in developing a logistics and communications manual for staff, which was used to train staff and as a reference when materials were delivered to the regions. Checklists and forms were also developed for the election workers to ensure that shipments were complete. The Logistics Advisor also recommended recruiting additional logistics staff to help with the distribution and collection of materials. The implementation of this recommendation proved instrumental to the successful operation of logistics before and on Election Day. While materials were delivered over the course of Election Day, they were available at each polling station when needed and presiding officers were in place on time. Voter turnout proved to be one of the highest in the history of Guyana.

Election Polling

In order to provide to the Returning Officers (one appointed for each of the 10 region-based election districts), and their deputies and clerks with the information and guidance required to establish their offices and manage the process for 2001, IFES helped GECOM prepare and circulate a manual that contained instructions about their various duties and responsibilities. These duties included designating polling station sites, training polling day staff (in support of GECOM Training Instructors), distributing Election Day supplies and equipment, displaying the notice of poll and list of registered voters, and managing the overall polling and counting process in their area. The manual presented the Secretariat's plan for pre-election and Election Day activities as a program that could be implemented by each Returning Officer and his/her staff.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4: CIVIL SOCIETY INFLUENCES PUBLIC POLICY (WOMEN, YOUTH/CHILDREN, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE)

SUB IR 4.1 INCREASED NETWORKING AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING CAPACITY OF THE TARGET NGOS

- **TRAINING**

There was a clear need for conflict mediation and negotiation skills training within the CSO community. In order for civil society groups to undertake effective, sustainable joint advocacy campaigns, they needed strong skills to reach consensus and develop common agendas. Such skills were necessary within the groups themselves to agree on advocacy

positions, as well as to increase the groups' ability to collaborate effectively and successfully with other civil society organizations.

The training activities fostered networking among targeted groups and other NGOs. The initial basic training package culminated in October 2002 with the final advocacy workshops, in which special emphasis was placed on the importance of building coalitions and networking with like-minded civil society organizations.

To further address these needs, TCC incorporated aspects of consensus-building in the strategic planning sessions with selected partner or Targeted NGOs (TNGOs). The goal of the workshops was to help the participants manage relationships both within their organization and with other organizations. The training was interactive and realistic. A Guyanese co-trainer worked alongside an international consultant very familiar with the Guyana context to assist in the delivery of the workshops, in order to build local trainer capacity.

A high level of interest was shown in this training module. Participants included TNGOs, local government and municipal officials, as well as probation officers/social workers. Participants requested follow-up activity to make the impacts more sustainable and measurable. TCC engaged a Guyanese trainer to facilitate follow-up sessions for participants of the 2003 workshops. These discussion sessions served as a means of evaluation of the impact of the first series of workshops, and a reinforcement of skills that were learned.

- MENTORING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Mentoring provided to TNGOs by staff and consultants during the grant proposal process, strategic planning exercises and Advocacy and Effectiveness evaluations served as opportunities to further introduce and reinforce the benefits of working collectively to address issues and to map out specific plans for outreach during the project development and implementation process.

The launch of the TCC Resource Center in January 2003 contributed to increasing the level of networking among the TNGOs. During the event, participating leaders presented three-minute spots in front of a TV camera, offering an opportunity to practice expressing their views and activities on camera, while informing other participants about the mission and projects of the grantees. Participants later met in small breakout groups to stimulate further networking, with a focus on topics of mutual interest.

- YOUTH FORUMS

Three regional youth forums were organized in 2003. The focus was on raising the level of participation by youth in decision-making and governance, mobilizing young people to become more involved in volunteer activities, and supporting the development of future community leaders. Participants included members of the National Youth Commission, Youth Officers, youth wings of political parties, faith-based youth groups, NGOs, sports clubs and members of other TNGOs. All participants received contact lists and information packages on the issues discussed.

A total of 201 participants from 104 institutions/organizations participated in the forums, from regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10. A report summarizing the findings and recommendations of all three regional forums was prepared and circulated to all participants in order to encourage information sharing, future networking and common action. The report was also presented to the Minister of Culture Youth and Sport. This was in lieu of the planned National Youth Forum, which was planned but never implemented due to political difficulties outlined in the results section.

TCC also provided financial support to an Amerindian youth-elder conference in Region 9 in November 2002, organized by the Bina Hill Institute. Participants included over 120 youth and elders, including a delegation of Canadian youth who had been residing in the Rupununi for several months. The agenda included sessions on Amerindian Act revisions, indigenous languages preservation, HIV/AIDS, leadership, gender awareness, economic development, land rights, and Canadian indigenous culture.

- **INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING**

TCC helped the NGO Youth in Development (YID) participate in the World Conference Against Racism using the internet to register, connect with other interested youth groups, and identify funding sources to send members to the Conference. (YID later became a partner TNGO.) TCC also supported the University of Guyana International Affairs Association's attendance at the Model OAS General Assemblies of 2001 in Argentina and Mexico in 2003 and the Harvard World Model United Nations General Assembly in Brazil in 2002.

TCC organized the 2004 NGO Conference to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to effectively advocate, by sharing lessons learned and successes from Guyana, and information from the wider Caribbean. Representatives of three prominent Caribbean NGOs were invited, based on the relevance of their missions to the targeted populations and advocacy orientation of the program. The Conference agenda covering youth, legal issues, indigenous peoples, crime and violence, HIV/health, business, and education topics was established based on participant priorities. Reference books were provided to all participants as a networking tool.

SUB IR 4.2 INCREASED ORGANIZATIONAL AND ANALYTICAL CAPACITY OF A SUBSET OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIAN NGOS

In accordance with the USAID results framework, TCC adopted a strategy that placed emphasis on building organizational and analytical capacity among Guyanese civil society groups. This was especially important in the regions beyond Georgetown where capacity was particularly lacking. Most civil society groups were unregistered, had no staff and few resources, had few basic financial and management skills needed to run an organization effectively, lacked the funds to travel within their communities, and had almost no advocacy skills. Organizational strengthening strategies were identified through regular interaction with the groups, the Advocacy and Effectiveness Index, and the process of developing and implementing sub-grant projects. Participation in later workshops was limited to TNGOs in order to provide more focused attention on their capacity building needs.

- TRAINING

TCC training workshops were designed to be both responsive to participating organization needs and starting capacity (as identified in the initial assessment process), and to correspond with the goals of the program. There is considerable overlap in terms of this activity contributing to IR 4.3 Capacity to Advocate, as well as to IR 4.1 especially on consensus building, but for the sake of cohesiveness, all workshops are reported fully in this IR, while only being referred to in other IRs. Initially, a basic package of four topics was planned and implemented in 2002, following selection of the targeted NGOs. These workshops included TNGOs, and approximately 40 other organizations that had applied to participate in the program. The introductory package concluded with two levels of advocacy workshops in the fall of 2002. Workshop themes included:

- Project Proposal Writing
- Results Based Management
- Basic Financial Management
- Advocacy
- Grant Management
- Survey Methods
- Media and Communications
- Consensus Building

- COACHING AND MENTORING

Coaching assistance was initially focused on a small number of NGOs in the target populations that Guyanese stakeholders had recommended as having strong potential for development. Guybernet in 2000, Youth in Development in 2001-2, and the Hinterland Students Association received assistance in registration, internal procedures, strategic planning, computer and Internet usage, international networking, and advocacy.

TCC strategy fostered the establishment of groupings of indigenous leaders that would not necessarily be classified as NGOs as a result of resource limitations of the program, which would have made it impractical to work with individual community groups or to spend significant time mentoring completely new entities.

In early 2002, coaching and mentoring focused on the partner or TNGOs, especially those applying for small grants. Consultants and TCC staff guided the groups individually through the process of planning a project, completing a proposal, and creating a budget. One-on-one follow-up training on advocacy concepts was provided to help the groups apply workshop content to real-life situations. Once Networking and Phase I grants were awarded, the TCC Grants Manager monitored grantees on a monthly basis and mentored project leaders and group members. Most grants were finalized during November and December 2003, and special attention was required to ensure final accounts were accurate and all objectives had been met or adequate explanation made for unsuccessful objectives.

Targeted NGOs were evaluated four times over the course of two years, based on the Advocacy and Effectiveness Index. Each evaluation meeting scored the group's progress on the Index indicators and helped the group identify priority areas for strengthening their organization.

TCC staff helped TNGOs who had expressed an interest in registering as an NGO under the laws of Guyana draft their constitution, secure copies of required forms, and work through the process of completing and submitting their documents for registration. Finally, in 2004 TCC staff helped interested partner TNGOs prepare applications for participation in the new CIDA-funded Building Community Capacity Program which seeks to build civil society capacity in Guyana, with a particular focus on rural areas and poverty reduction.

- STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2001, TCC began working with groups such as Youth in Development, Guybernet, and the youth wing of the Guyana Trade Union Congress to help them develop clear strategic visions and plans for the future. A strategic planning session was facilitated for representatives of five youth groups, all with an expressed interest in information technology. Support was also provided to the Region 9 Toshias Council. Following the basic training of the groups, TCC local staff worked with an international consultant to design an appropriate approach and module, and then conducted strategic planning sessions with selected NGOs (primarily grantee groups). Each exercise involved 5-10 key persons of each organization in mission development and SWOT analysis. In all, 61 individuals from 12 partner groups were engaged in the process. Following this experience, a strategic planning manual was developed to guide other trainers and NGOs in this process.

- RESOURCE CENTER

The Resource Center offered a selection of printed and electronic information for non-profit organizations on topics such as advocacy, organizational development, conflict resolution, national youth policies, donors, training methods, elections, indigenous rights, women in development, justice and human rights, among others. A computer workstation with Internet access was provided for research and networking purposes. The launch of the Resource Center took place on January 31, 2003, with representatives of USAID, NDI, and various media, as well as 22 TNGOs. The primary target audience was the local non-profit community and especially the targeted NGOs of the TCC program. Subsidies for travel expenses were available to TNGOs regardless of location, to enable them access to the services of the Resource Center.

- TRAINER IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

NDI recruited and selected a number of experienced facilitators to take part in a series of Train-the-Trainers sessions with women leaders. The training modules that were used throughout the project were *Leadership Training*, *Understanding Local Government*, *Effective Use of the Media*, *Negotiation Skills* and *Campaign Management*. These modules were used in similar programs in the Caribbean with great success and build local know-how.

Women responded well to the open style and the participatory nature of the workshops, which for many was an empowering experience. Many respondents felt that they were better prepared to speak out and take on leadership positions in their communities. Several women subsequently reported that they had attended council and other community meetings and had participated in discussions and debates.

A sixth training module was included in the workshops on *Voter Identification and Outreach* during the third year of the program. The *Voter Identification* module was developed to provide a practical way for women to develop a plan of action for issue-based campaigns. Activities included having the participants research issues of importance to residents in their areas, identify government agencies responsible for those issues, and develop positions that resonated with the public. Training was provided in basic polling research to enable candidates to conduct polls in their regions to find out what issues residents considered the most important.

By becoming candidates, women would take on a larger role in public affairs. According to NDI's research report *Public Perceptions About Women in Politics (2003)*, women in Guyana regard politics as a negative experience, and would not participate unless there were basic changes to the way politics is conducted.

The decision to become a candidate put women at the crossroads of politics and community. Many participants in NDI's program regarded local government as a link between their community and the nation, and their decision to consider running for office was an acknowledgement that women have important contributions to make in the development of policies and programs that shape the identity of their communities.

▪ TRAINING AND CAMPAIGN MANUAL

The facilitator's guides used for each training module formed the basis for a Training Manual developed by NDI for potential women candidates. Modules included *Leadership Skills, Understanding Local Government, Effective Use of the Media, Negotiation Skills, Campaign Management, Voter Identification and Outreach, Campaign Finance and the Role of the Party in Democracies* were included. The training manuals were made available to political parties, women's groups and individual women. Information about NDI's online Political Party Network, which offers practical information on building and renewing political parties, was included.

The Campaign Manual covers such topics as *The Candidate, Volunteers, Media Contact and Public Speaking, Campaign Planning, Campaign Finance and Fundraising, Community Outreach and Building Coalitions with Civic Organizations, Voter Identification and Outreach, Get Out the Vote and Winding up the Campaign*. The manual was written to help candidates plan and organize their campaigns, assist them to research issues of importance to their constituents and to formulate informed positions and policies on those issues. Locally generated materials were supplemented by materials from campaign manuals developed by NDI field offices in Kenya, Nepal, Cambodia, Croatia and Russia.

- **TRAINING FOR AMERINDIAN WOMEN**

Many Amerindian communities are so remote that Amerindian people generally do not benefit from programs run by Georgetown-based organizations. Amerindian women's involvement in the women's political participation program was affected by logistical challenges and the high costs of providing training in Amerindian communities, as small pockets of Amerindian populations are scattered across communities with little infrastructure. Amerindian organizations, women activists and individual women in the more remote regions requested that training be provided in central locations that were accessible for Amerindian women.

NDI partnered with the CIDA Gender Equity Fund to provide training in four remote Amerindian communities. Facilitators used modules from the *Increasing Women's Political Participation* program adapted to the unique circumstances of Amerindian culture. In addition to CIDA, NDI also worked with the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute, several Amerindian organizations and the Minister of Amerindian Affairs to implement this program. Participants traveled from remote villages to the training site for significantly longer training periods where all five modules were covered at the same training session, rather than scheduling them over a longer period as was the practice with the program elsewhere. Training will continue beyond the period of the USAID Cooperative Agreement.

. SUB IR 4.3 INCREASED CAPACITY TO ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATUS OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIANS

- **ADVOCACY TRAINING, MENTORING AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

TCC staff and consultants worked with groups to design advocacy projects for grant funding. The Grants Manager provided helped groups stay focused on advocacy goals, or identify alternative goals. Coaching on advocacy took place parallel with coaching on organizational and grants management issues.

More established and experienced civil society groups showed a low level of involvement in advocacy and an ingrained reluctance to engage in what was perceived widely as "political" activity. TCC included sessions on advocacy in all major activities such as Youth Forums and Women's Legal Empowerment Forums, and the NGO Conference in order to broaden the scope of outreach of advocacy learning. TCC conducted a workshop in advocacy with the New Amsterdam Action Group in support of NDI's program. As well, the Bina Hill Amerindian youth-elder conference described in IR 4.1 helped develop the advocacy and leadership skills of 70 active Amerindian youth as well as elders from their communities.

An advocacy skills training was held for University of Guyana International Affairs Association to supplement the support to send delegates to Model OAS and UN General Assemblies. However, the issues generated as priorities for advocacy campaigns did not strongly reflect the international slant expected from this group, and there was no apparent activity to pursue those issues.

A Position Paper Competition was organized in late 2003 to motivate targeted NGOs to develop their organizational priorities, and to articulate them clearly to decision makers, potential allies, the media, and the general public. Many of the grantee groups had already developed a position on a priority issue in the course of their advocacy activities. However, few of them had taken the next step of elaborating and presenting their case in writing, including rationale and research data, and evidence for their recommendations.

Thirteen targeted NGOs submitted position papers on topics from HIV/AIDS awareness in Amerindian communities to the police handling of domestic violence situations. The groups assembled in Georgetown to orally defend their positions to the committee. This process was designed to simulate a meeting with a decision maker, and thus was part of the learning experience for all participating groups. The best groups were awarded a reconditioned laptop computer, a new desktop computer, and a camera. TCC staff continued working closely with the TNGOs to improve their position papers in accordance with recommendations from the judging committee. The ultimate goal was for the groups to use the final position papers to persuade decision makers and others to support their advocacy initiatives on priority issues.

In January 2004, TCC staff attended a meeting of about 25 (mostly national) organizations hosted by the NGO Forum to discuss the issue of improved NGO legislation, and to evaluate the potential for providing limited support to any emerging activities in this direction. This was seen as a relevant opportunity for the program, since an enabling legal framework is a significant factor for strengthening NGO capacity to advocate freely and effectively. TCC introduced the NGO Forum to a representative from the Caribbean Policy Development Center based in Barbados. CPDC had done related work to enhance NGO laws in several Caribbean states, and expressed interest in lending support to a reform process in Guyana. The meeting and comments by the CPDC representative were publicized in a prominent Stabroek news article, which brought the NGO law discussion back into the public arena after a hiatus following the Presidential Candidates Forum in 2001.

Although concerned about the capacity of the NGO Forum to implement a comprehensive and consultative process around this issue, TCC wished to support further sharing of information and debate about the legal framework for NGOs, and promote networking on the issue within Guyana and the wider Caribbean. This was done by including NGO legislation as a major agenda item in the March 2004 NGO Conference, and inviting the Caribbean Policy Development Center as well as the NGO Forum and GAWL to present their views and experience on the subject.

- TRAINING MANUALS

TCC prepared training manuals on strategic planning and advocacy, based upon the modules already developed for Guyanese trainers of fairly limited experience. This idea grew out of the challenges faced by TCC in identifying local trainers with the requisite skills and knowledge to facilitate a process of strategic planning, and to deliver quality training on advocacy. Copies of the manuals were distributed to targeted NGOs, other groups and agencies, as well as individual trainers.

- AMERINDIAN REGIONAL COUNCILS

Over the course of the program, TCC undertook to build the capacities of leading organizations in key hinterland regions. Two regional councils of Toshaos were targeted with technical and financial support to enable them to better represent the interests of their constituent populations at regional and national levels. TCC assisted the Region 9 Toshaos Council in developing a proposal to the PRSP Secretariat in mid-2001 to organize advance consultations throughout the region, in order to raise awareness, stimulate discussion, and thereby enhance the quality of participation in the government-led national consultation process. TCC then trained the consultation team and supported a 17-day consultation process around the PRSP, including a focal gathering of 120 youth, women and village captains from 43 villages and communities.

In addition to determining regional priorities for poverty reduction, the Council used the opportunity to generate discussion on the institutional strengthening measure of a constitution to govern the body's operations, and as the first step towards registration as an NGO.

The Carter Center provided staff and funding support for a meeting of Region 8 Toshaos in Monkey Mountain. The Center had retained the Council's attorney to prepare a draft constitution for the Council that was presented and approved at the meeting. The Council then duly registered under the Friendly Societies Act. Despite this promising start, the progress of this Council was hindered by a significant turnover when Toshao elections took place in the villages, resulting in a new group of leaders who were not part of the earlier process, and were reluctant to embrace it.

- NATIONAL TOSHAOS CONFERENCE

TCC worked closely with individual Toshaos, two leading Amerindian NGOs, and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs to organize the National Toshaos Conference in May 2003. The conference was a collaborative endeavor with a broadly representative 14-member Coordinating Committee. The Ministry participated in the Coordinating Committee's regular planning meetings, which included TCC, the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) and the Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP, also a TNGO), and several individual Toshaos. Co-funding was obtained from CIDA and other donors approached at TCC's recommendation.

A total of 114 Amerindian communities were represented at the Conference, including over 90% of all Toshaos in Guyana. The Minister of Amerindian Affairs attended the Conference for two of the three days, and made opening remarks. TCC provided some financial support, the services of a rapporteur, co-chaired two sessions, facilitated breakout discussion groups and provided technical assistance with election procedures. This proactive role was intended to offset the influence of any one organization or agency on the proceedings.

TCC sponsored the first meeting of the Interim National Toshaos Council (NTC) on June 30 and July 1, 2003. Representatives of USAID, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, APA and GOIP also attended the meeting. The Ministry supported formation of the NTC, provided that it would be a statutory body, but the Council was not prepared to make a decision on whether the body should be statutory and planned to seek advice from international experts with regard to

bodies of this nature. TCC expressed a willingness to help identify and finance the participation of relevant international experts on the subject. The Toshaos executive members planned to conduct information sessions with Amerindian communities to address concerns about lack of consultations prior to the Conference, but no resources were available for this initiative. A World Bank report on recommendations for new legislation related to the indigenous peoples of Guyana was expected to address the role/structure of the NTC and to help clarify future steps for the NTC. As of May 2004, the consultant report had not been received.

- **ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS BY NGOS ON PRIORITY ISSUES**

ADVOCACY SUB-GRANTS

The Phase I advocacy grants of up to US\$8,000 and nine months in duration were designed to enhance the capacity of TNGOs to advocate in a logical and step-by-step fashion. This included research and information gathering to help the organization define its position, raise public awareness on the issue, determine activities to mobilize the community around the issue, as well as effective ways to approach decision makers regarding the issue. Support was provided by TCC staff and consultants (local and international) throughout the project design and proposal writing stages to assist groups in identifying advocacy goals. Eleven TNGOs submitted applications, which were reviewed by the Grant Review Committee of Magda Pollard (ESOT, National Women's Commission), Patricia Henry (Bina Hill Institute) and Gillian Bristol (ESOT, CARICOM). Nine grant agreements totaling over US\$50,000 were executed and disbursements were made following mandatory grant management training. Phase I grants varied in duration from 6 to 9 months as some groups required short extensions to allow for unanticipated difficulties in meeting project timelines. All projects were concluded by the end of 2003.

Larger Phase II advocacy grants were made available to a wider range of established civil society organizations. In order to be eligible for a grant under Phase II, the applicant had to meet a number of criteria defined to target the most experienced and established organizations. Advocacy on a regional or national level on the interests of women, youth, and/or Amerindian people of Guyana had to be the focus of the project. The projects could also be related to improved and more informed law making, improved capacity of the justice system, improved capacity to conduct free and fair elections, and/or strengthened local governance. The maximum grant amount was US\$10,000, and the applicant had to show either in-kind or cash contribution towards the project amounting to 10% of the total budget request.

Four Phase II advocacy grants were funded in June 2003 and a fifth grant was later awarded to Region 9 Indigenous Development Association once they became formally registered as an NGO. Project duration was restricted to five months, due to the imminent closure of the program.

- **INCREASING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.**

Historically women in Guyana have had limited opportunity for political engagement at the local level. Government statistics as of 2001 showed that of the 1,125



councillors in 65 Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) only two chairs, eight deputy chairs and 132 councillors were women. NDI hosted a meeting in 2001 with representatives from women's organizations, past and current local government officials and individual women to develop a strategy to increase the participation of women in local government elections. The meeting led to the recommendations that there was a strong need for leadership, negotiation and communication skills in order to increase the number of women who would be willing to run for office. As a result, NDI designed the "Increased Women's Political Participation" program to help women gain the skills and confidence necessary to run as candidates in local government election.

SUB IR 4.4 INCREASED PUBLIC DEBATE ON ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIANS

- **SPECIAL PUBLIC EVENTS**

In March 2001 the consortium partners and the CIDA-funded Building Communities Capacity Project (BCCP) supported a half-day Forum for Presidential Candidates and Civil Society Organizations hosted by the NGO Forum, a national coalition of over 25 civil society groups. The goal was to articulate strategies for the development of civil society and greater citizen participation in Guyana. Presidential candidates from 11 parties were invited to present their policies on the role of civil society in national development and decision-making, and members of civil society and the public were able to ask questions of the candidates. In the end, five candidates participated, unfortunately, none of these candidates represented the two major parties. One of the subjects raised pertained to legislation regulating the activities of NGOs, and whether candidates supported laws that would allow for inexpensive and prompt registration, the option to fundraise through economic activities, and tax exemptions administered by an independent commission for groups of public benefit.

Also in early 2001, in the period leading up to elections, the NDI consortium supported the formation of the "Youth Alliance for Electoral Awareness", a coalition of five youth groups. The Alliance's goal was to put youth issues on the election agenda and give youth an opportunity to question candidates about their policies. The principal activity was a street fair entitled "Present Leaders meet Future Leaders", in which young people were able to interact with representatives of the political parties on an informal basis. Six political parties were represented, with four setting up booths. About 300 people were present from the start, with a peak crowd of several thousand.

The National Toshao Conference in May 2003 was an event that made a great impact in terms of public debate on issues pertaining to indigenous people, especially the mechanisms for indigenous participation in national policy. The event was widely covered in the media, and its representativity and transparency were widely debated in public forums for months afterwards, including on national television in an interview with the President of Guyana, and at an international conference in Georgetown in June 2003.

- **AMERINDIAN ACT REVISION**

In 2002 the Government of Guyana initiated a review of the Amerindian Act. TCC provided funding to both the Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP) for consultations in Region 2 and the Region 9 Amerindian Council to organize a series of informational activities about the Amerindian Act to supplement the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs process. The NGOs expressed concern that the Ministry process was too rushed, and did not allow for sufficient time for discussion of the proposed revisions. The consultations in Region 9 were conducted through a series of meetings in centrally located villages for three geographical clusters of communities, and a final region-wide meeting in conjunction with Amerindian Heritage Week. The “Plain English Guide to the Amerindian Act” prepared by the Amerindian Peoples Association was distributed at these meetings. The Region 9 Council collaborated closely with the APA in this undertaking.

The Region 2 consultation targeted all eight Amerindian villages of that region. TCC staff helped facilitate the first planning meeting with the Toshaos in the region. The Toshaos received training in facilitation skills to enable them to work with GOIP in the village sessions.

The “Rupununi News” newsletter developed in 2003 by the Region 9 Indigenous Development Association (pursuant to the Phase II grant described in IR 4.3) recently featured an article about the pending revisions to the Act. The newsletter has been distributed on a monthly basis to hundreds of communities in the region and received considerable popular acclaim.

- NGO CONFERENCE

An NGO Conference was convened by the Carter Center in March 2004 to bring together local and regional NGOs in Guyana in the final public forum of the program. Over 100 NGO leaders from 8 of 10 regions in Guyana participated in the conference, as well as guest speakers from the Caribbean Policy Development Center (CPDC) Barbados, Society for Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) Belize, and USAID. The Guyana Association of Women’s Lawyers (GAWL), Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA), and the NGO Forum of Guyana all contributed to the forum as prominent Guyanese civil society organizations of long standing.

At the Conference, the targeted NGO partners exchanged experiences on lessons learned, success stories, future advocacy plans, and conducted an evaluation of the TCC program. The opening ceremony featured an address by Guyanese media and conflict resolution expert Hugh Cholmondeley and the launching of the video (see below) of program highlights. Mike McCormack of Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) and Phil Westman of Society for Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) from Belize spoke on the advocacy role of civil society. Sessions on networking and collaboration produced strategies for future cooperation along sectoral lines. The conference devoted time to further develop issues related to legal frameworks for NGOs and advocacy strategies and stages for legislation.

Every participant received a Conference Reference Book, that included a wealth of information to supplement the conference themes. The purpose of the Reference Book was to enhance the depth and sustainability of conference impact by reinforcing messages for the individual participant, to facilitate the post-conference sharing of valuable information with other

members of the participating organizations and beyond, and to provide a mini-NGO directory that would encourage groups to share information and collaborate in areas of common interest.

The contents of the Book can be summarized as:

Profiles of the NGOs attending the conference – including structure, members, geographical coverage, past projects, and future plans

List of partner TNGOs

Information on advocacy, networking and legal framework themes

Table of donors active in Guyana

Information on guest NGOs from Belize and Barbados

Description of NGO networks operating in Guyana

Information about the NGO Conference participants, agenda and topics was immediately available on the Internet at <http://www.sdn.org.gy/csoc>. By April 2004 the final conference report was printed and distributed to all participant groups, major donors, and guest speakers, and was also posted on the website. A video of the conference proceedings was made available on request to participants.

▪ WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FORUMS

The Carter Center organized a series of empowerment forums - beginning in 2001 with the Women's Economic Literacy Forum. "Economic literacy" refers to an understanding of economic issues that affect both personal finance and public policy. The purpose of the Women's Economic Literacy Forum was to enhance participants' ability to individually and collectively influence public policy debates, including the PRSP consultation process. Civil society representatives explored economic issues relevant to families and communities, development strategies at the regional and national levels, and the international context of financing for development. They also had the opportunity to build a network of partnerships among women from a wide range of professions and perspectives, and to increase their analytical abilities regarding economic development themes.

Women from advocacy groups, religious and youth organizations, professional associations, unions, and social service agencies participated. Women from civil society organizations in Region 9 also attended. The Carter Center provided an Economic Literacy Sourcebook for each participant and a series of manuals on organizational strengthening, strategic planning, and participatory training methods. Guybernet set up two computers linked by wireless connections to the Internet. Guybernet facilitators helped workshop participants browse sites related to international financial institutions, women's advocacy and community development. Members of Youth in Development also provided organizational and creative support to the forum.

Three Women's Legal Empowerment Forums attracted participants from across the country. The focus of the forums was based on needs expressed by women from TNGOs in the regions. The main theme was women's legal rights as related to domestic violence. Expert advice was provided by panels including the Guyana Association of Women's Lawyers, the

Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers (GAPSW), Guyana Police Force and Red Thread. Each participant was provided with a comprehensive sourcebook of information, to help reinforce the learning and promote additional sharing of information following the forums.

Chancellor of the Judiciary, Desiree Bernard gave the opening address at the final forum in Georgetown. Both civil society and public service representatives participated. Panelists included representatives of GAWL, Guyana Police Force, GAPSW, Probation Services, and Help and Shelter. Participants identified problems related to domestic violence and access to legal advice, and developed recommendations and action plans to target specific issues and agencies.

The final forum in this series was organized by Toshao Salome Henry of Malali village in Region 10 with facilitation support from Help and Shelter. The forum was well attended by over 30 people, both male and female, from that Amerindian community as well as neighbouring villages. The report indicated a high level of receptivity and interest in the subject, and requests were made for additional workshops in other villages (time and resource constraints would not allow TCC to support any further fora).

▪ POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PLAN (PRSP) CONSULTATIONS

During 2001, The Carter Center lent support to several events designed to encourage representatives from civil society organizations in each of the three target populations to become involved in the PRSP public consultation process. The PRSP provided a timely opportunity to increase public debate on issues affecting women, youth and Amerindians, particularly since the Government of Guyana had initiated a countrywide consultation process. Civil society organizations had an important role to play in helping communities articulate their economic development priorities in advance of the consultations.

TCC distributed the Interim PRSP and related documents to Guyanese NGOs for distribution to their membership. In July 2001, YID organized a Youth Forum on the PRSP for youth throughout Guyana with Carter Center support and technical assistance. With financing from the PRSP Secretariat, YID members organized every aspect of the event, delivered the opening remarks explaining the PRSP, facilitated working group discussions, and produced a final Youth Agenda – a consensus document from the whole group – for presentation to the PRSP Secretariat.

The TCC program provided financial support and assistance to Region 9 Toshaos and community leaders to develop a funding proposal to the PRSP Secretariat to hold consultations. The Region 9 Toshaos were awarded GD\$1 million to conduct a consultation process in all five sub-regions. TCC trained the consultation team and supported the consultation process, including facilitating a meeting of the Toshaos Council. A 76-page assessment of Amerindian priorities in Region 9, with specific recommendations on projects, budgets and timelines was produced. TCC reproduced and distributed the report to stakeholders in the region. Region 9 leaders formally organized and registered the Region 9 Indigenous Development Association as an NGO, which will enable them to coordinate donor inputs and work with the government as the PRSP is implemented.

- **POST ELECTION ROUNDTABLE**

NDI repeatedly planned to host a post-election round table with participants, trainers, candidates and newly elected councillors to debrief the results of the women's training program and its impact on the election. Invitations were to be extended to a cross section of participants including women who but did not run, women who ran but did not win, and women who got elected. Planned discussions would focus on strategies that worked or didn't, assistance that was or was not available and its impact on a) forming the decision to run b) conducting a successful campaign, and c) eliminating barriers to their participation. The roundtable would help frame post-election assistance to Guyanese women by creating a support network at the local level and would serve as an opportunity to evaluate the program's effectiveness. As local government elections were postponed in 2001, 2002 and 2003, this activity never took place.

- **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN IN POLITICS**

In late 2002, NDI developed a survey to find out from women what they thought about politics. Four hundred and forty six women from across the ten administrative regions of Guyana were randomly selected through a two-stage stratified selection process. Interviews were conducted in January 2003. Focus groups and key informant interviews were also conducted, including 10 women currently involved in decision-making at various levels of government. The population distribution of the sample was not representative of the national demographic profile based on the 1991 census. However, the data collected provided insights as to the perceptions of Guyanese women toward their participation, and the participation of women generally, in politics.

The survey found that women were concerned more with local issues in their communities, than in national politics, which was perceived as argumentative and confrontational. Taken in its broadest sense, participation included clubs, groups and organizations in addition to active involvement through elected office. Seen in this light, two-thirds had some consequential involvement. In terms of election campaigns, women were more likely to be involved in fund raising than in any other activity. Work and family responsibilities left them with little time to get involved, although 69 percent felt that women could change the political bottom line. Most women believed that they voted for the party that had the best program for developing Guyana, although the most frequently cited reason in Region 4 was that they voted for the least of all evils. In some instances they didn't vote, yet 75 percent of those interviewed indicated that they were planning to vote in the next local government elections.

The majority of respondents had some organizational development experience. However, fewer than one-fifth reported any advocacy training. Similarly, advocacy as a strategy was for the most part noted by its absence from work plans. Many women equated advocacy campaigns with demonstrations and protests, and viewed them negatively. For those who reported some involvement in advocacy campaigns, it was primarily related to domestic violence, women's rights, health care, HIV/AIDS and education. Word of mouth was the principal method used by campaigners to publicize the issue.

Use of media was limited to the lowest one third of responses, reflecting a lack of experience, or possibly a lack of appreciation by the media of women's issues. In fact, one third of respondents felt that the media never showed positive images of women, and an equal number noted that women experts were never consulted. Although television was the most favored media for women, a statistically insignificant number found talk shows to be sources of information about women's issues.

The level of women's participation in public meetings such as Constitutional Reform or Poverty Reduction Strategy and statutory council meetings was very low. The most frequently cited reason was lack of interest, but a significant number of respondents indicated that they were unaware that the meetings were being held. However, even where women attended meetings, almost 60 percent said they never or rarely participated.

Nevertheless the vast majority of respondents said that women, if given a chance to participate in politics, would make a greater impact as parliamentarians, particularly with regard to working across party lines on issues of importance to women. More would get involved in politics if they were in a financial position to do so, if they didn't have family responsibilities, and if the manner in which politics is conducted in Guyana were to change.

- CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN POLITICS

Sponsored by the NDI and co-hosted by the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers and UNIFEM, the Conference *50/50: Increasing Women's Political Participation* took place in June 2003 in Georgetown. Women politicians, including ministers, activists, program participants and relevant government officials from the Caribbean attended. The Guyanese delegates had previously participated in NDI's *Increasing Women's Political Participation* program and were selected by their peers at a series of pre-conference workshops. The conference was designed to increase opportunities for networking amongst women, increase the capacity of women to advocate for improvements in the status of women and focus public debate on issues affecting women. A resolution was developed that identified the need for the training of women candidates and potential candidates, the strengthening of institutional mechanisms such as the representation of women at CARICOM meetings, the strengthening of the CARICOM women's desk, the development of sister programs throughout the Caribbean region, the creation of networks and caucuses across party and ethnic lines, the implementation of public and voter awareness campaigns, the establishment of national and regional databases, the sharing of information on constitution reform processes, electoral law reform and special measures to increase women's political participation.

SUB IR 4.5 MORE INFORMED MEDIA DISCUSSION ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIANS

- SPECIAL EVENTS

Prior to the launch of the Resource Center, each grantee group introduced their organization on camera at a media skills workshop at a local TV studio. The participants selected

three persons to repeat their presentations during the formal launching in the presence of the media cameras and reporters. TCC invested in a small video camera in order to enable regionally-based partner groups to secure improved national TV coverage of their activities, as well as to record, monitor and replicate TCC-sponsored events. The video camera was loaned to TNGOs and used for TCC events.

The National Tashaos Conference, NGO Conference, Youth Forums, and Women's Empowerment Forums that were videotaped provided the tapes to TV stations to facilitate coverage in newscasts. The NGO Conference was professionally videotaped in its entirety, and a promotional version was edited for wider distribution. The five-segment final product was aired in May 2004 on two national television stations.

“GUYANESE MAKING A DIFFERENCE” VIDEO

The concept of a documentary video to highlight the advocacy impacts and successes of the TCC partner groups was conceived and developed in 2003, and production was completed in March 2004. The overall goal was to demonstrate by concrete examples that NGOs are making a difference in their communities and beyond, by not only delivering needed services to vulnerable persons (especially women, youth and Amerindians) but also by advocating for changes in policy and procedure that have a wider and longer term benefit for those persons.

This one-hour documentary video is a valuable tool for improving media and public understanding of civil society issues and programs. The video is intended for audiences such as government officials as well as the donor community. Partner NGOs used this video to demonstrate their increased capacities and the impact of their work. The video was launched at the NGO Conference and complementary copies were given to all TNGOs, major donors and the main TV stations

▪ SUB-GRANTS TO TARGETED NGOS

The sub-grants described in IRs 4.1 and 4.3 also contributed directly to achievements in this IR by providing resources to grantees to become much more active, vocal and visible, and to conduct events that would attract media attention. The sub-grants also gave them the impetus and some resources to conduct research and gather data (via surveys and other methods), so that the TNGOs could provide accurate information to the media about problems confronting the targeted populations.

▪ TRAINING

Five women from targeted NGOs attended the NDI-hosted training in media monitoring skills in February 2003, further described below in this IR. The goal was to increase their capacity to influence media reporting in the Guyana, and to more effectively publicize women's issues related to the mission of their organizations. Although TCC planned to deliver a series of 3-4 half-day seminars for media professionals and NGO representatives to discuss priority issues, this activity was ultimately replaced with the production of the Guyanese Making a Difference video.

- CREATION OF BASELINE DATA

NDI contracted with a University of Guyana research team to undertake an in-depth monitoring study that examined the treatment of women and issues of importance to women by the media. Over a six week period in December 2003/January 2004 two team leaders (University of Guyana faculty members) supervised a team of 18 student researchers who monitored daily newspapers, selected TV stations and radio programs to determine how often women's issues were covered, the importance they were accorded, how women were portrayed in the media and whether and on what issues women were consulted as "experts". The three daily Newspapers were monitored three days a week, while the television channels were monitored during prime time three days a week.

The researchers studied news reports involving women in terms of issues covered and the importance they were accorded based on frequency of coverage and placement in the print and broadcast media. The analysis examined how women's issues were contextualized in relation to what was constructed as a reflection of broad socio-economic and political realities. The portrayal of women by the media and whether and on what issues women were consulted as "experts" was also tracked. The results reflected what researchers found in other countries, that images of women are overused in advertising products that sell youth and beauty, while women expertise is confined to women's issues such as birth, family and domestic violence. The premise of the exercise was to demonstrate that expectations of women are shaped by their treatment in the media.

- MEDIA WATCH TRAINING

NDI sponsored a workshop for a group of local women to train them to critically analyze the images of women in the media and the way the media addresses women's issues. The trainer was Ms. Melanie Cishecki, the Executive Director of Media Watch Canada. Women's groups in Guyana have long complained that women are poorly or negatively represented in the media. Issues of importance to women are given token treatment and women experts, advocates and professionals are virtually ignored. The workshop provided participants with analytical tools to assess coverage of stories, columns, programs, commercials and advertisements. The workshop placed particular emphasis on how women are treated with respect to politics, political issues and civil society concerns. Also included was awareness raising techniques, how to organize campaigns to engage the local media and advocacy and lobbying methods. The workshop examined models of media regulatory frameworks used in other countries. Media monitoring gave participants the tools they needed to lobby for positive changes to media coverage of women and women's issues.

- AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGN

In the months between the completion of the training workshops and the planned local government elections, NDI worked with program alumni to further develop and sharpen their media skills. Media Skills workshops were designed to help women influence the public agenda and secure a higher profile for their issues through articles, press releases and letters to the editor.

A group of women trained through the *Increasing Women's Political Participation* program appeared on a segment of Guyana TV's morning show entitled Promoting Women's Political Participation. Representatives of the major political parties who had been trained through the NDI program appeared on a later segment of the same show. Several segments dealing with women in local government were broadcast featuring women who received training through the NDI program.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 5.0: STRENGTHENED LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In 2001, NDI produced a report, *Local Democracy in Guyana – Recommendations for Reform and an Outline of Program Activities and Strategies* which summarized the views of the Caribbean Center for Development Administration (CARICAD), Management Systems International, the Urban Development program, the Constitution Reform Commission, the National Development Strategy and the PPP/C and PNC/R party manifestoes. The report was presented to the newly created Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform, a bipartisan body mandated to recommend fiscal and electoral reforms that reflected the intent of the Constitutional Reforms approved by parliament. The report offered an in depth analysis of the local government structure and reform options and defined the parameters of the discussions of local government reform that much of NDI's approach to this IR became.

SUB I.R.: 5.1 STRENGTHENED MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO COMMUNITIES' NEEDS

▪ FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION

NDI implemented fiscal decentralization training in order to diffuse fiscal authority and create new opportunities for leadership at the local level and citizen involvement. A one-week *Fiscal Decentralization in Guyana Training Course* was implemented by Dr. Mark Rider and Dr. Andrey Timofeev from the Andrew Young School Policy Studies, Georgia State University the at the Centre for Information Technology of the University of Guyana. Lecturers included members of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Guyana. The broad areas covered were *Basic Principles of Fiscal Decentralization*, including concepts and issues in the assignment of revenues sources and expenditure responsibilities and *Intergovernmental Transfers* including concepts and issues in the design of intergovernmental grants and estimation revenue buoyancy. The objectives of the course were:

- To examine and discuss concepts and issues in intergovernmental transfers
- To analyze and discuss intergovernmental transfers as it pertains to Guyana
- To discuss and develop the parameters to guide formulation of a workable intergovernmental transfer regime for Guyana
- To create a pool of resource persons to work on developing the formula for intergovernmental transfers for Guyana

Participants included Town Clerks, Regional Executive Officers, officers from the Ministries of Finance and Local Government, and members of the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform.

A public forum on *Financing Local Government in Developing Countries* was held at the City Hall where Dr. Rider made a 45-minute presentation on the subject. 100 people representing the Regional Democratic Councils, Municipalities and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils attended. Course facilitators also made presentations on *Fiscal Decentralization* on television and radio programs and held discussions with the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform.

▪ LOCAL GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT IN AMERINDIAN COMMUNITIES

In January 2001, local expert Gordon Forte conducted an assessment of local governance in three Amerindian communities on the Essequibo Coast. He made several recommendations, including the need for extensive practical training in local governance and greater dialogue between local government entities and affected communities. The findings of the report *Needs Assessment Survey and Baseline Data on Local Governance in the Amerindian Communities of Mainstay/Whyaka, Tapakuma and Capoey*, and its implications for working with the respective Amerindian communities were sent to USAID. The results were intended to provide the basis for further work with Amerindian communities on local governance.

NDI staff visited the Amerindian communities of Mainstay/Whyaka, Tapakuma and Capoey to discuss the findings of needs assessment with the respective councils. Discussions on the Indigenous Rights Section of the Constitution Reform Commission's Report were held. Strong interest was shown in these discussions and concerns raised about the establishment of Indigenous Peoples Commission as recommended by the CRC. The Amerindian community leaders believed that revisions to the Amerindian Act should include a reduction in the powers of the Minister of Amerindian Affairs while at the same time providing more autonomy to the councils. NDI facilitated a link between these councils and the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform. Further work with the Amerindian communities with respect to revisions to the Amerindian Act were done in conjunction with IR4.

▪ COMPARATIVE MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

NDI sponsored a one-week work attachment for the Town Clerks, Superintendents of Works and Environmental Health Officers of the Anna Regina and New Amsterdam Town Councils to the respective departments at the Georgetown City Council. The aim of this attachment was to provide these officers with comparative municipal management experience and transferable skills in specific municipal operations including town planning, environmental health, public works, revenue collection, management information systems and community participation.

▪ LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSESSMENTS

NDI proposed working with the donor community and implementing agencies to undertake an assessment of the human resources and institutional capabilities of a sample of the

various local government bodies and to make appropriate recommendations based on the results. The findings of these assessments would contribute to an understanding of the extent to which local government can carry out additional responsibilities and the degree of capacity-building and institutional strengthening needed to enable local government to function efficiently and effectively under the new decentralized system.

- **COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE**

NDI sponsored senior government and local elected officials to attend the Local Government Service Partnerships Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa in March 2003. At this conference, the participants were exposed to successful local government service partnerships, best practices throughout the Commonwealth of South Africa, and networking opportunities to meet with mayors, local government officials and the private sector in a unique information-sharing environment.

The delegation from Guyana consisted of the mayors of Anna Regina and New Amsterdam, the Clerk of Georgetown Council, and a Co-chair of the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform. The Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and the Director of Community Councils of Guyana, both government members, declined to attend. The Guyana delegation was the largest from the Caribbean. As a result of the experience, the Mayors were able to consider new ways of providing municipal services and revenue generation. A follow up meeting with the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum took place in Guyana shortly after the Conference to explore ways of implementing concepts generated at the Conference.

SUB I.R. 5.2 ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FURTHER DEFINED AND RATIONALIZED

- **COMPARATIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT MATERIALS**

NDI provided comparative information and best practices materials to help the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform decide on the type of information that would best suit their needs. More than 25 sets of documents on a wide variety of local government issues including intergovernmental fiscal relations, local government commission, decentralized development planning and other related issues were produced and distributed. NDI also provided the Task Force members documents from the UNDP sponsored 'Decentralization Symposium in Africa' conference pertaining to fiscal decentralization, sectoral decentralization, gender inclusion in decentralized governance and the process of decentralization.

- **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND CONSULTATION FORUMS**

In collaboration with the University of Guyana, NDI designed a public education and information television program entitled *Future Forum*. This fortnightly program focused primarily on the work of the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform and the issues on the Task Force's agenda. A wide range of topics have been featured including Women and Local Government, Fiscal Decentralization, Local Government Elections System, and Local Government Reform. The Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and the Chairman of

the PNCR, who serve as Co-chairs of the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform, have used the show as a platform to provide updates on the pace of reform, and have reported on the progress of the various issues under discussion.

The program featured the Minister of Amerindian Affairs, the Amerindian Peoples Association, the Guyana Association of Local Authorities, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Urban Development Program and local government experts from the University of Georgia's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Programs focused on local government development in Guyana as it relates to the local government reform process in Guyana. 21 instalments of the program were produced in total in 2003 and 2004.

- EXPERT CONSULTATIONS

A Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform included members of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) and the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) was established in 2001 and tasked with providing recommendations on local government reform. The Task Force was also created to address the implementation of provisions in the Local Government Reform Legislation. The time frame was 12 months to facilitate the execution of Local Government elections which were delayed. This timeline, however, was further extended for the Task Force to complete its work.

NDI provided the Local Government Task Force with names and curriculum vitae of experts in the areas of electoral systems, local government commissions and garnering of resources. At the Task Forces' request NDI made available the expert services of Dr. Benjamin Reilly, who provided consultation on Local Government Electoral Systems, Dr. Randall Crane, who provided information and advice about the Garnering of Resources, and Dr. Kare Vollan from Norway to discuss the creation of an electoral system that would allow for groups and individuals to participate in local government elections as well as allow for a direct relationship between the elected officials and their constituencies.

Dr. Benjamin Reilly held meetings with the Task Force, media, General Secretaries of the two major political parties, Elections Commission Chairman and Senior Officers of the Commission and delivered a lecture on *Some Common Electoral Systems for Local Government in Multi-Ethnic Societies* at a public forum at the City Hall. He presented six options for electoral reform for local government to the Task Force. Among the options were the closed list, proportional representation system (currently used in Guyana), to single and multi-member constituencies with a combination of first past the post and proportional representation. These options were further elaborated by Kare Vollan when he visited Guyana in June 2004.

Professor Randall Crane of the University of California, Los Angeles brought expertise on the subject on the garnering of resources to the Task Force. He discussed types of intergovernmental transfers (grants and revenue sharing), including issues of allocation criteria and implementation. To complement these discussions, Crane shared with the TF materials on intergovernmental transfers from Kenya and Yemen. He subsequently presented a report of the issues discussed. He also met with the media and made a presentation at a well-attended public forum on *Common Sources of Local Government Financing*.

- CONFERENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECENTRALIZATION

In collaboration with the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA), the Guyana Association of Local Authorities (GALA), and the Universities of Guyana and the West Indies, NDI organized a *Caribbean Conference on Decentralisation and Local Government* in May 2002. The conference provided a vehicle to promote local government reform in Guyana by scheduling it near the announcement by the government of its plans for local government reform based on the recommendations of the Joint Task Force.

Invitees included Ministers responsible for local government, mayors from capital cities in the Caribbean, women local politicians (including participants from the *Increasing Women's Political Participation* program), chairpersons of local government bodies, senior local government officials in ministries of Local Government, Regional Chairs and chairs of selected Neighborhood Democratic Councils in Guyana.

In addition, NDI hosted the visit of Professor Bishnu Ragoonath from the University of the West Indies to make presentations on "Decentralization, Autonomy and Local Governance" at a public forum at the Georgetown City Hall and to the University of Guyana student body. To complement these presentations, NDI distributed a variety local government materials to those attending, including copies of his presentation.

- CONFERENCE PUBLICATION

Based on the June 2002 Conference, NDI produced a *Decentralization and Local Government in the Caribbean* report. This publication consists of an analysis of the Country Survey Information submitted by seven countries, selected presentations made at the conference, presentations made by the experts to the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform, a presentation made at the Fiscal Decentralization Training Course and an essay on *Local Government Decentralization and the Caribbean: The Way Forward*. More than 500 copies were published and distributed to local government officials and libraries throughout Guyana and the Caribbean. The 107-page publication is a resource that can be used by local government officials, practitioners in the field, students of local government and those researching related issues.

- LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

The Minister of Local Government requested NDI's assistance in retaining the services of a drafter to make the required amendments to the various pieces of local government legislation that were expected to result from the work of the Joint Task Force. A former Chief Justice and Attorney General, Keith Massiah, who drafted the original Local Authorities Act, was retained to provide the drafting expertise. NDI negotiated a funding arrangement with CIDA to pay for the services of the drafter. An MOU was signed with the CIDA Head of Aid, the Minister of Local Government and NDI that clearly delineated responsibilities. The Minister was responsible for ensuing that the drafter met the contractual obligations, while CIDA and NDI provided financial and technical support. The work was not completed by the end of NDI program.

The government also requested NDI's assistance in acquiring the services of an electoral expert to develop simulations for a constituency system with the element of proportionality using various scenarios suggested by the governing and opposition parties on the Joint Task Force. The consultant delivered a report to the USAID Mission in Guyana which contained a mixture of options including mixed proportionality, proportional representation and single and multiple member constituencies. Based on these options, the parties would negotiate a representative system which would be used in the next local government elections. Changes will be made to the *Representation of the People's Act* when agreement is reached between the parties.

SUB I.R. 5.3 DIALOGUE PROMOTED BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES AND AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

In July 2001, USAID suggested that NDI look into the possibility of implementing a Making Cities Work program in the Town of New Amsterdam. Preliminary conversations with civic, government, and business leaders indicated a low level of satisfaction with the delivery of services. Subsequent consultations identified specific areas in which public, business and government bodies could collaborate to address local government needs.

NDI designed and conducted a survey to measure the interaction between the local government and citizens, first in the town of New Amsterdam and then in Anna Regina. Results of both surveys confirmed a low level of satisfaction with the delivery of services, particularly in the areas of waste management and communication between elected councillors and citizens on local policy issues. NDI worked with the New Amsterdam and Anna Regina town councils, business sectors, regional officials, NGOs and civic groups on several initiatives which were designed to address identified issues. The focus of NDI's program activities was on increasing the capacity for citizens to influence the decisions of local councils, and to promote dialogue between the local citizens and municipal councils.

The baseline data gathered in these surveys was useful for measuring Performance Monitoring Plan indicators:

- increased responsiveness by local officials to community concerns
- increase in the quantity and/or variety of public services provided by local councils
- increased frequency of public interaction between council members and citizens

The researcher interviewed 75 randomly selected citizens in each town. He also conducted focus interviews with the town councillors and the town clerks. Interactions between citizens and local officials were non-existent. Two-thirds of those interviewed had never spoken to a councillor or the town clerk and of those who had been in contact with their councillor, fewer than 15% were satisfied with the response that they got. Eighty seven percent of the interviewees stated that they had never been invited to a public meeting on any subject. Among those who had attended a public meeting organized by the municipality, they could not recall the last occasion that the town council conducted a public meeting.

The information provided a baseline of information for an annual survey to measure service improvements, council-citizen interaction and the degree of citizens' satisfaction with the work of the council. The results of the Baseline Data Gathering Project Report were presented to the Mayor and Town Council of New Amsterdam and Anna Regina. Local Action Groups were then established with interested citizens. NDI staff presented the findings to the various sectors in New Amsterdam, including staff from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New Amsterdam media, the NGO and business communities of New Amsterdam, the Regional Health and Regional Education Departments.

- **COMMUNITY MEETINGS NEW AMSTERDAM**

A coordinating committee was formed with NDI's assistance to reach out to other citizens in New Amsterdam, and to explain the results of the survey. As part of mobilizing citizens to participate in these meetings, letters were sent to every household. Handbills were distributed and television ads were broadcast. NDI provided a community facilitator to lead these meetings.

For the purposes of organizing the community meetings, the New Amsterdam Action Group (NAAG) divided the town into 12 communities. During the 2001-02 program year, 8 of the 12 community meetings were held. At each of these meetings a NAAG representative gave an overview of the purpose of NAAG and its work; the Town Clerk discussed plans for development of the town especially as it relates to environmental enhancement such as garbage collection and disposal. A representative from the Environmental Protection Agency made a presentation of ways and means of reducing household waste, and the Commander of the Police Division discussed the issues of crime and internal security. Prior to these meetings NAAG met with the Commander of the East Berbice Police Division who was very interested in the police engaging with the communities through this initiative. He attended all the community meetings and recommended a Senior Police Officer to serve on the NAAG Committee. This was followed by discussions with citizens on problems faced in their community and possible solutions. The community meetings concluded with the formation of a community citizens group that would relate with NAAG.

- **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION NEW AMSTERDAM**

NDI worked in partnership with the Education, Training and Information Department of the Environmental Protection Agency and the New Amsterdam Coordinating Committee in implementing a systematic environmental enhancement education drive. Assistance was provided in organization, management, public outreach and education, and networking with the other stakeholders. The major initiative was the "Keep New Amsterdam Clean" campaign geared at encouraging citizens to enhance their environment through participation in the community's clean-up activities. The campaign mobilized citizens through banners and billboards placed in strategic locations throughout the town, the production and distribution of "Keep New Amsterdam Clean" handbills, posters and bumper stickers and Environmental Education workshops with schools, youth clubs and civic groups.

NAAG hosted call-in television programs to launch the campaign and worked with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Regional Education Department in conducting a “Keep New Amsterdam Clean” school’s competition. The competition was conducted in 18 primary and secondary schools and included poetry, art, drama, essay and school’s beautification. NAAG worked in collaboration with the other sectors in mobilizing financial and other resources for this particularly activity. The group obtained substantial support to clean almost 2 miles of the canal in the center of New Amsterdam.

- PUBLIC/COMMUNITY OUTREACH NEW AMSTERDAM

As part of its Second Anniversary celebrations, NAAG hosted a symposium on *Citizens Participation in the Governance Process* for the general public of New Amsterdam. Several stakeholders from the town of New Amsterdam made presentations. The Co-chair of the Task Force on Local Government Reform and Vice Chairman of the PNCR, Mr. Vincent Alexander, made the keynote presentation. He discussed the work of the Task Force and how this would affect the development of a new local government system in Guyana. The overflow crowd showed keen interest as evidenced by their active participation in the discussion session that followed. The attendees included representatives of the donor community, local government officials and councillors from the Regional Democratic Council, the Neighborhood Democratic and Town Councils in the Region.

- BASELINE DATA COLLECTION, ANNA REGINA

The survey of randomly selected residents of Anna Regina was conducted after the New Amsterdam Action Group was created. It sought similar information, namely, to identify issues affecting citizens, to assess the degree of responsiveness of the Town Council to community concerns, to determine the quantity and variety of public services provided by the town council to the citizens and the frequency of public interaction between council members and citizens. The information formed a baseline for an annual survey to measure service improvements, council-citizen interaction and degree of citizens’ satisfaction with the work of the council as it did with a similar survey done in New Amsterdam. Inadequate garbage disposal, poor sanitation and poor services from the water and electricity utilities were the top three issues identified by respondents.

- ESTABLISHMENT OF ANNA REGINA COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The data gathered in Anna Regina provided a foundation for generating community interest in addressing the identified issues. A Coordinating Committee was established comprising of representatives from the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Regional administration, the local faith community, a women’s organization and a disabled persons group. This committee was tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the project, including planning, strategizing and monitoring progress. The Committee subsequently met to develop a strategic plan for implementing the major recommendations of the report. The Town of Anna Regina Development Support Group was formed with the participation the Essiquebo Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Mayor, several NGOs and faith groups.

- **COMMUNITY MEETINGS, ANNA REGINA**

NDI supported the coordinating committee in planning and conducting community meetings. In preparation for these meetings, NDI facilitated training sessions on how to organize community meetings. More than 100 persons attended the initial public forum organized at the Town Hall by the Town of Anna Regina Development Support Group (TARDSG). At this forum, citizens were given the opportunity to make suggestions for the future development of Anna Regina. The initial meeting lasted several hours, resulting in dozens of recommendations from citizens. The deputy Mayor, the Chairman of the Regional Democratic Council, the Town Clerk, the President of the ECC and I, and NDI Country Director made presentations.

- **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, ANNA REGINA**

NDI worked with the coordinating committee and the various stakeholders to implement the agreed upon plan. Activities included assistance in organization, management, public outreach and education, and networking with the other stakeholders. A schedule of community meetings has been developed and will be implemented during the next year.

- **CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOPS**

NDI organized capacity-building workshops for the Town of Anna Regina Development Support Group. The group was exposed to approaches to public participation, mobilizing for social action and techniques in conducting community meetings. These workshops were conducted to develop and strengthen skills to plan and conduct community meetings.

A follow-up six-week capacity-building training program for community leaders for the TARDSG through the University of Guyana Institute of Distance and Continuing Education was also developed. The training program equipped community leaders with leadership and community development skills and exposed them to issues of governance, conflict management, advocacy and inter-personal relationships. Twenty-five people from 10 groups participated in the training program which also included field trips and community work.

NDI also facilitated capacity-building workshops on community development, conflict resolution, governance and public participation for the NAAG and its affiliate community groups and other interested organizations and individuals. These subject areas were identified at the quarterly review meeting of NAAG.

These capacity building workshops resulted in an increase in the community leaders' abilities to organize, lead and manage stakeholder groups in the development of New Amsterdam and Anna Regina.

- **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE**

NDI organized a study mission of members from the New Amsterdam Action Group (NAAG) and the Town of Anna Regina Development Support Group (TARDSG) to participate in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities *Sustainable Communities Conference* held February 4-7, 2004 in Ottawa. Some of the topics addressed included *Planning for Success, Urban*

Challenge and Urban Environment Quality, Institutional Structures for Integrated Decision Making, Integrated Land Use Planning and Building Social Capital.

- **INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PILOT PROJECT**

A 12-member delegation from NAAG participated in a Study Mission to the UMP-LAC Integrated Solid Waste Management pilot project conducted in Trinidad. The NAAG conducted a similar project with selected communities in New Amsterdam, but the Trinidad project is in its advanced stages. During the four-day mission, the delegation toured the communities and interacted with the leaders and residents thereby gaining first hand insights into the issues and challenges being faced by their counterparts in Trinidad.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.0: IMPROVED AND MORE INFORMED LAW-MAKING AND REGULATORY PROCESS

In January 2001, NDI conducted an assessment to determine alternative methods for strengthening legislative drafting capacity. This mission sought to reassess the assumptions underlying the CPs and possible alternatives in light of evolving political realities. With the subsequent lifting of the CPs, the assessment was used to shape NDI's legislative program.

SUB-I.R. 1.1 INCREASED TECHNICAL CAPACITY FOR LAW-MAKING AND REGULATIONS

INDICATOR: LEGISLATION ACTED UPON AND ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS ISSUED IN A TIMELY MANNER

UNITS OF MEASUREMENT:

AVERAGE TIME ELAPSED FROM IDENTIFICATION OF NEED FOR LEGISLATION BY THE APPROPRIATE AGENCY TO DEFINITIVE DISPOSITION (PASSAGE OR REJECTION) BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

AVERAGE TIME ELAPSED FROM IDENTIFICATION OF NEED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION TO ISSUANCE OF SUCH REGULATION

- **IMPROVE THE DRAFTING CAPACITY WITHIN MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

The Boston University course is a well grounded course which seeks to achieve democratic change through the ways laws are made. The course provided participants a strong foundation in analytic theory and research methodology. NDI sponsored 16 members of the Guyana Bar Association in an online distance course that was based on the same principles and designed by Professor Robert Seidman and Professor Ann Seidman, international experts in the field.

- **DEVELOP PROCEDURES TO SHARE STANDING ORDERS, BILLS AND ACTS IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT**

Procedures were developed, and agreement was reached by all the parties that they would follow these procedures. There is a history and tradition of circulating draft bills but no written procedures other than the legal requirement that two copies of the drafts must be delivered to the Clerk of the National Assembly to be tabled in the House. An amendment to the Standing Orders was required to make it possible to circulate the bills in electronic format. This amendment was not passed.

- **LEGISLATION DRAFTING MANUAL**

The final draft manual was completed in the final months of the program. It was intended to be used as a users' manual for back bench and opposition MPs and training modules were to be developed to reflect its various sections. The manual is thorough, clear and accessible. In the absence of being used as an instruction manual, it can also be used as an analytical tool to help MPs understand the architecture of bills. It is hoped that further work to develop a training and orientation workshop will be completed through another program.

- **SURVEY TO ASSES THE USEFULNESS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCE CENTER**

The Survey served to make MPs aware of the Parliamentary library, and to consider ways of making it more useful for them as legislators. The library is seriously under resourced, and is at the bottom of the government's list of priorities, but research staff have been added recently who are computer literate, and enthusiastic about making improvements so that the MPs can be more effective as law makers.

- **PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCE CENTER**

A draft Strategic IT plan for the Parliament Office was developed with NDI's assistance. A team composed of NDI staff and Parliament Staff were instructed to prepare a comprehensive proposal that would employ a range of modern information technology services to strengthen the effectiveness of the legislature. The plan integrated the elements of a communications system into the projected needs of the Assembly over a five year period to increase the transparency, accountability, efficiency and overall effectiveness of the Parliament.

The **Legislative Modernization Plan** would be a wide-ranging initiative that employed a multi-phase and versatile approach to transform the information services of the legislature. Each strategic objective proposed in the draft would be carried out by the Information Technology Development Committee and the Office of the Clerk of the Parliament. The draft plan covered structures required, budgets, technology and information services, data centers, networks and telecommunications and proposals to build technical competencies in parliament.

The Laws of Guyana on CD were updated and launched at the end of June 2004. This CD included the amended Constitution, and was the first time it was available to the general public since the approval of amendments in 2001 through 2003. A thorough vetting process included the Guyana Bar Association who served as verifiers that the electronic version of the laws were true and accurate representations of the official laws that were used in the courts. The exercise, however thorough, suggested that a formal Law Revision process be established to

undertake a complete review of laws that are currently in force. This has not been done since Guyana became an independent nation in 1966.

- THE PARLIAMENT GUIDE AND WEBSITE

The Speaker of the National Assembly, The Honourable Ralph Ramkarran, officially launched the Parliamentary Website and Parliament Guide at a ceremony on Monday, January 26th, 2004. NDI and the Sustainable Development Network Program worked with the Parliament Office to develop the Website. The Site will be hosted by the SDNP. A demonstration on how to access the Website was conducted by Mr. Raul Small, Chief Administrative Officer of the Parliament Office. Invited guests included the members of the Parliamentary Management Committee and Parliamentary Sector Committees, as well as representatives of the National Youth Parliament.

- STAFFING STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

One of the benefits of the Communique signed by President Jagdeo and Robert Corbin, the leader of the Opposition, was agreement to increase staff resources for parliament. Almost immediately, the Clerk received permission to hire up to 17 new staff to provide support to the committees and develop a research unit. NDI was asked to provide input and advice in the development of position descriptions, and provide training resources to help prepare the new staff. A course in management and administration of parliament was developed to meet this need.

Training in Parliamentary Management and Administration took place from February 24 -28 2004. Staff representing all departments of the Parliament Office were in attendance. Expert trainers Peter Walker and Brian Wilson were very popular with the participants. They drew on their practical parliamentary experience to discuss recent procedural changes at Westminster, parliamentary procedure, staff management issues and house administration. They ended the training by helping the staff produce action plans for the future development of Parliament.

Former Clerk of the Assembly Frank Narain was coaxed out of retirement to lead a workshop on the history and role of parliament in Guyana. He also produced a booklet entitled *Historical Facts, Notes and Dates on the Parliament of Guyana* for use in the course. NDI will help publish the booklet for distribution to all Members of Parliament and make it available to the general public.

- ASSISTANCE TO THE CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NDI invited the Clerk of The National Assembly to attend a training course sponsored by the Royal Institute of Parliamentary Administration in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the course was to improve parliamentary processes through strengthening the management and the efficiency of the administration of parliaments, legislatures and assemblies. Through the study of the workings of the United Kingdom parliament at Westminster, important issues related to the management of legislatures similar to Guyana's experience would be examined. The course was 4 weeks long, and was scheduled for November 10th to December 5th 2003.

The Speaker gave his approval, and the Clerk made arrangements to attend. NDI informed the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs about the program, who disapproved of this training. As a result, the Clerk was unable to attend.

The Clerk has been less enthusiastic about attending other trainings in Guyana. He did not attend the drafting course, and reluctantly attended the parliamentary management and administration course. Even though the benefits of the trainings would be asset for his position, the government is reluctant to permit him to be absent from his duties. The Speaker, however, has been steadfast in his commitment to having all staff of the Parliament office benefit from donor support.

SUB-I.R. 1.2 LAW/REGULATION-MAKING PROCEDURES REGARDING PUBLIC INPUT IMPROVED

INDICATOR: INCREASED FORMAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT IN LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY PROCESSES

UNIT OF MEASUREMENT: NUMBER OF LAWS/REGULATIONS ENACTED OR ISSUED FOLLOWING PUBLIC HEARINGS

- **PUBLIC EDUCATION ON THE CONSTITUTION**

The Guyana Women Lawyer's Association successfully traveled around the country organizing public meetings to inform the general public about recent reforms to the Constitution. They had both successes and failures in meeting their objective. Attendance was not as high as anticipated for all of the sessions, but the sessions were very interactive and participatory. An evaluation revealed that the advertising and mobilizing methods needed to be carefully tailored to suit the particular area and target group, and it was found that having a contact to assist with mobilization was useful.

- **PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

After much back and forth between the parties, and especially the governing party, the Parliamentary Internship program was finally agreed to by the Parliamentary Management Committee. Conditions for approval included opening the program to all Guyanese regardless of whether they are students or not, broad public advertising of the program and participant selection from the broader University of Guyana student body rather than just from the Faculty of Social Science. As a final input, NDI organized a steering committee to oversee the development and implementation of the program commencing in the 2004-2005 academic year.

- **SECTOR STANDING COMMITTEES**

The establishment of the sector committees was repeatedly delayed because of disagreements between the parties about the composition of standing committees, the choice of trainers, the utility of training, and the lack of accordance on the role of the National Assembly in governance. However, by the end of 2003, the committees were all in place.

By the end of the program, NDI assisted members of the Parliamentary Management Committee in preparing a training schedule. Approvals for the training were sought from the leadership of the parties. However, a boycott of parliament by the main opposition party prevented any further work from being completed before the program ended.

- **PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES**

The women's caucus was a victim of the breakdown of the Dialogue Process. However, support for a women's caucus remains strong. Women from all parties represented in the Assembly have pledged to create a woman's caucus when a normal political environment is restored.

- **NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

NDI provided support to the Guyana Youth Development Association to undertake a study tour of youth parliaments in England and Scotland. They also met with parliamentary staff, and the Clerk of Westminster.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.0: INCREASED CAPACITY TO RESOLVE DISPUTES IN A JUST AND TIMELY MANNER

SUB I.R. 2.1 MORE EFFICIENT JUDICIAL PROCESSES DEVELOPED (RESULTS)

INDICATOR (1): LENGTH OF TIME FROM DATE OF FINAL ADJUDICATORY DECISION IN HIGH COURT IN CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES TO DATE OF LODGING OF CASES APPEALED TO COURT OF APPEALS

INDICATOR (2): AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF COURT OR RULES OF PROCEDURE, OR TO SUBSTANTIVE LAWS, THAT INCREASE EFFICIENCY OF JUDICIAL PROCESSES

UNIT OF MEASURE (1): ANNUAL AVERAGE ELAPSED TIME FROM FINAL ADJUDICATORY DECISION IN HIGH COURT TO LODGING OF CASE IN THE APPEALS COURT.

UNIT OF MEASURE (2): NUMBER GOING INTO EFFECT EACH YEAR.

With respect to Indicator 2, a revised second draft of new Civil Rules of Procedure has been produced, consultations held, technical assistance provided, with a final draft expected by the end of 2004. The Supreme Court has adopted a Judicial Code of Conduct, based on deliberations at two judicial conferences. Amendments to court procedure to adopt ADR have not yet been entrenched in formal rules, but may well be if the pilot project proves successful.

It has not proved practicable to measure the impact of the program by using Indicator 1, due to the lack of reliable case tracking by the court registry, the worsening shortage of judges that has made it ever more difficult to demand expeditious delivery of judgments, and the fact that the program itself has evolved in a direction that is no longer reflected by such an Indicator.

Following is a brief description of additional key results achieved by the Carter Center during the program related to IR 2.1. Anticipated results changed and evolved over time as the program adjusted to the longstanding non-compliance with the CPs, and the compressed time for implementation during the latter part of the multi-year program.

▪ CRIMINAL LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE

The interim report the Criminal Law Review Committee delivered in July 2002 highlighted the issue of prison overcrowding and long remand periods and recommended that:

- priority should be given by court to hearing cases in which the accused is in custody
- persons charged with crimes should be released by the court on bail whenever feasible
- magistrates should hold preliminary inquiries into the most serious crimes promptly
- depositions should be prepared urgently after preliminary inquiries
- cases in which witnesses are consistently unavailable should be dismissed by the court
- bail must be set in an amount that is within the reasonable means of the accused, especially for minor offences or distant remand dates
- bail should normally be granted for minor offences not carrying a prison sentence
- bail should not automatically be denied in narcotics cases
- judges should consider various sentencing options such as suspended sentences, taking into account the overcrowding problem
- plea bargaining should be considered for legislative sanction
- preliminary inquiries could be replaced by paper committals, provided that the capacity of the High Court is also enhanced to keep pace with the increased case load
- educational programs for magistrates to remedy their lack of experience, also for judges
- magistrates and judges should prepare their reasons for judgment promptly so appeals can be heard
- increasing the number of appeal judges and creating civil and criminal divisions
- in cases of unnatural death, such as extrajudicial killings, inquests or inquiries must be held expeditiously, by an independent national Coroner's Office

The failure of the Committee to release a final report has hampered efforts to mobilize stakeholders to implement these recommendations. Finalizing the report and implementing recommendations was impeded significantly by the serious crime wave that began in early 2002.

▪ CIVIL RULES REVISION PROCESS

The process of revising the Civil Rules has been long and laborious, requiring significant inputs of time and energy from key judicial system stakeholders since it began in late 2001.

The proposed changes in the draft document will almost without exception make significant differences in the time required for a case to be dealt with by the court, an objective that can only be achieved by numerous inter-related amendments to the Rules. The proposed changes include:

- introduction of case management conferences, a key measure in a case flow management system, to give judges and the court more control over all cases
- recognition of Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms such as mediation as an option to be considered by judges when evaluating pending cases

- general simplification of terminology and revision of outdated terms to reflect current reality and practice
- decreasing the time period after which a case will be considered abandoned and removed from the court rolls
- decreasing the times allowed for the filing of basic litigation documents
- allowing for alternative means of serving legal documents, such as by post
- requiring the exchange of witness statements in advance of hearing
- providing rules for contempt of court, to discipline lawyers or parties to litigation as appropriate
- empowering the Chancellor to make practice directions to further enhance delivery of timely justice related to the implementation of the Rules and relevant statutes

In April 2004, the Rules Committee completed their proposed revisions to the George draft, which were reproduced in May/June 2004 on both paper and CD-Rom, and disseminated to the judiciary and legal profession. The Rules Committee's draft is also being made available to all interested parties through publication on the court website launched in May 2004 with TCC support. The next anticipated step is a general meeting of judicial and legal personnel, with the aim of soliciting additional feedback and arriving at a final draft shortly thereafter. The Chancellor plans to ask the Attorney General to present a final version of the Rules to Parliament by September of 2004.

▪ JUDICIAL EDUCATION/CODE OF CONDUCT

At times it may be challenging to measure the results of interventions in judicial education. In the context of Guyana, the very fact of having established a precedent of regular judicial education events has made a significant contribution towards changing the judicial culture (and by extension the legal culture) of the country. The judges have gradually become more open about expressing their need for improved knowledge and continuing education. This was amply demonstrated by the final judicial conference on judicial writing, during which the judges were willing to engage in a level of peer review that has seldom been conducted at the judicial level in Guyana.

The Chief Justice's leadership role in establishing a court website can be directly related to his participation in the Court Technology Conference in 2001, at which several sessions were devoted to court website development. Following a two-day stopover in Atlanta in 2003, during which TCC staff organized several meetings and the observation of a mediation session, the Chancellor became noticeably more vocal in her support for ADR and mediation.

The **Judicial Code of Conduct, successfully adopted in late 2003** was the final product of a process that began with the Chancellor's First Judicial Conference in 2001, and after stalling, it was mobilized to completion by Chancellor's attendance at the Conference of the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association in 2003. A key focus of that event was on judicial corruption and codes of conduct, and recommendations emerged that all member nations should have a judicial code of conduct.

The endorsement of the new Judicial Code of Conduct was a significant step towards improved judicial standards and independence, and its wide publication serves to enhance the public perception of the administration of justice. The Code was printed by TCC in conjunction with the Chancellor's office and launched at a special ceremony on December 12, 2003, that included all judges and magistrates, and leaders of the legal profession associations, who each received a copy of the Code. The Code has also recently been made available to an international audience with its placement on the new court website.

The Code of Conduct enshrines seven fundamental values for judges: propriety, independence, integrity, impartiality, equality, competence and diligence, and accountability. Specific key provisions include the following:

1. Judges shall refrain from involvement in any partisan political activity or membership in any political party.
2. Judges may not accept "any gift, bequest, loan or favor in relation to anything done or to be done or omitted to be done by the judge in connection with the performance of judicial duties".
3. Judges shall reject any attempt to influence his or her decision in any matter

While the Code provides that normally judges may not practice law while serving as a judge, the Code also includes as an annex a draft code of provisions for part-time judges, which is one option being considered as a means of reducing the burden on the courts in the absence of qualified and willing judges to serve full-time.

- **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/RESOURCES**

The judges of the Supreme Court as well as magistrates benefited from a wide range of legal source materials, both in paper format and electronically. However, the Condition Precedent that prevented directly supporting the Supreme Court Library limited the extent of books and similar resources that could be provided through the program, and continues to limit access to materials as they must be housed in the Chief Justice's chambers.

- **SUPREME COURT WEBSITE**

With technical and financial support from TCC and the Sustainable Development Network Project (SDNP), a template for the new Supreme Court of Guyana website became accessible in January 2004, and the site was launched in May 2004. The website not only benefited the public image and transparency of the justice system, but will in the future offer easy and timely access to decisions handed down by the courts. The publication of judgments on the website will be used to motivate judges to be more prompt in writing their decisions, thus addressing a key bottleneck in the system.

- **BUILDING AN ACTIVE ADVOCACY BASE FOR COURT REFORMS**

As noted above, mobilization of a Core Judicial Advisory Group was impeded initially by the concerns of key stakeholders, and later by their focus (including core members of the Bar

Association via their active role in the Social Partners) on governance issues and the serious violent crime situation.

However, the formation of the **Criminal Law, Civil Rules, and ADR committees** with TCC support enabled a variety of voices to be heard and publicized on fundamental challenges facing the justice sector.

A prime example of TCC's efforts at rule of law coalition-building is the ADR Committee. With TCC encouragement, the narrow scope of the Planning Committee was significantly broadened to encompass several key civil society groupings, such as the Justices of the Peace Association, Consumer Association, and Private Sector Commission. The public relations campaign for the mediation project also contributed significantly to raising public awareness of court reforms and initiatives designed to improve access to efficient justice.

As a result of TCC initiatives such as forums and small grants, NGO St. Mark's Mothers Union advocated for the expansion of access to legal services for underprivileged women in Region 6. To this end, they established a positive working relationship with the Berbice Bar Association and the GAWL, as well as the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic. The Airy Hall Women's Group succeeded in having private interview rooms allocated in local police stations for cases of domestic violence. In a collaborative effort led by Guyanese Women in Development of Region 6, several women's groups met with the Attorney General and the Chancellor of the Judiciary to advocate for positive change in the administration of justice as it affects women in their communities.

The efforts of these groups were informed by a series of Legal Empowerment Forums organized by TCC, about which more detail is provided in IR 4.4. These forums drew upon the expertise of GAWL to present the more technical information on national policy aspects of the issue. The forums raised the level of understanding of the legal aspects of domestic violence, and mobilized support for reforms in the law and justice system. The final forum resulted in the adoption of a resolution covering the legal obstacles related to domestic violence, and shortage of legal aid services and facilities in Guyana.

Progress can also be reported on recommendations made by TCC at the donor/government thematic working group on democracy and governance in early 2003 as outlined below:

- ***Strengthened political commitment*** Establishment of committees to include groups from outside the judicial sectors, and establishment of Judicial Service Commission.
- ***Alternative Dispute Resolution*** Pilot Mediation Project implemented, with 10 cases settled to date, over 100 in progress.
- ***Reduction of Backlogs*** Backlog blitz cases are now being culled from the system at a rate of 500 per month.
- ***Judicial Appointments and Incentives*** Remuneration unchanged, but four magistrates and two judges have been appointed recently by Judicial Service Commission. Option of part-time judges being explored by Chancellor.

- *Legal Literacy and Legal Aid* Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic re-opened with limited GOG support, project targeted NGOs advocating for expansion of services to regions.

I.R. 2.2 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION CAPACITY OF COURTS STRENGTHENED, PARTICULARLY FOR CASE FLOW MANAGEMENT AND COURT REGISTRY

INDICATOR: NUMBER AND QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT REPORTS DISSEMINATED ON ANNUAL BASIS

UNIT OF MEASURE: NUMBER OF MANAGEMENT REPORTS AND TYPES OF INFORMATION PUBLISHED IN MANAGEMENT REPORTS THAT ARE PREPARED, DISSEMINATED AND ARE USEFUL IN AFFECTING DECISIONS CONCERNING RESOURCE NEEDS AND ALLOCATIONS WITHIN JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

The following is a brief description of the key results achieved by the Carter Center during the program related to IR 2.2, based upon the April 2003 supplementary work plan. Given the very short time frame remaining in the program once the condition precedent was finally satisfied and work could proceed in this IR, and the continued lack of full cooperation from the Registrar, demonstrating tangible results in this IR proved to be a challenge. As a result, anticipated results changed and evolved over time. Additional evaluative discussion on this point is contained in the TCC evaluation section of this report.

- **TRAINING JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

While constraints on his intended role have been a limiting factor, the Court Manager has proved himself to be a huge asset to the court system in the one area in which he has been given real scope to function – that of ADR and the pilot mediation project. The Court Manager’s report following the visit to Trinidad’s court made a number of suggestions for improved administration of the courts in Guyana, including establishment of a judicial education center, and development of a comprehensive plan for computerization of the courts.

At the time of writing, the report from the case/information management mission from Trinidad and Tobago had not been received, due to delays in sending the required information by the Registrar, incomplete information when ultimately sent, and other pressing commitments in the Trinidad courts. The delay of the report made it impossible to implement any of their recommendations for training of Registry staff. (See below under Information Management for detail.)

The Registrar returned from the Case Flow Management workshop in Texas in 2004 with a clear commitment to implement CFM in the Guyana courts. Her report made recommendations that the court conduct a detailed assessment of the existing system of case management, and consider engaging an expert to help design the introduction of a case flow management system.

- **CASE FLOW MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the reaction of justice system stakeholders to **Case Flow Management** as a method of retooling the court's way of doing business was cautiously optimistic and generally welcoming. Feedback from the participants of the June 2003 retreat was overwhelmingly positive, as was the reception of over 50 lawyers at the November 2003 followup meeting.

The retreat received excellent media coverage and was the first step in raising public awareness of CFM, as well as the ongoing rules revision process. A lengthy article later appeared in the Stabroek News entitled "Chancellor takes steps to unclog court system". The article described the essence of the ADR initiative. This was followed by another article highlighting delays in judges delivering decisions and possible remedies for that situation.

The work plan anticipated a number of targeted informational activities about CFM aimed at critical stakeholders in Guyanese society. However, the bulk of educational activity related to the new civil rules (and thus, CFM) would be more appropriate following actual adoption of the new rules, and thus will be beyond the timeframe of this project. TCC has promoted stronger bonds with the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in the area of incorporating CFM in new Civil Rules.

▪ INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The final report of the Trinidad court administration team will include recommendations on how the information flows within the Registry could be streamlined, either with or without additional automation. Their report was delayed by lack of prompt and full cooperation by the Registrar. In November 2003, the Registrar finally forwarded most of the necessary raw data about staff duties to Trinidad. However, the information was incomplete, lacking vital detail about the duties of the top Registry staff, including the Registrar herself. Requests to provide that information were made in vain. Therefore, in early 2004, the Trinidad team was asked to prepare a report based on the information in their possession, but at the time of writing, the report had not been received.

The team had serious reservations about the distribution of duties within the Registry (especially with respect to the Deputy Registrar and Court Manager), which placed relatively menial tasks on the desk of the Chief Justice. They also had concerns about the use of the computers in the facility, the security of files and confidential information in the system.

Having reviewed the 2002 information technology needs analysis, The Carter Center elected not to make any investment in this area, given the significant expense that would be involved and the very limited time remaining in the project (initial end date being August 2003). The IT report includes proposals for enhancing and automating the court's case information systems and financial management systems, as well as a basic outline for a court website – a recommendation that has since been implemented with TCC support.

▪ REMOVAL OF ABANDONED CASES FROM BACKLOG

In total 5,000 cases in the 1995 to 1999 backlog reviewed by University of Guyana law students and members of the Guyana Bar Association were deemed to have been legally

abandoned. After several months of delay and difficulty in establishing an appropriate mechanism, the Chief Justice began using the list of abandoned cases to cull cases from the backlog. He instituted a system of assigning a quota of abandoned cases to each sitting judge. Each case is advertised in the Gazette prior to being heard, in order to give parties an opportunity to appear and explain the lack of activity on the case. Failing any appearance or other action, the cases are being struck from the active list and removed from the backlog.

As of May 2004, at least 500 cases had been declared officially abandoned and were no longer on the list of active cases pending in the court, and barring unforeseen obstacles, an additional 95 to 100 cases will continue to be culled from the list every working day. Only 3-4 percent of cases called are being maintained on the active rolls, and at this pace, all 5,000 cases selected by the students and Bar Association volunteers will be called up and an estimated 4,800 cases should be culled from the backlog before the end of 2004.

At the time of writing, the draft PRSP progress report was in final preparations. It described the “reclassification” of cases, and confidently predicts that the backlog will be halved in the near future. The backlog reduction is also listed in the projected activities for 2004-2005, reflecting the Government of Guyana’s recognition of and prioritization of this problem.

SUB I.R 2.3. INCREASED CAPACITY TO ADDRESS CASE BACKLOGS THROUGH EXAMINATION AND APPLICATION OF PROMISING ALTERNATIVES SUCH AS ADR

INDICATOR: NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVE FORUMS FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION

UNITS OF MEASURE:

NUMBER OF FORUMS AUTHORIZED BY LAW AND INJUNCTION

NUMBER OF COURT CASES SETTLED IN THESE FORUMS PRIOR TO THEIR FINAL ADJUDICATION

Since approval of the supplementary work plan in early 2003, huge strides have been made towards the entrenchment of Alternative Dispute Resolution as a means of addressing court backlogs in Guyana. While not expressly authorized by law, the pilot mediation project was designed carefully to fall within existing legislation and rules, in order to expedite its implementation, as well as minimize resistance to its introduction. If the initial high levels of success continue, the court will move to entrench the process in law and the rules of court in 2004.

The following is a brief description of the key results achieved by the Carter Center during the program related to IR 2.3, based upon the April 2003 supplementary work plan as well as earlier preparatory and assessment interventions.

- **FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The interviews conducted in the course of the ADR feasibility study demonstrated strong support for action to address the problems of backlog and delay, particularly among the legal profession and the judiciary, notably including the Chancellor and the Chief Justice. In fact, the mere presence of the TCC consultants rekindled interest in judicial reform amongst key stakeholders.

Following the feasibility study, the report was disseminated to an initial group of stakeholders, and consultations were held with the Chief Justice and Chancellor on how to proceed. Both agreed that they wished to pursue the introduction of a civil mediation procedure in Guyana's High Court, but stressed that raising public (and Bar) awareness was of utmost importance and urgency, as without their support and buy-in, any effort to adopt ADR processes would be impossible. Both concurred with the recommendation that an advisory committee or steering group be formed to provide a focal point for review of the ADR recommendations, and to guide the implementation of activities in this area.

- **ADR KNOWLEDGE AMONG A CORE GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS**

A permanent ADR Committee was established in July 2003. Balanced representation of governmental and non governmental interests ensured that the Committee could avoid a strictly legalistic emphasis, a problem faced by the earlier Planning Committee consisting only of lawyers and judges. The more representative nature of the ADR Committee also contributed to a "big picture" perspective on dispute resolution in the context of Guyana, recognizing that court-connected ADR is only one option, and that ADR can and should be considered as a viable mechanism for resolving disputes at the community level if they have not escalated to the level of legal action.

The results of informational and educational activities facilitated by TCC staff and consultants can best be demonstrated in the results of the Pilot Mediation Project, described below. The fact that various judges are now referring cases to mediation, that attorneys are volunteering cases for mediation, that the Chief Justice and Chancellor have placed their influence behind the development of ADR in Guyana, that the Mediation Coordinator is handling the heavy workload competently, that the Registrar has endorsed mediation and ADR in her 2003 Annual Report, and that the Attorney-General supports the project – all of these are clear indications that the concept of mediation is understood in an environment where most of these key persons had NO prior exposure to it.

- **PILOT MEDIATION PROJECT**

The mediator training aroused the interest of the legal profession, created a core group of lawyer activists and allies for the process, created a base of knowledge in the profession where none had existed before and provided the necessary local expertise to make a pilot project possible. The post-workshop evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, with ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5 on all categories, from effectiveness of trainers to overall quality of workshop. All participants were recommended for approval to the pilot project roster of mediators.

- **PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION**

The following are the major accomplishments of the mediation pilot project, based on the final evaluation of April 2004.

1. Caseload figures as of end of March 2004 were as follows:

- ✓ 98 cases had been referred to the mediation program. Of those,
 - 89 were referred by the court
 - 8 were referred by attorneys
 - 1 was referred by a plaintiff

- ✓ 42 cases had a first mediation session scheduled
 - 2 asked to be returned to the court docket prior to the mediation session
 - 10 cases reached a full settlement
 - 1 case reached a partial settlement
 - 6 cases not settled at mediation were returned to the court docket
 - 28 cases were still in the process of mediation

- ✓ 2 cases settled prior to notification from the court manager
- ✓ 7 cases refused to mediate
- ✓ In the remaining 47 cases, the lawyers and parties had not yet formally agreed to a mediator and first session date

- ✓ Time from referral to the date of the first mediation session (n=25)
 - Range: 3-122 days
 - Mean: 42 days

In all of the cases that reached settlement in mediation, the agreement was put into writing and submitted to the referring judge or the Chief Justice to be converted into a court order.

Written evaluation results from attorneys and litigants in the first five completed cases indicated strong support for the program, even in cases that did not settle. Of 15 attorney responses, 13 indicated that they would recommend mediation to other clients. Five of the initial 7 were in cases that did not settle. Of 13 litigant responses, 10 indicated that they would use mediation again. All 29 respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the mediator's conduct. Other positive indicators regarding the success of the project include:

- Even when mediation failed to bring about a complete settlement within the three hour session, the parties have without exception been willing to commit more time to the process.
- One judge reports successfully bringing about a settlement by forcing the litigants and lawyers to either go to mediation, or prepare for an early trial date
- Attorneys report that they are not having any difficulty in agreeing with the other side on the selection of the mediator.
- Attorneys report satisfaction with the work of the court manager in handling the logistics of scheduling the mediations.
- Litigants and attorneys agree that the mediators are doing a good job in explaining the process, encouraging the parties to talk, treating both sides fairly, and encouraging solutions to come from the parties.

- Attorneys report that clients are asking to try mediation instead of litigation, having seen or heard about the project via the promotional campaign.
- The mediators are showing a strong awareness of the need to maintain a high standard of ethics, thanks to the early development and dissemination of a code of conduct for mediators.
- A Mediation Center has been renovated in the High Court building complex above the library, with a furnished mediation room, a caucus room with good sound protection, a comfortably furnished waiting room, and a kitchen area.
- The Mediation Center is being used every day, and on some days, multiple mediations are being held, necessitating the use of the library meeting room on the ground floor when there are overlapping sessions.

Some challenges that have been identified for the project:

- Attorneys are concerned about losing their place on the trial docket if they fail to settle at mediation. The court needs to determine clear rules about this.
 - Some attorneys are concerned about incurring judicial disapproval if they are referred to mediation by a judge and then do not settle.
 - For older cases being referred to mediation, the court manager is having difficulty locating attorneys and parties.
 - Adjournments of mediation sessions were viewed as a potential problem. So far most mediations have had at least one adjournment, and some have had three or four. Few judges are referring cases, most are being sent by the Chief Justice.
 - The Mediation Coordinator has become overburdened with the volume of cases being referred, especially given the level of effort required to schedule mediations.
 - A source of funding for the mediators needs to be developed as a priority, as their volunteer commitment is bound to wear thin in the near future.
- PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The court manager has received at least 75 calls to date from the general public about mediation, including numerous calls from people who have disputes but haven't contacted an attorney or filed a lawsuit. One attorney mediator has received calls from the general public asking about mediation as a result of his TV spot, including calls from people asking if they can mediate a dispute even if a lawsuit hasn't been filed.

Positive media coverage has been achieved at regular intervals throughout the project, beginning with major events organized by TCC and the court in preparation for the introduction of ADR/mediation, such as the mediator training and the launch ceremony. "Mediation Centre Ready for Business" and "Response to Court Mediation 'Overwhelming'" appeared prominently in the Stabroek News, describing the Mediation Centre and its role in assisting dispute resolution in appropriate cases. An article showed mediators under the headline "Over 100 cases referred to Mediation Centre: Deemed 'valuable venture'". The piece contained informative descriptions of the mediation process and how cases could come to be mediated.

The Mediation Center and ADR were also described by lawyers, court staff and judges during the five-program NCN television series on Administration of Justice in Guyana, sponsored by the Carter Center in April and May 2004.

One challenge noted in the public outreach campaign is that attorneys report that some clients do not read well enough to understand the brochure or written materials describing the mediation process. A short video to be watched by the parties prior to a mediation session has been recommended as a way of combating this problem.

- **MARKETING OF ADR TO LEGAL PROFESSION**

Forty applications were received by the Chief Justice for the 24 available spaces in the mediator training. Participants were actively engaged throughout the training and showed significant improvements in their techniques. Six months later, most mediators were willing to continue serving on a voluntary basis, while the issue of mediator payment was being addressed.

Special efforts were made to reach out to the Berbice attorneys, including a visit to New Amsterdam resulting in the participation of an attorney from the Berbice Bar in the training. The inclusion of Berbice in this initiative will have the long term effect of providing wider access to mediation services.

Attorneys interviewed for the April 2004 evaluation reported that they limited their role in the mediation to helping their client if the client got stuck. Seven attorneys reported that they had conducted mediation and would recommend mediation to their clients in the future. Mediators and attorneys reported that some attorneys who play an overly active role in the mediation are tending to override their client's willingness to be more conciliatory and explore options for settlement.

Provision of ADR materials to the University of Guyana Law Department for use in the ADR course will contribute towards the development of a better understanding and positive attitude towards ADR among the legal profession. Students have been accessing materials from TCC's resource center and seeking advice from TCC staff and consultants to conduct further research and write papers on ADR-related topics. In addition, two law students have recently expressed an interest in providing voluntary services to the Mediation Centre.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3: SUSTAINED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO CONDUCT FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

SUB-I.R. 3.1 ESTABLISH AND INSTITUTIONALIZE A PERMANENT ELECTIONS COMMISSION: STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF PERMANENT ELECTION COMMISSION (PEC)

INDICATOR: CLEARLY ARTICULATED AND ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PERMANENT ELECTIONS SECRETARIAT (PES)

UNIT OF MEASURE: THE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH OF THE PES WILL BE MEASURED ON THE BASIS OF THE PRESENCE AND CURRENT STATUS OF FIVE "CORE" ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONALIZATION. THESE ARE: (A) AN ORGANIGRAM, (B)

COMPLETE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ALL POSITIONS, (C) A PERSONNEL & OPERATIONS MANUAL(S), (D) INTERNAL RULES AND REGULATIONS, (E) A FINANCIAL PLAN AND PROCEDURES (INCLUDING AN ANNUAL BUDGETARY PROCESS), (F) A CODE OF ETHICS. THE PES WILL BE SCORED ANNUALLY ON THEIR PROGRESS IN CREATING EACH OF THESE BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS, IN TERMS OF THE STATUS OF EACH OF AS (A) COMPLETED, (B) REVIEWED, AND (C) APPROVED, BY THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY (PEC).

While GECOM did experience some technical difficulties during the March 2001, these elections were generally well regarded by election observers and free of the bitter animosities that had characterized the 1997 polls. Given the tight timeline GECOM had to follow while preparing for this election, this achievement is significant.

IFES successfully completed an organigram of GECOM's structure, which GECOM implemented. The goal of this organigram was to create an internal organizational structure that would aid the Chief Elections Officer and his team in their work.

IFES assisted GECOM in developing a recruitment policy and evaluation method for future staffing needs within the organization. This policy was designed to offer advice concerning recruitment and to develop a training program for existing staff.

IFES developed and implemented an information technology training program for GECOM's middle and upper management. The training was conducted by local experts. The training program was designed to enable GECOM's staff to capitalize on the use of computers. The program benefited employees and GECOM, but more importantly it enhanced the functioning of GECOM. As part of this program, IFES developed the Information Systems Development Technology Manual (ISDMM).

IFES also examined all national election and registration forms and systems used by GECOM and recommended changes. The primary purpose of this exercise was to achieve greater efficiency. Every attempt was made to minimize the number of forms used. However, because certain tasks must follow a correct procedural path, it was not always possible to create multifunctional forms that could fulfill several tasks.

SUB-I.R. 3.2 STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO CONDUCT FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

INDICATOR: PERMANENT ELECTION COMMISSION (PEC) PERFORMANCE IMPROVES

UNIT OF MEASURE: PROGRESS WILL BE MEASURED BY AN INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE INDEX WITH ELEVEN COMPONENTS, WHICH COVER VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ELECTIONS PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING: RESPECTING TIMETABLES, ADOPTING CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR VOTER REGISTRATION, EFFECTIVELY ENFORCING COMPLIANCE WITH ELECTORAL REFORMS (PROPORTIONALITY, GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY), COMPETENT AND TRANSPARENT HANDLING

OF CLAIMS AND OBJECTIONS, EFFECTIVE VOTER EDUCATION, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH THE VOTERS THROUGH THE MEDIA, ELECTION DAY MANAGEMENT, TRANSPARENT AND ACCURATE COMPILATION OF VOTES, PROMPT ANNOUNCEMENT AND PUBLICATION OF OFFICIAL RESULTS.

Domestic Election Observation programs successfully implemented as part of the program included media monitoring, the monitoring of public meetings during the campaign period, civic audits of the final voters list, fielding polling place observers and conducting a quick count (Parallel Vote Tabulation - PVT).

IFES helped develop an IT operations manual. This manual included: minimum specifications for hardware, networking, and software; security measures for protecting both the physical security and the integrity of all data both from tampering and accidental loss; a disaster recovery plan; a maintenance plan for the physical environment (minimum environmental considerations to ensure continued operation of all equipment); and software specifications.

IFES sponsored exchange activities with the Elections Secretariat. These technical trips strengthened GECOM by helping the staff acquire knowledge, skills and values consistent with international best practices for the organization, management and conduct of elections.

IFES supported GECOM in conducting a workshop to study the issue of voter registration in Guyana. The goal of this workshop was for GECOM staff to analyze and discuss the pros and cons of the Guyana's current voter registration system, receive first-hand reports of the benefits of the continuous registration system from international experts, and discuss whether such a system should be implemented in Guyana. The proceedings of this workshop were printed and distributed to GECOM and all key stakeholders in Guyana.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4: CIVIL SOCIETY INFLUENCES PUBLIC POLICY

INDICATOR: SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

UNIT OF MEASURE: THE NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS CARRIED OUT BY TARGETED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (TNGOS).

KEY RESULTS: Because advocacy by civil society organizations was so new to Guyana, and regarded with considerable skepticism, there were considerable challenges in shifting focus from service delivery to policy debate. At the outset, targeted NGOs showed some reluctance in going beyond the steps of information gathering and awareness raising with their constituencies, which many of them were undertaking for the first time. Refer to all sub-IRs of IR 4 for numerous examples of public awareness and information gathering activities. Ultimately, the initial processes of advocacy helped the TNGOs to build enough confidence, support and momentum to approach the identified decision makers, to present the case for the change they were seeking, and to achieve significant levels of success in actually influencing decision makers to take actions consistent with the organization's position. According to the Advocacy and Effectiveness Index database, at least 15 TNGOs conducted advocacy activities for the first time during this project, by presenting their views to decision makers either directly or indirectly. In

total, 18 of the TNGOs conducted successful advocacy campaigns as defined in the PMP, influencing at least 40 separate decisions on priority issues.²

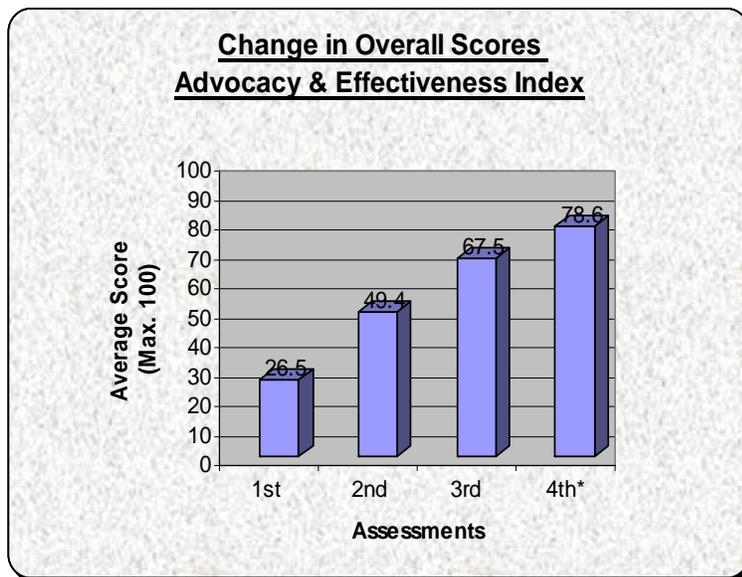
Taking into account the initial point of departure for the program and the low starting capacity of civil society with respect to advocacy, it was considered essential to undertake considerable capacity building of the targeted NGOs before they could be expected to influence policy by conducting successful advocacy campaigns.

In October 2002 a comprehensive Advocacy and Effectiveness Index was designed with input from USAID in order to provide for an objective and quantifiable method of measuring changes in the capacity of the TNGOs. The Index included 12 criteria to track organizational development (internal regulations, plans, systems, membership, etc.) and another 18 criteria to track changes in networking and advocacy capacity (identifies issues, holds public meetings, conducts research, links with other organizations, etc.). The criteria are closely related to the performance indicators detailed in the PMP. In late 2002, a database was designed by consultants to facilitate accurate tracking and generation of useful reports on the progress of the targeted groups. All contact information and training data as well as Index scoring has been captured in the database.

The Index was applied to the TNGOs on four occasions during the program in order to track progress. Although several TNGOs dropped out of the program during 2003, the average performance improvement was impressive for the remaining 23 active organizations.

While the significant improvements in organizational capacity are shown in IR 4.2, and the advances in advocacy capacity in IR 4.3, the gains in combined scores are equally impressive, as demonstrated by the following graph. This progress, as well as the increased confidence levels that are not shown in the statistics, gives cause for optimism that the successes in advocacy achieved by these groups during this program will not be the last, but will be surpassed by farther-reaching efforts to influence policy and decision-makers in future.

² Refer to IR 4.1 and 4.3 Results sections for more highlights of these campaigns, which took place under the auspices of Phase I, Phase II and Networking grants



* Three groups were not evaluated on the 4th assessment due to scheduling difficulties. This average excludes those three groups.

Assessment Dates:

1st – February 2002

2nd – Dec 2002 to
Mar 2003

3rd – July to Sept
2003

4th – Feb to Mar

Database reports show that partner TNGOs planned and initiated at least 108 joint program-related activities since starting to work with TCC. TNGOs participated in many additional joint activities initiated by other NGOs and agencies and TCC, including marches, exhibitions, forums for women and youth, workshops, and public meetings. See below for examples of significant joint activities. Furthermore, the five Phase II grantees initiated at least 15 joint program-related activities pursuant to their grants.

The Advocacy and Effectiveness Index measured the significant changes that occurred in the targeted groups since starting to work with TCC. Half of the 24 active partner TNGOs reported having regular interaction or cooperation with at least one other organization outside their region, and 15 reported they had a relationship with another organization related to an advocacy goal or campaign, where they had not previously had such linkages.

The following are some specific joint activities that were carried out by various groups.

- **Airy Hall Women’s Development Group** – Established an active local consortium to address the issue of domestic violence including two TNGOs and a USAID HIV/AIDS partner group.
- **Vilvorden Women’s Group** – Literacy training in conjunction with Institute of Distance and Continuing Education benefited members from two other NGOs.
- **Pomona Women and Youth Reaching Out** – Active use of Comforting Hearts expertise in HIV/AIDS to strengthen their awareness campaign.
- **Love Outreach International** – Collaborated with other TNGOs, the National Library, and the regional administration and others to host an exhibition on Guyana’s racial diversity.
- **St. Marks Mothers Union** - Established linkages with the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers for expert advice on legal issues facing women, and for extension of legal aid services to Region 6. This link has allowed GAWL to strengthen their own

outreach to the region, and led to regular liaison by St. Marks with the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic as well.

- **St. Marks** also organized a meeting with the Minister of Social Security that was attended by 24 groups in the East Berbice area.

- TRAINING

Results of the consensus building workshops held in 2003 were evaluated at follow-up discussion sessions in early 2004. Participants generally agreed that the initial training was very useful to them and attributed many behavioral changes to it. Some of the changes mentioned by participants included:

- Became more attentive to details, less subjective, more objective
- Collaborative
- Open minded
- Avoid Conflicts/Low key partner in conflict
- Able to manage conflict better, try to achieve a win-win situation
- Able to better analyze conflict

There was almost unanimous agreement that additional training in conflict resolution was needed. However, it was not clear to what extent the participants had utilized the tools and strategies delivered in the training, so the changes may have been more attitudinal, which in the Guyanese context is a significant step forward. All three regional workshop groups felt that networking was beneficial and that their group should network in support of promoting conflict resolution in their communities. One group opted to have a formal network (the "Berbice Conflict Resolution Society"). Other groups opted to form informal networks. TCC provided support in linking them with other emerging groupings at the national level such as Partners in Conflict Resolution.

- MENTORING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The benefits of both mentoring and training of TNGOs in the area of networking and consensus building are indicated throughout this report, starting with the listing above of a few joint activities initiated by the groups, and the listing below of advocacy impacts of networking grants.

As a result of the networking opportunities presented by the launch of the TCC Resource Center, several partner and associate partner groups from Region 2 joined forces to conduct a fundraising event, and groups from Region 6 began saving on expenses by traveling together for events in Georgetown. Several of the TNGOs who joined the grouping on domestic violence issues later formed strong cooperative bonds, helping each other with surveys, national contacts, workshops, and even collaborating in developing a policy position paper for a Minister. The birth of this informal network can be traced back to the launch event in early 2003, as one of the first opportunities for close interaction amongst groups from distant regions who shared a common priority.

The 2004 NGO Conference had a significant impact on networking among NGOs, with many participants reporting plans to follow up on new contacts and use of the reference book and website links to find new partners and access information. See IR 4.4 for further details. Over 95 percent of the participants evaluating the event noted that they had begun new linkages/partnerships/networks with other NGOs. The Guyana Bar Association and GAWL offered assistance to bona fide NGOs seeking to become legally registered. The donor reception held in conjunction with the NGO Conference was attended by representatives of six bilateral or multilateral agencies, each of whom made a brief comment on their respective programs as they related to civil society.

GOIP demonstrated its ability to build consensus around Amerindian issues through various interventions over the period of the project, leading a process of consultations in Region 2 on the revision of the Amerindian Act, participating in PRSP consultations, joining the Organizing Committee of the National Toshias Conference, and reaching agreement with three other Amerindian NGOs to appoint two representatives to the Indigenous Peoples Commission. Several of these activities were supported by TCC.

In terms of consensus building, the following are other pertinent examples of activities supported by the program:

1. YID facilitated a youth forum on the PRSP in the nation-wide consultation process in 2001. This was one of only three youth consultations held nationwide.
2. PRSP consultations were also conducted in various communities by the Region #9 Amerindian Council, after which an impressive report was submitted to the PRSP Secretariat on issues prioritized by residents in the reduction of poverty.
3. Leaders from 114 Amerindian communities met in 2003 to discuss and arrive at a common position of the Terms of Reference for a National Toshias Council and elected an interim council.
4. Communities of Regions 2 and 9 reviewed the Amerindian Act and developed common positions on recommendations to government.

▪ NETWORKING SUB-GRANTS

Networking Grant advocacy success stories include:

- The establishment of a Race Relations Committee in Region 2 as a result of initiatives taken by the **Vilvoorden Women's Group**.
- **GuyWID, Hopetown and Airy Hall** developed a common position regarding the system for payment of child support. After GuyWID made a representation on behalf of all three groups to the Minister of Legal Affairs, he made a verbal commitment to remedy the situation.
- **Pomona Women and Youth Reaching Out** secured the full commitment in writing from four Amerindian village leaders and the RDC to support its HIV/AIDS awareness campaign.
- **Airy Hall Women's Development Group** engaged local police in their domestic violence support group, and two local police stations have set aside special interview rooms for cases of domestic violence as a result. The divisional police commander

committed in writing to have this step implemented at the two remaining stations as soon as possible.

- **Community Based Rehabilitation Region 3** secured a grant of land from the NDC for construction of a model playground for the disabled. Both the Regional Chairman and Chair of the NDC pledged additional support at the launching.
- **Creative Theater Movement** persuaded the Ministry of Housing to allocate land for housing to residents who were squatting on the Diamond Sea defense area, contrary to established procedure, by presenting a clear case supported by ample evidence of need.
- **Community Based Rehabilitation Region 6** obtained a commitment from the Ministry of Social Services to provide public assistance to 12 disabled persons in the region who had not previously been included.

▪ YOUTH FORUMS

Facilitated by TCC, the Youth Forums were an opportunity for youth leaders from across the country to identify and advocate on issues affecting them, and to form networks and coalitions. Delegates from four regions established action plans for post-forum activities centered on the establishment of such bodies at the community, regional and national level. However, progress towards the realization of these plans proved disappointing, with only one region making an effort to make the plans a reality.

Following the first forum, six groups from the Linden area held several planning meetings to pursue the establishment of a regional level youth council in Region 10. However, their efforts were hampered by the civil disturbances that subsequently plagued the Linden area, the power and water shortages that precipitated the unrest, and finally by the departure from Guyana of several key players.

At the third forum in Region 7, the National Youth Commission took the opportunity to consult with youth about the National Youth Policy. The forum was seen as an opportunity to augment the scope of that consultation, which was limited due to scarce resources according to the head of the Commission.

The end of the program evaluation concluded that the forums were perceived by civil society groups as significant opportunities for NGOs to come together, share ideas, access new information and learn from each other. In some cases, it was difficult to follow-up on forum action plans and ideas in the absence of financial support. The forums were only a day long, which some participants felt was insufficient time to discuss the issues and develop workable action plans.

The planned National Youth Forum was intended to generate consensus on recommendations from earlier forums, and resolutions on implementation plans for the National Youth Policy. However, due to concerns raised by the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport, the Forum was postponed and finally cancelled despite protracted discussions with USAID and the Ministry.

Recommendations of the forums included:

1. An action plan to accompany the National Youth Policy with fixed time lines and clear lines of responsibility.
2. Youth representation on all RDCs.
3. All schools must have student unions.
4. Community youth leaders should elect regional leaders who in turn elect national leaders.
5. Expansion of work study and an apprenticeship scheme to include private firms.
6. Arrangements to be put in place so that youth can access funding without collateral.

Following the November 2002 Amerindian youth-elder conference organized by Bina Hill Institute, the youths prepared programs in their communities to disseminate the conference information and messages to at least 780 people. Several civil society organizations were involved in the conference, including the Amerindian Peoples Association, Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples, Ghost River Rediscovery of Canada, Young Achievers of Region 9, and Help and Shelter.

- INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

As a result of the May 2001 visit of Makonnen Blake-Hannah, a group of students from the interior studying at the University of Guyana organized a Hinterland Students Association. The coalition developed a proposal to establish a community computer center in Lethem, and with TCC facilitation, prepared a strategic plan.

At the 2004 NGO Conference the Caribbean Policy Development Center of Barbados, the NGO Forum, and GAWL presented their views on the development of an improved legislative environment for Guyanese civil society. 100 representatives of NGOs participated. The NGO SPEAR of Belize provided information on NGO legislation in that country. A half day session was devoted to networking, based on recommendations of the 2003 civil society forum. One week after the conference, the Association of Regional Chambers of Commerce announced their intention to work closely with other NGOs such as the Private Sector Commission, Guyana Manufacturers' Association and NGO Forum. This announcement closely mirrored a resolution adopted by private sector-based organizations at the conference.

Information and materials from the NGO Conference are now available through <http://www.sdn.org.gy/csoc>, designed and hosted by the Sustainable Development Networking Project. This information includes detailed profiles of all 75 plus participating NGOs, to which other Guyanese groups are welcome to add their own information

- Other international networking opportunities arising out of TCC program activities included:
- Strengthened ties between the St. Stanislaus Training Center, a Canadian 4H club and Partners of the Americas, working together towards the re-establishment of 4H Clubs in Guyana.
 - Exchanges on agricultural development issues between the Region 9 Indigenous Development Association and Embrapa in Brazil.
 - International linkages and exposure for hinterland youth at the Bina Hill youth forum.
 - Exchange of views and experience between Guyanese university students and students from across the region at model UN and OAS assemblies in 2001, 2002 and 2003,

including the development of a greater understanding of Guyana's regional and international obligations and commitments.

- Sunflower Striving Women's Group and GUYWID have established relationships with international groups in support of their goals and objectives.

SUB IR 4.2 INCREASED ORGANIZATIONAL AND ANALYTICAL CAPACITY OF A SUBSET OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIAN NGOS

INDICATOR (1): TNGOs CLEARLY ARTICULATE THEIR OBJECTIVES

INDICATOR (2): TNGOs COLLECT INFORMATION AND INPUT ABOUT ISSUES THAT CONCERN THEM, AND FORMULATE A POLICY POSITION ON THE ISSUE IN A CONSULTATIVE PARTICIPATORY FASHION.

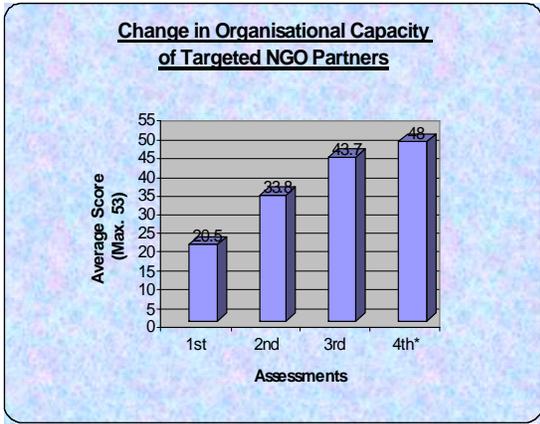
UNIT OF MEASUREMENT: TNGOs WILL BE RATED ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS, FOR EACH OF THE TWO INDICATORS, AND A COMBINED SCORE DERIVED ANNUALLY.

FOR INDICATOR (1): (A) THE TNGO HAS GOVERNING RULES AND REGULATIONS; (B) A YEARLY WORK PLAN IS DEVELOPED; AND, (C) PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE ORGANIZATION ARE IDENTIFIED ON A CURRENT BASIS.

FOR INDICATOR (2): (A) RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES ON THE ISSUE ARE IDENTIFIED AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS; (B) GENERAL INPUT FROM CONSTITUENTS IS COLLECTED VIA MEETINGS, ETC.; (C) EXISTING INFORMATION AND DATA ON THE ISSUE IS COLLECTED AND ASSEMBLED IN USABLE FORM; (D) MEETINGS ARE HELD WITH THE CONSTITUENCY ON THE ISSUE; (E) EXISTING DATA AND INFORMATION ARE SHARED; AND, (F) A WRITTEN POSITION STATEMENT IS DEVELOPED BASED UPON THE FACTS, INFORMATION AND OPINIONS COLLECTED.

TCC designed the Advocacy and Effectiveness Index specifically suited to measure the starting level of the targeted NGOs and the effectiveness of program support. Although the Index does not assess all of the elements described in the PMP indicators, it provides a comprehensive scoring system to measure TNGO progress. TNGOs were evaluated four times, most recently in March/April 2004. Some TNGOs have ceased to be active, so results generally include only the 23 remaining active NGOs.

The database reports show dramatic increases in scores since the group performance began to be measured. Improvements on the organizational effectiveness component of the Index average 28 points, more than doubling starting scores. Overall scores including both general capacity and advocacy indicators now average 78 out of a possible 100, which represents an average gain of 51 points.



* Three groups were not evaluated on the 4th assessment due to scheduling difficulties. This average excludes those three groups.

Assessment Dates:

- 1st – February 2002
- 2nd – Dec 2002 to Mar 2003

Indicator 1

Twelve TNGOs now have strategic plans in place for at least a three-year period, nine of them include priority issues and plans for advocacy.

All 22 groups who applied for a sub-grant have identified priority issues.

10 TNGOs have adopted constitutions to govern their organizations since starting to work with TCC in 2002, and have become formally registered with the appropriate authorities.

Indicator 2

At least 10 TNGOs have conducted systematic data collection for first time, mostly in the form of surveys, and used that information to further their advocacy objectives.

16 have had meetings with constituencies to discuss issues of concern to obtain input; and

17 have clearly identified relevant government agencies on those issues.

▪ **TRAINING**

The following table shows the number of persons by workshop, along with a gender breakdown, and the most important results.

Topic	Beneficiaries	Results
1. Proposal Writing	100 participants (82 females) from 47 organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All groups able to prepare proposals that meet requirements of donors in Guyana. ✓ 7 groups prepared and presented proposals to other funding agencies as part of training. ✓ 5 proposals were funded or promised funding.
2. Results Based Management	103 participants (84 females) from 41 organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participants able to identify the difference between activities and results. ✓ Participants able to develop indicators to measure success in achievement of results.
3. Basic Financial Management	87 participants (69 females) from 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved record keeping capacity realized in all partner groups. ✓ Foundation laid for preparing budgets for sub-

	organizations.	grants and management of grant funds.
4. Advocacy 1 and 2	90 participants (53 females) from 41 organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At least 12 groups executed advocacy projects, most achieving objectives such as implementation of policy, changes in policy at local level, and raising public awareness. ✓ 45 trainers received the advocacy training manual. ✓ Most partner groups now have advocacy as an integral part of their programs.
5. Grants Management	50 TNGO members (grant project managers and finance officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ First time grantees are able to produce accurate financial reports and manage grant funds professionally in spite of onerous requirements. ✓ Only 2 of 25 grantees experienced serious difficulties in reporting on funds. ✓ Narrative reports were prepared in a detailed and professional manner.
6. Survey Methods	25 participants (23 females) from 16 selected TNGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 8 partner groups successfully designed and executed surveys. ✓ Several groups who had not planned to gather information on a systematic basis have now conducted surveying activities.
7. Media & Communications	47 participants (36 females) from 25 TNGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At least 8 targeted NGOs obtained their first ever coverage in the mass media. ✓ 9 groups received national coverage more than once (a significant achievement given that many groups were local or regional based).
8. Consensus Building	79 individuals (45 females) including: 26 TNGOs 2 mayors 3 social workers 5 executives of the National Toshaos Council 2 Deputy REOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participants in follow up workshops claimed a variety of positive behavioral changes. ✓ Participants at Berbice follow-up workshop formed a loose coalition to continue work on conflict resolution. ✓ Refer to IR 4.1 for more detail.

▪ COACHING AND MENTORING

TNGOs in six regions benefited from coaching and mentoring on project design, even though not all TNGOs ultimately decided to submit a proposal. Ten out of 11 applications for Phase I advocacy grants were recommended for approval by the Grant Selection Committee, and later, 11 out of 15 applicants for networking grants were successful.

In the Grants implementation stage, the Grants Manager regularly monitored grantee activities and financial records. Narrative and financial reports improved dramatically with continual feedback, and grantees increased capacity to monitor and report on activities.

Registration of targeted NGOs jumped from only 8 to a current total of 18, based on TCC assistance in the preparation of a constitution, which included specific mission statements and other organizational procedures and policies.

Six TNGO partner groups were selected in early 2004 to be partners in the new CIDA-funded 5-year program of BCCP (now called CHF-Partners), which seeks to build civil society capacity in rural areas with a goal of poverty reduction.

- STRATEGIC PLANNING

12 participating organizations drafted strategic plans. The plans varied in length from three to five years and all have medium term strategies as well as short-term plans of action to guide them in the coming year. Following wide dissemination of the training manual, 45 Guyanese trainers now have a flexible tool that can guide them in the execution of strategic planning sessions.

The following are the future advocacy plans incorporated in eight of the Strategic Plans.

1. Airy Hall will continue to advocate for victims rights in domestic violence situations through their recently established support group.
2. St Marks will advocate for legal rights for underprivileged women and provision of legal aid in Georgetown and Region 6.
3. Groenveldt will advocate/provide input into the national youth policy.
4. Love Outreach will continue to advocate for ethnic equality under the recently established ethnic relations committee.
5. Comforting Hearts will continue to advocate for HIV/AIDS facilities in Region 6.
6. GUYWID will continue to advocate for a crisis center for DV victims.
7. GOIP will continue to advocate to have input into the revised Amerindian Act.
8. Hopetown will continue to advocate to reduce truancy in Regions 5 & 6 and possibly at the national level.

- RESOURCE CENTER

Eleven out of 14 TNGOs surveyed in early 2004 strongly agreed that the Resource Center had been useful to the group. Although many of the more distant groups did not often travel to Georgetown to use the center, those TNGOs situated closer to the office (such as GOIP and Creative Theater) used the center on a regular basis for drafting brochures and correspondence, and accessing email. It was used by partner groups from Georgetown and students from the University of Guyana on an almost daily basis. The center was used by students from the University of Guyana Law Department for research on Alternative Dispute Resolution, other UG students for more general resources, and by the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute for materials on women's issues and training methodologies.

At the end of the program, the Resource Center information on civil society was donated to the National Library, information on women's issues and training techniques were donated to the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute, materials on ADR and justice were given to the University of Guyana Law Department and the Chief Justice, and indigenous resource materials were given to the Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples.

- **TRAINER IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

NDI recruited and selected a number of experienced facilitators to take part in a series of Train the Trainers sessions. The 5 original training modules that were used throughout the project were *Leadership Training*, *Understanding Local Government*, *Effective Use of the Media*, *Negotiation Skills and Campaign Management*. These modules were used in similar programs in the Caribbean with great success.

Over 450 women throughout Guyana were trained on a progressive basis under the program, with the exception of women in remote Amerindian communities. The bulk of the initial training took place in the 2002-03 programs year. Outreach to the women's divisions of the two main political parties successfully integrated the training into party efforts to increase the number of women candidates. Participants consistently indicated that the workshop greatly increased their knowledge and self-confidence.

In one region, participants identified a low-income government-housing scheme as an important issue with residents. The government was threatening to reclaim house lots from residents who had not completed paying for their land. Residents claimed that they hadn't paid, as the government had not completed clearing and surveying of the land in keeping with the agreement of sale. Using techniques learned in the training workshop program, participants met with the affected residents to develop strategies to address their concerns. They wrote a letter to the Minister responsible requesting that the area be cleared and surveyed, the date for final payments extended until the work was completed and that the Ministry establish a local presence. They made a videotape of the area and sent a press release about the issue to the media. The story was picked up by a Georgetown television newscast. The Minister contacted the group after responding to the story. He expressed his disappointment that the group had gone public with the issue, but agreed to send two ministry employees to investigate the situation.

When he did not live up to this commitment, the group took advantage of a visit to the area by the President. A group of over 100 residents met with the President and requested that he intervene. Shortly after the President's visit, the Minister contacted the group. Eventually all of their demands were met, including the reduction of the price of house lots by 37 percent. Residents who had already paid the full amount were refunded the difference and those who had not paid were granted a six month extension to complete payment. The area was cleared and surveyed and residents whose lots were flooded were relocated. Two ministry officials have been assigned to the region and visited the area every two weeks until the end of the project. The Minister apologized to the delegation for publicly doubting their complaints.

Region 8 is a remote region with a mining town as its main center. The region has electricity only 12 hours per day and no telephone system. The local regional coordinator referred to this region as the forgotten region as it is often passed over for training and other opportunities. The facilitator and regional coordinator took great pleasure in reporting that after the last workshop, participants met with the regional chair to discuss several issues that affected their communities. The women lobbied the council to have infrastructure work done. When they were told that a work crew was unavailable, they submitted a proposal to do the work themselves and have the region pay them instead. The end result was that the women were awarded the contract to clear the roadways in and around their village which were overgrown with bush.

In Region 5, the program training took place at the Skills Training Center. The facility was in such disrepair that participants invited the regional chairman to meet with them on the final day of the workshop where they presented him with an itemized list and budget for the needed repairs. They subsequently secured a commitment from the Regional Council to replace toilets and sinks at the primary and secondary schools and to build a dorm for the secondary school so that children from the sub-regions could attend school regularly. Both the training center and the schools received the repairs demanded by the women.

- TRAINING AND CAMPAIGN MANUAL

Three hundred copies of each of the manuals were printed in May 2004 and distributed to all political parties, the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute, women's organizations, trainers, the National Library, and women who had participated in the *Increasing Women's Political Participation* program. They are clear, user friendly and complete with exercises that can be used by the trainers, added to, developed further, adapted to other jurisdictions or translated. With the exception of the Guyana specific sections it is hoped that they will be picked up by other programs with the same objective.

SUB IR 4.2 INCREASED CAPACITY TO ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATUS OF EACH OF THE THREE TARGETED SEGMENTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY: WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIANS.

INDICATOR: TNGOs DEVELOP AND ALLOCATE RESOURCES FOR ADVOCACY

UNIT OF MEASUREMENT: PER CENT INCREASE IN FUNDS RECEIVED AND AVAILABLE PER YEAR, DISAGGREGATED BY THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

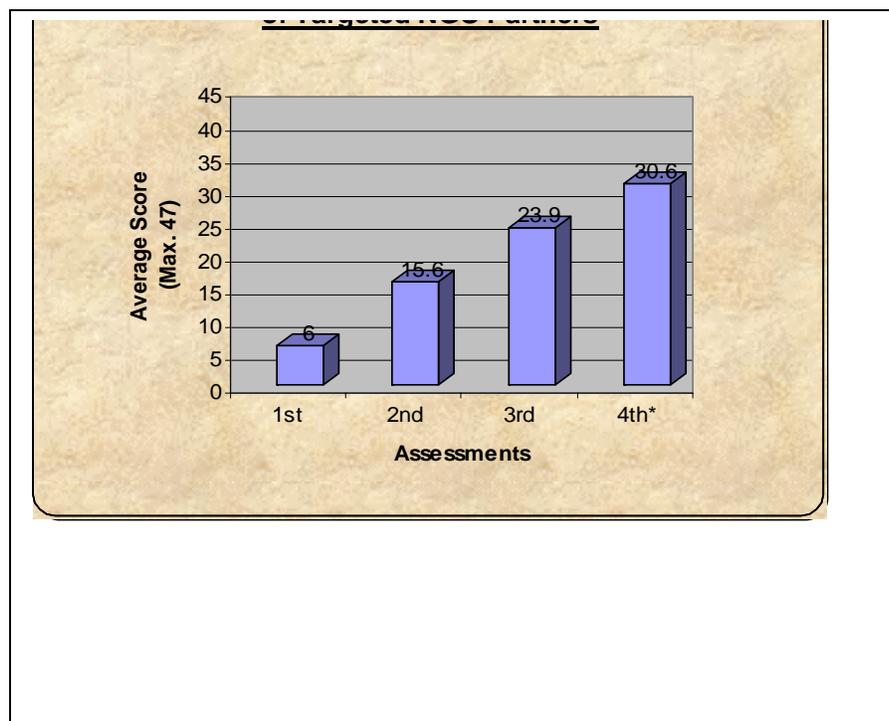
CONTRIBUTIONS COLLECTED FROM MEMBERS;

CONTRIBUTIONS COLLECTED FROM OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS;

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES WITH INTERESTS IN THE ISSUE AREA ARE IDENTIFIED AND THEIR PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT ARE DETERMINED; AND, INCOME FROM INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S VISION AND MISSION.

Scores on the advocacy component of the Advocacy and Effectiveness Index have averaged a dramatic increase from only 6 (out of a possible 47) to over 30 points. Overall scores on the Index have leapt from an average of 27 to almost 79 points out of 100. These are remarkable improvements, especially since TCC began to work with the TNGOs only in early 2002. The improvements are especially noticeable for those TNGOs who have received and

executed sub-grants during this period, two of which are highlighted later in this section. A total of 14 TNGOs identified a priority issue and relevant decision makers in government or elsewhere for the first time, primarily due to the influence and assistance of the TCC program.



* Three groups were not evaluated on the 4th Assessment due to scheduling difficulties. This average excludes those three groups.

Assessment Dates:

- 1st – February 2002
- 2nd – Dec 2002 to Mar 2003
- 3rd – July to Sept 2003
- 4th – Feb to Mar 2004

As mentioned in the SO level results above, 18 TNGOs have reported success in advocacy, having influenced a decision maker to take an action on a priority issue in the course of their grant-funded activities.

TCC has not tracked the increase in revenue generated by the TNGOs for advocacy purposes, since once the groups were selected in early 2002, it became apparent that few had more than a trickle of revenue from sporadic local fundraising activities, even fewer had reliable financial records, and only a couple had engaged in any advocacy in the past. Therefore, it is safe to conclude generally that the TCC sub-grants were the first measurable amounts that the groups had allocated to advocacy. Those sub-grants to TNGOs total over US\$60,000 for Phase I and an additional US\$50,000 for Phase II grants). As will be discussed in the Evaluation section, there are few options for NGOs in Guyana to raise funds to support advocacy initiatives, as other donors tend to place a high priority on service delivery projects.

▪ **ADVOCACY TRAINING, MENTORING AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

The results of training and mentoring are illustrated in sub-grant results described below. A summary table of results of training workshops, including Advocacy 1 and 2 and others directly related to building advocacy capacity, is presented in IR 4.2.

Reluctance to engage in advocacy diminished as NGOs were made aware of what was entailed in advocacy, and came to understand the distinction between advocacy and political

campaigning. This was especially the case in the regions outside of Georgetown, where issues are generally less politicized and decision-makers are more receptive to input from civil society groups.

All TNGOs surveyed at end of program indicated that their understanding of advocacy had changed as a result of the program, while 88% indicated that their organization had undertaken new advocacy initiatives. Eight of 12 respondents said that one of the most important benefits was building their capacity for advocacy. Somewhat surprisingly, 7 groups disagreed with the statement that they would rather have a grant to do service delivery instead of advocacy. Eleven out of 12 TNGOs indicated that they will include advocacy as part of their future activities. Out of 12 groups with strategic plans, at least 9 plans indicate in writing that they will continue to advocate on an issue in the future.

As a direct result of the Position Paper Competition held in late 2003, five TNGOs revised their position papers with TCC advice, and presented their positions to a local or national decision maker. Specific advocacy successes arising out of this include the story of the Airy Hall Women's Development Group.

Before participating in the TCC program, **Airy Hall Women's Development Group** of the Essequibo Coast was a very small organization, providing modest income generating activities for its members (sewing) and providing some assistance for the poor. It had little or no contact with government representatives and undertook very limited networking with other community groups.

Following the launch of the Resource Center, Airy Hall designed a networking grant project to raise public awareness about domestic violence in Region 2 and networked with other organizations with respect to the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. They started by conducting a simple survey in the region to better understand the nature and scope of domestic violence. It then held two community meetings to raise awareness on the issue and on the provisions of the Act. This was followed by a seminar on the Domestic Violence Act organized with the aid of Help and Shelter involving the police, probation services, regional education and health authorities, sports clubs, women's groups, as well as members of religious bodies. During these community meetings, women said they were reluctant to report cases of domestic violence at the police station due to lack of privacy.

With information generated at these events, the group prepared a position paper to request that the police receive special training on how to handle cases of domestic violence, and that a special room be set aside in each station to accommodate domestic violence cases. The private room has recently been established at two police stations in the region, and police are receiving additional training. Airy Hall has set up a support group in Region 2 for domestic violence and is now used by police as a referral resource on domestic violence.

The proceedings of the NGO Conference in May 2004 showed that the Guyana NGO community has a solid basic understanding of advocacy. Participants identified obstacles to advocacy and generated strategies for combating those obstacles. Several recommendations are listed below:

- Guyana Bar Assoc. and Association of Women Lawyers will take the lead in advocating to the Attorney-General to appoint more Justices of the Peace and Notaries Public in underserved regions.
- Guyana Forum for Lifelong Learning will lead a group to advocate for more effective action against illiteracy by the Ministry of Education.
- The grouping on youth issues agreed that it was necessary to form regional and national Youth Councils to coordinate efforts and share information affecting youth, and planned to advocate as a group for this to happen.
- The grouping on business and economy resolved to work more closely with each other to lobby the government to be more receptive to their issues and create a better economic climate. The Association of Regional Chambers of Commerce gave a press conference following its AGM a week later, and vowed to place heavy emphasis on advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the powerless in the coming period.

During the feedback session after the “Guyanese Making a Difference” documentary video at the NGO Conference TNGOs reported that they felt inspired by the collection of success stories to continue or initiate new advocacy work. Later on, several targeted NGOs shared their future advocacy plans with the other participants, consistent with their strategic plans.

It is not yet completely clear what the outcome will be of the collaboration between the NGO Forum, GAWL, and CPDC on the issue of the NGO legal framework

▪ TRAINING MANUALS

The training manuals were initially distributed to 47 local trainers and institutions with training and facilitation activities, and then disseminated on request to several other persons. Strategic Planning manuals were also given to the TNGOs that participated in a strategic planning process. Copies were donated to the National Library as part of the civil society collection of the Resource Center.

▪ AMERINDIAN REGIONAL COUNCILS

With TCC assistance, the Region 9 Toshias Council formally registered under the Friendly Societies Act, as the Region 9 Indigenous Development Association (RIDA) and became eligible to receive a Phase II advocacy grant. Results of RIDA’s subgrant activity are described below.

▪ NATIONAL TOSHAOS CONFERENCE

The outcomes of the Conference were agreement on the mission, terms of reference, composition and structure of a National Toshias Council (NTC) and the election of NTC executive.

The NTC elections had been placed on the agenda by the Coordinating Committee with the concurrence of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs representative. Members of the

Coordinating Committee made every effort to ensure that the Toshaos reached their decision after careful deliberation, by adjusting the agenda to allow for more time.

The government objected to the elections and the role taken by TCC, and suggested that TCC interfered in Guyanese internal affairs. The result was a strained relationship with the Minister and some members of Cabinet that persisted until the end of the program in spite of a visit by Minister of Amerindian Affairs to Atlanta, where she met with President Carter and other key staff.

In February 2004 the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs held a meeting of all Toshaos resulting in a decision to make the National Toshaos Council a statutory body, which the Minister had been advocating for since the previous conference. The implementation details and full ramifications of this decision remain unclear, particularly in relation to the earlier decisions made by the Toshaos. At that meeting, three persons were nominated to the Indigenous Peoples Commission, clearing the way for the government to constitute the commission.

The TCC external evaluator considered that “the National Toshaos Conference and the establishment of the Interim Executive of the National Toshaos Council... a significant program milestone. The event was widely covered in the media and its representativity was widely debated in public forums.”

The National Toshaos Conference is reported more fully in IR 4.3.

ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS BY NGOS ON PRIORITY ISSUES

▪ PHASE I SUB-GRANTS

The advocacy goals of the Phase I projects were outlined in the activities section, while some result highlights are as follows:

St. Mark’s Mothers Union submitted a signed petition with over 500 signatures to Ministry of Social Services to request extension of legal aid services to underprivileged women in Region 6. As a result, the Minister traveled to the region, attended a meeting of 26 groups led by St. Mark’s, and pledged to support their demands once the Georgetown clinic was again operational. The Union obtained a commitment from some leaders of the Berbice Bar Association to implement a pay later system for underprivileged women.

Love Outreach International has successfully advocated for the establishment of a Race Relations Committee in Region #3. The founding meeting was attended by the Regional Vice Chairman, who pledged the region’s assistance. The National Ethnic Relations Commission held a meeting in March 2004 at which they formally recognized the efforts made by both Love Outreach and Virvoorden Women’s Group in the establishment of regional ethnic relations committees. The National Commission decided that it would make every effort to collaborate with these two committees as regional outreach bodies.

Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP) worked with the Region 9 Amerindian Council to raise awareness regarding the revision process for the Amerindian Act. Between the two organizations, 14 community information sessions were held in Regions 2 and 9 for 700 Amerindian people. GOIP researched and formulated its own organizational position with recommendations on the revision process which was presented to the Ministry.

21st Century Youth Movement successfully lobbied Guyana Water Inc. and Central Housing and Planning for the installation of water mains in an area of Linden that had no access to potable water. However, on nearing completion of the grant, two members misappropriated funds and project property, and the grant was terminated early. Most of the money was recovered.

Groenveldt Youth Group organized a road march against substance abuse, which attracted the participation of the Minister of Health, as well as the Regional Chairman. Afterwards, they received a commitment from the Minister to provide support for continuing the group's work on substance abuse in Region 3.

Several groups were able to build upon the foundation of an initial Phase I Grant with a subsequent Networking Grant in the same thematic area, and achieved excellent outcomes by doing so. Here is an illustration.:

Before participating in the TCC program, **GUYWID** (Guyanese Women in Development) in Region 6 was involved in fund-raising to support orphanages and hospitals, beautifying the physical environment and providing hampers for women in distressed communities. GUYWID explains that before their participation in the program they never engaged in advocacy for change but “just provided help to people in need.”

GUYWID received both an advocacy and a networking grant from the TCC program. The aim of the advocacy grant was to raise awareness on domestic violence and to advocate to the police for better reception of those making domestic violence complaints. The aim of the networking grant was to exchange experiences among other NGOs working on issues of domestic violence while building support for a claim to the Attorney General for greater facility in accessing child maintenance payments.

With these grants, GUYWID conducted a survey on domestic violence, organized three community workshops on women's rights and domestic violence, staged a candlelight march, facilitated a workshop on domestic violence with police in region 6, participated in a TV program on domestic violence, planned a meeting with other women's groups to formulate a common position on child maintenance payments, and met with the Attorney General of Guyana and representatives of the Ministry of Social Security.

Through these initiatives, GUYWID was able to secure written commitment from the Police Commissioner for Region 6 that one officer in each station would be designated to deal with cases of domestic violence, and that officer would receive special training. In addition, written commitment was secured from the Ministry of Social Services to the effect that

protective order applications would be made available in all police stations and magistrate courts of Region 6.

- PHASE II SUB-GRANTS

Highlights of the five grants:

Essequibo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI). In the “Partnership for Improved Sanitation” project, ECCI worked with the local town council, regional government, and other partners to plan and advocate for an appropriate dumpsite and proper disposal of solid waste in Region 2. To this end, they drafted and presented a position paper to leading Ministries, the Guyana Environmental Protection Agency, and other stakeholders. An intense environmental awareness campaign included various tools such as signboards, television shows, and workshops. ECCI received written commitment from the EPA and regional council for the development of an alternative dumpsite in Region 2.

Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association advocated for a national policy for youth involvement in the planning and implementation of reproductive health services. A position paper was compiled from recommendations at four workshops with different stakeholder groups across Guyana, and over 10,000 signatures were collected on a petition to the Minister of Health, along with recommendations from regional forums.

In advocating for a National Literacy Plan, **Guyana Forum for Lifelong Learning** conducted four regional and one national conference, to contribute to the development of a national plan to substantially reduce illiteracy among youth and women by 2010. This plan was presented to the Ministry of Education with the aim of establishing a collaborative approach between the government and GFLL. This plan is still under discussion with the Ministry.

Region 9 Indigenous Development Association (RIDA) advocated for a comprehensive plan to improve agricultural development in Region 9, and decentralized financial resources to put such a plan into action. The project included publication of five monthly newsletters focused on agricultural and other development issues of the Rupununi, as well as regional consultations and a baseline agricultural survey. The group established close links with EMBRAPA, a Brazilian agricultural agency, and organized a study tour of Brazilian methods of sheep rearing that could be applied in Region 9. The project culminated in the presentation of the updated agricultural development plan to the Ministry of Fisheries, Crops, and Livestock. The Permanent Secretary said that the Ministry was willing to allow greater decentralization of their authority over agricultural development in Region 9, which would form part of a proposal going to Cabinet. Also, the PRSP Secretariat verbally committed to sponsoring the continuation of the newsletter.

St Stanislaus Training Center advocated for the re-establishment of 4H clubs for youth in Guyana to be supported by the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, and Culture, Youth and Sport. After an intensive promotional campaign, including a new Guyana 4H website, the new 4H movement was re-launched with support from local and international NGOs, particularly Partners of America and a Canadian 4H club. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport expressed his Ministry’s unalloyed support for the initiative, and the Ministry of Education pledged the services of a full time teacher to support the training needs of

the 4H program – a significant commitment in a system that is desperately short of teaching personnel.

- **INCREASING WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.**

Sixty women attended the June 2001 consultation. The event received excellent media coverage. A strategic plan was developed with the assistance of Hazel Brown of the Engendering Local Government project in Trinidad and Tobago. Topics identified for training to strengthen dialogue between women and local government formed the basis of subsequent workshops held throughout Guyana. The initial consultation identified domestic violence, women’s health and lack of networking among women’s organizations as the most urgent areas of concern. These formed the organizing tool which NDI used to develop strategies to address women groups’ organizational capacity, networking between local groups and contact between women and local government entities. The training program adapted the Trinidad and Tobago Engendering Local Government training manual and further developed them into the training modules that became the staple of the *Increasing Women’s Political Participation* program.

SUB IR 4.4 INCREASED PUBLIC DEBATE ON ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIANS

INDICATOR: NUMBER OF FORUMS CONCERNING:

(A) CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, AND

(B) PUBLIC ISSUES/DECISIONS PERTINENT TO THE ONE OR MORE OF THE THREE GROUPS OF NATIONAL REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

TCC has organized three women’s forums, held three regional youth forums and supported one other in Region 9, co-organized one national conference of Amerindian leaders and a national NGO Conference, and provided grant funding for at least 18 public meetings in Amerindian communities, to facilitate open public dialogue about various policy issues of concern to these three target populations. Many of these activities have been reported in foregoing sections, while the women’s forums and NGO Conference are described in this IR. Issues of primary concern at forums included legal rights, domestic violence, revision of the Amerindian Act, gender relations, linguistic rights, and youth role in decision-making, HIV/AIDS, and others.

In addition, TNGOs have held at least 20 public meetings or forums on priority issues, largely pursuant to sub-grants. Phase II grantees have held an additional nine public meetings, several of them having national scope. See IR 4.5 Results section for media coverage of meetings, forums and other TNGO activities, as well as key public information activities of grantees.

Data from the Advocacy and Effectiveness Index evaluations shows that 19 out of 24 active TNGOs reported having organized a public meeting or event to raise awareness over an issue during the project, and many had organized more than one such meeting. When surveyed in 2004 as to whether there had been an increase in public discussion or debate of problems affecting their target population (women, youth or Amerindians), because of this program or the group’s work, 12 out of 12 TNGO respondents said yes. 65 percent of TNGOs felt they had

been able to raise community awareness and generate debate around human rights issues for youth, women and Amerindians to a large extent.

- **SPECIAL PUBLIC EVENTS**

The parties represented at the 2001 Forum for Presidential Candidates and Civil Society Organizations gained little support in the ensuing election, and therefore any measurable results from their support would be difficult to determine. However, Stabroek News published two articles on the event and GTV broadcast highlights of the event two weeks later.

The street fair organized by the “Youth Alliance for Electoral Awareness” in 2001 was successful in securing the participation of all the political parties with the exception of ROAR. All major TV newscasts plus the Guyana Chronicle carried the event, which was also featured in The Economist magazine of that week.

Several TNGOs undertook activities related to International Women's Day 2003, which served to raise the profile of women's issues as well as the public profile of the participating organizations. In Region 2, **Airy Hall Women's Development Group** planned and raised funds for an early morning parade followed by public speeches related to domestic violence. The regional TV station covered the event. The **Pomona Women and Youth Reaching Out** organized a booth displaying materials relevant to women's issues. The group also held a road march on substance abuse, which attracted over 100 participants. Meanwhile, in Region 6, **GUYWID** planned and performed a skit on domestic violence that was videotaped and aired on regional television. They also organized a candlelight march in New Amsterdam in which approximately 75 women participated. Regional TV stations broadcast the coverage twice.

As described in IR 4.3, the National Toshias Conference was a rare opportunity for debate on issues ranging from the terms of reference for a national representative council to Amerindian land claims. The Conference also generated considerable media attention, which served to keep Amerindian issues in the public eye. That event led directly to several other meetings of the National Toshias Council interim executive, and a second gathering of all Toshias sponsored by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs in 2004, which also contributed to ongoing public debate on Amerindian issues.

- **AMERINDIAN ACT REVISION**

TCC's support to GOIP and the Region 9 Amerindian Council resulted in opportunities for over 700 Amerindian people in two regions to participate in a more meaningful way in the ongoing Amerindian Act revision process. This was especially significant taking into account the logistical constraints that hinder the assembling of people from different communities in the hinterland, which is where the vast majority of Amerindians reside. Following these meetings, recommendations were submitted to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs.

A separate report was prepared on each of the sub-regional level consultations in Region 9. Each sub-region subsequently provided their own submissions to the technical team from the Ministry, having had a chance to evaluate the information and ideas from other parts of the region. In addition, a written submission was presented to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs which covered the recommendations from the sub-regions.

It should be noted that the Amerindian Act consultations supported the achievement of tangible results in at least three Intermediate Result areas in addition to IR 4.4: consensus building in the context of advocacy for local concerns of Amerindians, increased capacity to advocate for improvement in the status of Amerindians, and increased organizational capacity of GOIP and the Region 9 Amerindian Council.

▪ NGO CONFERENCE

The NGO Conference in March 2004 was the culminating event of the civil society program. Many of the results of this Conference have already been summarized in earlier sections, as they relate specifically to networking and consensus-building (IR 4.1), organizational capacity (IR 4.2), and advocacy capacity (IR 4.3). Also refer to IR 4.5 for a description of the video launched in conjunction with this Conference, which is serving to publicly highlight NGO activities and impacts relative to the three targeted populations and thus promote ongoing public debate on priority issues.

▪ WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FORUMS

The Women's Economic Literacy Forum of 2001 concluded with consensus on this Action Agenda, which was to be carried forward by the Core Group:

- Organize a meeting for civil society groups with representatives from the World Bank, IMF and IDB to discuss Guyana's financial situation and the PRSP.
- Draft a Women's Agenda for the PRSP that focuses on women's role in poverty reduction and adds a gender perspective to the PRSP.
- Provide information to civil society groups that would like to get funding through the PRSP Secretariat for public consultations in under-served areas with a gender focus
- With support from donor agencies, arrange training sessions on topics such as women's leadership, advocacy strategies, engendering the national budget, gender sensitivity in civil society groups, and other topics.
- Advocate for changes in legislation and policy that affect women, including union policies that impede women's full participation and leadership.
- With donor support, organize further workshops on economic literacy.
- Seek donor support for projects related to micro-credit for women, daycare for working women, etc.

Women's Legal Empowerment Forums produced the following Recommendations:

Recommendations related to domestic violence:

1. The mandatory arrest policy in domestic violence cases must be properly formulated, streamlined, implemented and enforced.
2. More training for magistrates and court staff.
3. Increase the number of court staff who should be available to assist persons with court procedures when needed.

4. More police officers, especially more female officers and female Rural Constables, should be recruited and stationed in the rural and interior areas to enforce the laws in relation to domestic violence cases.

Recommendations related to legal aid:

1. The capacity of the legal aid services must be increased. Suitably supervised law students should be utilized.
2. Lawyers must be encouraged to provide more pro bono work.
3. Statutory [or constitutional] provision should be made for legal aid services, and there must be permanent provision for the funding of legal aid in the National Budget.

Recommendation related to the Ministry of Labour Human Services and Social Security:

1. The Ministry must take immediate steps to employ trained social workers and probation officers to fill existing vacancies, and take measures to ensure that Section 44 of the Domestic Violence Act 1996 be implemented by the Director of Human Services.

Following the first forum, TNGO St Marks Mothers Union adapted the Participant Sourcebook to reflect a dual focus on domestic violence and access to legal aid, and disseminated their version widely within Region 6 to libraries, churches, schools and community workers. This became an integral part of their sub-grant endeavors to advocate for access to legal services for underprivileged women in the region, and had significant effects on public awareness of women's legal rights.

▪ **POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PLAN (PRSP) CONSULTATIONS**

The TCC program contributed to greater civil society participation in the process by increasing the number of groups actively involved in the consultation and helping them to build consensus around common positions and supporting them in the development of submissions to the PRSP Secretariat on the specific interests of Amerindians, women and youth. Following the Youth Forum on the PRSP, Youth in Development (YID) submitted their report to the government and distributed it widely to youth and donors. A youth representative was requested to join the Poverty Reduction Monitoring Committee, but this request was not granted.

There was a strong correlation between the PRSP progress report and broad policy recommendations of participants at the two TCC sponsored interventions. There are other aspects of the recommendations in the schedule for priority attention in the 2004 to 2005 period. This information is available in the 2004 Guyana PRSP implementation progress report. The forum recommendations were reflected in the actual implementation activities related to the PRSP as reported in that document.

▪ **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN IN POLITICS**

A survey on *Public Perceptions about Women in Politics* involving a cross section of 700 hundred women from across Guyana examined women's opinions about politics, the political process and their interest in putting their names on the candidates' lists in local and national elections. This was the first survey of its kind in Guyana and there was significant public interest

in the results. The results were used as the basis for planning training sessions at the NDI organized regional Caribbean conference on women in politics. Copies were distributed to the political parties/women's wings, women's organizations and prominent women politicians.

NGOs, women activists and women's groups throughout Guyana requested copies. Women against Violence Everywhere, a broad based non-partisan women's group, used the information from the survey to assist them in planning further research and outreach activities. A group of women operating under the theme "Positive Politics" requested a copy of the survey to help them with research as well. The Guyana Women's Leadership Institute used the survey data to develop training programs for its clientele. The researcher presented the findings at the initial plenary session of the conference on women in politics, and framed the subsequent discussions.

- **CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN POLITICS**

The resolution was distributed to regional governments including the CARICOM Secretariat and CARICOM Heads of Government. The resolution established a regional steering committee to ensure the implementation of strategies adopted by the conference. That group was tasked with advocating that the recommendations of the conference were placed on the agenda of a subsequent regional conference on women's political participation held later in 2003. The Conference report included a list of participants, trainers and resource people with their skill set and was distributed to delegates and other stakeholders. An Action Plan booklet was developed by each woman during the three day conference based on notes and observations she made in the sessions and was intended to be used as a commitment that each woman made to herself to follow up after the conference.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS it is recognized that women form the majority of the populations of the CARICOM region;

AND WHEREAS the governments of CARICOM have affirmed their commitment to the implementation of measures regarding women in decision-making as outlined in Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals;

AND WHEREAS the governments of CARICOM have recommitted to the implementation of the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society, which firmly entrenches women's rights to participate in the decision-making processes;

AND WHEREAS THEREFORE women of CARICOM [desire to and] must participate fully in the policy and development processes of the region at all levels and in all spheres of endeavor;

AND REAFFIRMING that the rights of women of CARICOM to so participate are a fulfillment and embodiment of their human rights;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates of the thirteen territories of the Caribbean Community here represented at the Conference ‘Fifty-Fifty Increasing Women’s Political Participation in the Caribbean, May 28-30, 2003’:

URGE the implementation, not later than December, 2004, of the following strategies for ultimately achieving the goal of increasing women’s political participation to fifty – fifty:

- 1) Training for women and candidates, and in campaign management, policy formulation and advocacy and lobbying;
- 2) Strengthening of the institutional mechanisms - women in CARICOM, including the representation of women at CARICOM meetings and strengthening of the women’s bureaus;
- 3) Sistering programs;
- 4) Networking and caucuses across party and ethnic lines and on specific issues;
- 5) Public and voter awareness campaigns, including a focus on youth voters;
- 6) Documentation and recording of women’s stories, data collection and analysis and the establishment of national and regional data bases;
- 7) Action and information sharing on the Constitution Reform processes, electoral laws reform and special measure to increase women’s political participation.

PLEDGE to remain committed to the advocacy and implementation of the these strategies at both the national and regional levels;

AND FURTHER PLEDGE within two months hereof to establish a steering committee to specifically address the strategies as outlined and to ensure their implementation.

SUBSCRIBED TO this 30th day of May, 2003

SUB IR 4.5 MORE INFORMED MEDIA DISCUSSION ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND AMERINDIANS

INDICATOR: INCREASE IN INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL PROGRAMMING AND PUBLICATIONS
UNIT OF MEASUREMENT: SELECTED WEEKLY TELEVISION BROADCASTS AND DAILY NEWSPAPERS – (A) “PLAIN TALK” WITH CHRIS RAM, AND “TIMEOUT” WITH BIBI NARAIN; AND, (B) STABROEK NEWS AND GUYANA CHRONICLE – WILL BE REGULARLY MONITORED AND RATED ON A SIMPLE SCALE.

▪ **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Since the selection of targeted partner NGOs, TCC’s supported a strategy of increasing public debate through TNGO activities and outreach to the public and the media in order to achieve this objective. TCC supported TNGOs’ efforts to seek media coverage of their activities through continual coaching and monitoring, as well as with media skills training workshops. TCC routinely issued press releases and invitations to the media in connection with any major launches, forums, conference and seminars, and structured all program events in such a manner that the media was encouraged to participate and report on the event in question. Forums, meetings, workshops and other public events organized by TCC and TNGOs in implementing

their sub-grants publicized the concerns of women, youth and Amerindians. Every TCC-hosted forum on women or youth issues was accompanied by the production of a comprehensive resource book with relevant materials gleaned from around the world on the topics under discussion, copies of which were provided to all participants. 12 out of 15 respondents evaluating the program in 2004 stated that the TCC forums had helped them to publicize issues of concern to the group.

- After the launch of the Resource Center, some TNGOs organized TV call-in shows and appearances in conjunction with their sub-grants. Two reporters attending the launch interviewed two TNGOs about their program activities.
- The National Toshias Conference in May 2003 generated considerable media attention on Amerindian issues, but government dissatisfaction over the event and its outcomes prevented TCC from being more proactive in supporting additional media attention.
- The NGO Conference received excellent coverage in the three national newspapers, including photographs and lengthy articles on the second day of the event,
- The Women's Empowerment Forums were also an excellent opportunity to raise the level of media attention to women's issues, in particular legal rights and domestic violence. Each event attracted either regional or national media attention and coverage.
- "GUYANAESE MAKING A DIFFERENCE" VIDEO

Following the launch at the NGO Conference in March 2004, the video was broadcast on both national and regional TV stations. Three national TV stations responded to TCC's request for one free prime time airing of the video, and agreed to a discounted rate for additional airings as a public service. Many participants at the NGO Conference took copies of video to show it in their communities and regions at group activities and workshops.

- SUBGRANTS TO TARGETED NGOS

TCC grantees' activities and events received considerable attention in the media, contributing to a heightened level of discussion about the issues identified.

Highlights of media coverage include:

- **Love Outreach International:** Program on ethnic unity.
- **Community Based Rehabilitation Region 6:** a live television forum on disabled rights, which led to provision of public assistance for several disabled persons by the Ministry of Social Services, and donation of wheel chairs by the public.
- **The Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA)** improved public debate on youth involvement in setting policy on adolescent reproductive health.
- **Guyana Forum for Lifelong Learning's** national and regional consultations on national literacy plan to address illiteracy among women and youth in Guyana.
- Public debate on indigenous interests was stimulated in Region 9 as a result of community and region-wide consultations led by the **Region 9 Indigenous Development Association.**

- **MEDIA WATCH TRAINING**

A group of women in Georgetown and Linden were trained in media monitoring methods by a consultant from Media Watch Canada. The training helped women critically analyze images of women in the media, the coverage given to women's issues by the media and the manner in which the issues were dealt with. The workshop provided women with the analytical tools to follow stories, columns, programs, commercials and advertisements. Particular emphasis was placed on how women were treated with respect to politics, political issues and civil society concerns. The training included building awareness and lobbying techniques and organizing advocacy campaigns. The women then conducted a media monitoring exercise on daily newspapers and TV and radio news broadcasts for a limited period of time. The data was sent to Global Media Monitoring Project for analysis.

As an outcome of the workshop, participants formed a Media Watch Group whose task will be to monitor media coverage of women and issues of importance to women in Guyana and to follow up on identified deficiencies. The Guyana group joined the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) whose members operate in 80 countries around the world in monitoring the portrayal and representation of women in the news on television, radio and newspapers.

- **AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN**

Using media releases and event organizing skills, program participants collaborated in the launching of training manuals, the opening of the women's political participation conference, the release of the results of the political attitudes survey and regional and local training programs. As a result of lobbying by women, Guyana's largest independent daily newspaper the Stabroek News dedicated space for a weekly column featuring articles dealing with issues affecting women. The Sunday Stabroek now features a column entitled "Women's Perspective". Utilizing existing footage from training workshops and other activities associated with the program a 6 segment video series on the women's political participation was produced and broadcast nationally in March 2004 in conjunction with International Women's Day.

In a community in Region 2, participants hired a cameraman to tape them at work on a self-help project for distribution to the local media. In Region 10 participants organized a monthly television series on the local channel dealing with women's issues.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 5.0: STRENGTHENED LOCAL GOVERNANCE

INDICATOR: INCREASED RESPONSIVENESS BY LOCAL OFFICIALS TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS

UNIT OF MEASURE: DEGREE OF SATISFACTION EXPRESSED BY A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF CONSTITUENTS WITH TARGETED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

RESULT NAME SUB: I.R. 5.1 STRENGTHENED MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO COMMUNITIES' NEEDS

INDICATOR: INCREASE IN THE QUANTITY AND/OR VARIETY OF PUBLIC SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL COUNCILS.

UNIT OF MEASURE: IN AT LEAST TWO PUBLIC SERVICE SECTORS, SERVICES (E.G., SOLID

WASTE DISPOSAL, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE, DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, ETC.) ARE MEASURABLY INCREASED, OR NEW SERVICES ADDED, BY LOCAL COUNCILS IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES EACH YEAR.

- **FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION TRAINING**

The Fiscal Decentralization course was conducted in Guyana in January 2004. NDI originally invited 8 senior government officials from the Ministries of Local Government, and Finance, and a Department Head from the University of Guyana to attend a 4 week course at Georgia State University on Fiscal Decentralization. The Minister of Local Government objected to NDI taking the initiative in identifying participants, and the government withheld permission for the public officials to attend. Attendance was also complicated by the new J Visa requirements. The course was rescheduled to take place in Guyana, and the Andrew Young School of Georgia State University sent two qualified instructors. The in-country training provided an opportunity for more officials, and political party representatives to attend.

As a result of the training, the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform established a three person technical committee to work on the development of objective criteria for the allocation of resources from central government to local government. Two members of this committee participated in the Fiscal Decentralization Course.

- **LOCAL GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT IN AMERINDIAN COMMUNITIES**

Several attempts were made to meet with the Amerindian community leadership, but schedules kept interfering. Eventually, circumstances related to the schedule of the Joint Task Force on local government reform and the consultations on changes to the Amerindian Act dominated the discussion. NDI subsequently returned to the communities with a proposal to provide training that would assist in the understanding of what the elements of decentralization were, and how they might impact local Amerindian governance.

- **COMPARATIVE MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE**

This activity was proposed in the 2002-03 work plan, but was not completed until early 2004. The schedule of the Clerk of the Georgetown Council, Ms. Buleah Williams, repeatedly prevented her from organizing the placements. When she finally made the time, the Clerk of the New Amsterdam Council passed away. Eventually, the Clerks of the two smaller towns, and their Superintendents of Work and Environmental Health Officers were able to spend a week observing how Georgetown Council was administered. They rotated between departments and were exposed to different methods of public administration that they took back with them to implement in their respective jurisdictions.

- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSESSMENTS**

This activity was not undertaken although NDI held discussions with the Ministry of Local Government to establish a scope of work. In addition, NDI met with donor agencies to explore themes and funding sources.

- **COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE**

This conference brought together local government, central government, NGO's and private businesses together to examine private public partnerships in the provision of public services. South Africa has a highly developed local government service infrastructure and leads the world in successful private/public ventures. It was felt that this case study would be of benefit to Guyana where local governments generally lack sufficient resources to provide basic services.

However, the government of Guyana insisted on selecting participants, and refused to attend if they could not make the selections. NDI carefully constructed an illustrative profile of delegates which included rural/urban, male/female, central and regional, Indian and African, PPP and PNC representatives in consultation with the co-chairs of the Joint Task Force. In the end, the Guyana delegation did not include representatives from the government. The New Amsterdam Action Group was showcased at one of the events and received a great deal of attention. Front page coverage of the conference and the role of the New Amsterdam Action Group appeared in the daily newspapers.

SUB I.R. 5.2: ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FURTHER DEFINED AND RATIONALIZED

INDICATOR: CRC RECOMMENDATIONS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ARE PROGRESSIVELY TRANSLATED INTO DRAFT LEGISLATION

UNIT OF MEASURE: NUMBER OF BILLS THAT ADDRESS ONE OR MORE OF THE CRC-RECOMMENDED LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS TO REACH "FIRST READING" IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

- **COMPARATIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT MATERIALS**

NDI provided the Task Force on Local Government reforms with information which was used as source materials on issues related to decentralization and local government electoral systems. Many of the materials were referenced in the Interim and Final reports of the Task Force.

- **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND CONSULTATION FORUMS**

This was a very successful tool for educating the public on issues related to local government reform. All the most significant opinion leaders on this issue were interviewed in some cases on more than one occasion. In addition, visiting experts also appeared on the show. Both the government and main opposition party saw it as an opportunity to reach out to their constituencies, but for the most part treated the subject matter with objectivity. NDI ensured that all political parties had an opportunity to present their views on Future Forum and the many public lectures that were scheduled on the topic. Public meetings were well attended and participation from the audience was high.

With the departure of NDI, there will be a need for other sponsors for the continued hosting of the *Future Forum*.

- EXPERT CONSULTATIONS

The various experts that NDI sponsored to assist the Joint Task Force provided essential base line information that helped clarify the direction of the discussions on local government reform. Dr. Reilly's 6 electoral options formed the basis of all subsequent discussions on electoral systems, and informed the analysis of the electoral modelling expert who advised the parties on the mathematical projections of alternative electoral systems that might be appropriate for Guyana.

Dr. Crane's recommendations formed the basis of the presentations on fiscal decentralization at the Conference on Local Government Decentralization, and were used as the starting point for the fiscal decentralization training provided by Georgia State University. Professor Crane also developed the parameters for changes in local taxation authority which would provide local government with a stronger revenue base.

The Task Force did not pursue the issue of the Local Government Commission as this seemed to fall outside it's area of political control, although it was part of their mandate.

- CONFERENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECENTRALIZATION

This conference was a very successful gathering of Guyanese and Caribbean local government public figures. A strong cross section of politicians, officials, academics and program managers provided an agenda that covered all the major issues currently popular in local government discourse. The information was designed to be practical, and evaluations agreed that it met this objective.

As is the usual case in Guyana, the disagreements between the major parties affected this activity. The opposition PNC/R objected to the number of PPP/C leaders taking part in the opening ceremony and especially the participation of the Minister of Local Government, Clinton Collymore as the keynote speaker, and boycotted it. However, they attended individual workshops.

A conference publication was printed in the Spring of 2004 which contained all the presentations made at the conference as well as other documents. This report was distributed widely throughout Guyana and the Caribbean.

- LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

The scope of work for the drafter changed after the contract was signed, based on further refinement of the work of the Task Force, and this had the effect of slowing down the process. In any case, Mr. Massiah did not meet the terms of his contract as he failed to provide timely updates on his progress to the parties to the MOU. NDI expressed concerns about this to the

Minister who made alternate arrangements regarding the legislative amendments. Mr. Massiah was subsequently sued by CIDA for the money he had received as a down payment. The drafting work was not completed by the end of the program.

However, late in the program, NDI organized the visit of an electoral modelling expert to Guyana to consult with the parties to try to break the stalemate on what type of electoral system to use in the next local government elections. The parties were hopelessly stalemated, and did not fully understand the modalities of the systems they were proposing. Kare Vollan of Norway provided a report with comprehensive options that were based on the positions of the parties. Meetings were held with USAID, GECOM, the President and Head of Presidential Secretariat, the Leader of the Opposition and representatives of the parties. The parties' reactions to Vollan's report were expected after the close of the program.

SUB; I.R. 5.3: DIALOGUE PROMOTED BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES AND AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

INDICATOR: INCREASED FREQUENCY OF PUBLIC INTERACTION BETWEEN COUNCIL MEMBERS AND CITIZENS

UNIT OF MEASURE: NUMBER OF TIMES STRUCTURED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS BRING COUNCIL MEMBERS AND CITIZENS TOGETHER TO DISCUSS LOCAL GOVERNANCE MATTERS IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES.

NDI's approach to this sub IR was based on survey data that could provide direction for a program of activity designed to alter the indicator, and to provide the basis for consultations with local community representatives. Organizations were created in New Amsterdam and Anna Regina where none previously existed. Talented people from all sectors of local community life expressed great enthusiasm for becoming engaged, and although initially wary of interference, the local governments eventually accepted what the two groups proposed. The Mayor and Town Council in New Amsterdam suggested that this community initiative was usurping their responsibilities, and initially, there was some confusion about what the ICMA/City of Huntsville project and the USAID/NDI project were doing, since both had the imprimatur of the Making Cities Work project.

Both the New Amsterdam Action group and The Anna Regina Support Development Group were initially composed of representatives from other groups, and this made a big difference in their ability to focus on results and organize achievable goals. In the initial months, attention was directed to securing the support of the local communities. Many meetings were held at the town and neighborhood levels to promote and develop the concept of citizen engagement. In both municipalities, these meetings were the first opportunity for elected representatives and citizens to meet face to face to discuss issues of concern. In New Amsterdam, the local Police began attending the meetings, along with the Town Clerk and the Deputy Mayor. For the Deputy Mayor, it was a chance to appeal to ratepayers to pay their taxes. For the Police, it was an opportunity to develop a relationship with people at the neighborhood level

The New Amsterdam Action Group established itself as a credible organization quickly. The UMP/LAC program contracted with them to do a solid waste management audit, which they

did capably and professionally. In fact, based on the surveys, the priority for both communities was to address the dismal state of solid waste management. Anna Regina's problems were minor in comparison to New Amsterdam. New Amsterdam had regular outbreaks of mosquito infestations because of the trash, clogged drains and low level of concern of the town government. As a result, it was a public health disaster. Both community groups prioritized cleanup campaigns.

The New Amsterdam Action Group moved quickly to consolidate the support it was receiving from the community. They conducted a review of work done over the initial six months and adopted recommendations for future programming. As a result of the review, they refined their mission statement and amended the organization's strategic plan.

▪ ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

A one-year assessment of the impact of the NAAG was conducted during the 2002-03 program period. The research found that while there was support for the goals of the Action Group, the NAAG needed to increase its visibility in the community so that people could understand the impact they were having on the town. Three-quarters of those interviewed had never heard of the NAAG, despite the high level of media attention they had received for the projects they had undertaken. In response, the NAAG developed a media strategy to better attend to the need to become better known to the local population.

NDI contracted the services of a local researcher to assess the changes that took place in New Amsterdam and Anna Regina as a result of the NDI's three year program. The researcher conducted interviews in Anna Regina and New Amsterdam with 80 residents from each town. To solicit feedback, NDI organized a meeting with stakeholders to evaluate the extent to which the project had been considered successful. The research found that there was a 22 percent increase in interaction between the town council and citizens. There has also been a significant increase in awareness of the services provided by the two town councils and an 82 percent satisfaction rate with the changes that had taken place in the towns. The researcher also found that there was an increase in the satisfaction with market services and road repairs, but that the town councils need to do more in involving, informing and interacting with citizens. Despite these positive changes, the survey reported that there was great reluctance on the part of the mayors of the two towns to conduct public outreach and this is reflected in the research findings.

Despite the enthusiasm of the participant members of the two groups, and the support received from various sectors, the lack of economic development and a viable tax base were and continue to be a limiting factor in the abilities of local government to provide services.

EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

The following summarizes some of the challenges faced and lessons-learned in the implementation of this multi-year democratic governance project.

NDI:

Specific NDI conclusions have been incorporated into the activities and results sections of this report. The development of institutions of governance in Guyana requires a longer time frame than was possible in the five years of the Cooperative Agreement. This is a consequence of factors outside the scope of the project, but has been recognized by the international donor community. In implementing the program, NDI was able to coordinate the interests of other donors in legislative strengthening through the Social Cohesion Programme (SCP), a multi-donor initiative that includes the DFID, CIDA, USAID, the IDB, the World Bank and the UNDP.

Speaker of Parliament Ralph Ramkarran was one of the strongest supporters of reform to the business of parliament but in many ways, his was a lone voice of transformation. The government could be accused of neglecting parliament, more as a result of the weakness of the institution historically, rather than out of political conniving, although the latter has to be considered as a reason for their lack of cooperation on most of the initiatives proposed by NDI. The almost contemptible treatment of the opposition by the government was particularly manifest in parliament. The government treats parliament as their possession, and has little interest in establishing a competitor to the executive Presidency and the winner take all system found little room to include the opposition in any meaningful way. As a result, opposition members, particularly those from the smaller parties, were very enthusiastic about legislative technical assistance programs and will need continued assistance. The legislative program was also challenged by Guyana's lack of tradition on public input and accountability.

NDI's activities were often affected the polarized relations between the major parties and breakdowns in the dialogue process. Examples include the ultimate failure of the development of a women's caucus and delays in the establishment of a parliamentary internship program and a training schedule for the sector standing committees. The persistent negative affect that this polarization had on program progress in the areas of legislative and local government strengthening has to be considered as an important factor for any future governance programming, and requires a flexible strategic implementation approach.

TCC RP 2 judicial reform.

A. Conditions Precedent

USAID determined in negotiating the bilateral agreement with the Government of Guyana that sustainable results and durable reforms could not be achieved without adequate administrative personnel and a commitment to reform. USAID believed that the fulfillment of conditions precedent (hiring of a Court Manager, Deputy Registrar and Court Librarian) would be a demonstration that there was adequate political will for reform to justify commencement of activities. As with the legislative program outlined in IR1, the failure of the Government to

fulfill the conditions precedent related to IR2 affected the partners' ability to conduct activities to strengthen the judicial process. USAID reached the conclusion that because the conditions precedent had not been met, program activities were not permissible.

TCC believes that this protracted failure, in spite of the technical assistance provided towards meeting the conditions precedent, reflected in substantial part a lack of commitment to judicial reform. While some of the conditions were ultimately met by the appointment of a Deputy Registrar and a Court Manager, there are grave concerns regarding the nature of the latter appointment. While working with the Court Manager on the pilot mediation project, TCC determined that the appointee is not being given anything approaching the responsibilities that were outlined in the job description that was endorsed by USAID and the GOG. In fact, based on information from the incumbent, the Court Manager is only partially performing about half of the 14 duties listed, and is rarely or not at all empowered to perform the remaining duties.

Given this situation, it is questionable whether the condition precedent related to this appointment can be considered to have been completely met. Hence, all the concerns about lack of political will for judicial reform, and more specifically, lack of capacity (and will) in the Registry to incorporate meaningful change, are just as valid today as they were when the conditions were imposed. The program of support envisaged under the IR 2.2 supplementary work plan of April 2003 was based upon the assumption that the Court Manager would be functioning within the agreed mandate. When this was found not to be the case, TCC creatively adapted to the situation by minimizing its support to the Registry under IR 2.2 (especially once the Registry proved uncooperative with the Trinidad team's assessment in August 2003), and instead relied on the Court Manager as a key ally and administrator in the achievement of the goals of IR 2.3 and implementation of the Pilot Mediation Project. This was consistent with the views expressed in an initial RFA preparatory document prepared by MSI in 1998 which formed the basis for this program, to the effect that failing the satisfaction of key conditions precedent related to judicial reform, the focus of the project should be on Alternative Dispute Resolution.

B. Political and Judicial Will

Since the Guyanese judiciary is small in numbers, the political will of the head of the judiciary, the Chancellor and the head of the High Court, the Chief Justice, are critical to any reform. Although these leaders face many challenges, their commitment remains strong and continues to best illustrate the potential for positive change. The leadership and momentum provided by these two key individuals, in particular, during the implementation of this program cannot be underestimated. Several leading members of the Bar Association and the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers are also dedicated to reform efforts and played an important role.

One contributing factor in this dire situation is a serious lack of judicial resources, as by 2002 only 8 of the 12 authorized High Court judgeships were filled. The shortage of judges also had the side effect of maintaining a heavy burden on the Chief Justice in particular, who continued to perform a significant amount of judicial duties, alongside his considerable administrative tasks. This presented a considerable challenge for the TCC program, as many of the desirable reforms would only be possible with the active engagement of the Chief Justice, and the Chancellor to a lesser degree.

Building a constituency for judicial reform was exacerbated by legal profession associations that lacked both organizational and advocacy capacity, and demonstrated little sustained interest in pursuing such reforms except on an ad hoc basis. Several efforts to develop the outreach and leadership of the Guyana Bar Association floundered when the executive failed to follow up on offers of assistance, despite having complained about being ignored by the program in early years.

Initially, The Carter Center envisaged the assembly of a core group of individuals interested in judicial reform who would form the nucleus for constituency-building efforts, a group that would take the lead on planning and implementation of concrete projects in support of judicial reform efforts and serve as a force to advocate for positive change within the judicial system as a whole. However, early concern expressed by key members in the Judiciary, as well as the Guyana Bar Association about its possible limited participation in such an advisory body, stymied plans to proceed with the initiative.

Pilot Mediation Project/ADR

The Carter Center believes that in spite of its challenges, a reasonably viable court system still exists in Guyana – one in which complementary ADR mechanisms can be successfully introduced. And it is possible under the existing legal framework to make ADR settlements enforceable – the Chancellor, Chief Justice, and other judicial and legal stakeholders concurring with this assertion. The severe political and ethnic divisions in Guyana provide special challenges for the successful introduction of an unfamiliar process such as ADR, and these issues were taken into account as the pilot program progressed.

Sustainability is now a critical issue. The Chief Justice is aware of this issue and is already taking steps to try to solve the problem. On the positive side, one sentiment that was expressed very strongly by the mediators, the Chief Justice, and the Chancellor was a commitment to see that the mediation program does not die with the departure of The Carter Center from Guyana.

One important lesson to be learned from this project is that change requires the engagement of all those who will be affected by it. The time that this project took to assess the problems, orient the bar, the judges, and a variety of other system actors to different approaches to addressing the problems was critical to the success of the project. The project approach recognized that cultural change is slow and non-linear. From its results to date, TCC believes that there is reason for optimism that it will have a positive effect on the quality of justice in Guyana.

Focus on Civil versus Criminal Law

During the implementation of the judicial reform program it became clear that work on the civil law side of the judicial system (as opposed to the criminal law side) would be more feasible, facing fewer challenges and reaping the most results. A set of recommendations for reform in this specific area have been developed through the work of the Criminal Law Review

Committee, and this body's work served to inform the work of the Disciplined Forces Commission. Nonetheless, in an ethnically and politically polarized environment such as Guyana, and one which suffers from a high degree of criminal activity (with sometimes political overtones), specific work on criminal law issues encounters many obstacles.

Need For Strategic Planning In The Judicial Sector

In early 2004, TCC broached the idea of developing a strategic plan for the courts with the Chief Justice and Chancellor, as well as the Registrar. The Registrar had prepared a very preliminary draft of a strategic plan some years ago, but there had never been any follow-up to further develop it or get other stakeholder input. Having received an initial expression of interest from the court, TCC asked ADR consultant Steve Weller to meet with each of these key stakeholders to explain in more detail about how strategic planning can help the court and how the process works. The Chief Justice, Chancellor and Registrar all expressed considerable enthusiasm for a participatory process to develop a strategic plan, assisted by an outside facilitator. While time and resource constraints would not permit TCC to provide any further assistance in this regard, TCC recommended the idea to USAID and other donors for future consideration.

IFES: The Major Problems:-

It is quite clear that significant numbers of Guyana's citizens lack confidence and trust in the electoral process. Every election in Guyana in the past decade has resulted in allegations of irregularities at registration, polling and counting. In the last three national elections, these irregularities were based on (1) what citizens and parties claimed to be flawed voter registration lists and (2) problems at the polling places on Election Day. Independent reviews after the elections found that the problems or errors resulted from factors like a lack of capacity, time constraints, or incompetence rather than deliberate fraud or conspiracy. While this review has, in the end, exonerated Guyana's elections and those involved from charges of significant fraud or conspiracy, many stakeholders will have confidence in election results until there is a significant reduction in irregularities.

Six problems appear to be at the heart of Guyana's electoral difficulties:

1. a general lack of trust;
2. the lack of clear, comprehensive, easy-to-understand election laws that all stakeholders know and understand;
3. the lack of a reliable voter registry;
4. the lack of sufficient lead time to prepare for Election Day;
5. election night results that do not inspire confidence because of constant changes; and
6. general technological inefficiencies.

Establishing Trust Between GECOM and All Stakeholders In Guyana's Elections.

It is critical that all stakeholders are able to trust the integrity of GECOM, both the institution and the individual managers who lead the conduct of elections. The best way to

establish trust is to encourage interaction among all actors. Insufficient trust is the core problem faced by all attempts to improve citizens' and political parties' perceptions of Guyana's electoral process. A significant part of the distrust results from the fact that promises were made—but not kept—by the government (though not necessarily by GECOM). Given that there is significant public distrust of GECOM and that each election has resulted in allegations of fraud, abuse and mismanagement, strategic and regular interactions with stakeholders are critical steps towards improving the situation.

Overhauling Election Law.

In order to implement the new design for voter registration (or any other significant revision to any of the outdated procedures for conducting election activities), the electoral law must be changed. For some time, IFES has recommended an overhaul of the legislative framework governing elections. In order to enable GECOM to implement new technologies—or even newly designed forms for voter registration, political party and candidate registration, ballot production, vote counting and tabulation, etc.—the law must be changed and segmented into different relevant sections.

Any review of Guyana's electoral law should recognize the country's need for a simple, understandable and transparent process by which voters can choose representatives to serve at every level of government. Guyana's electoral law should reflect generally accepted international standards and best practice while respecting appropriate and necessary local variation. The election review should draw on external expertise, the services of a local legal expert and input from stakeholders on an advisory basis. Commission members should be a part of the review process in order to eliminate the need for a second period of Commission review prior to submission to the legislature.

National election law should be revised to provide a general framework for the work of GECOM and should include less prescriptive detail. Too often election laws deal with procedures that are better left to a regulatory process so that they may more easily be revised to keep pace with technological developments and enable “best practice” experiences to be applied without undue delay. For example, the number of forms used in Guyana for voter registration should be reduced, and GECOM has already received suggestions for new forms developed with the support of an IFES consultant. (The forms are currently with the Commissioners for final approval.) Any new electoral law should also provide for the conduct of referenda. Guyana's constitution (Article 40 on fundamental rights of the individuals) does not explicitly recognize the right to vote as a fundamental right—though it should do so.

Addressing Voter Registration and Education Issues.

Because there is no permanent voter registry or sufficient time for voters and parties to review and correct list errors, the process of registration for each new election is often cumbersome and filled with public allegations of intentional misconduct. In addition, public trust in the lists, which are eventually used in elections, is minimal. Thus, the very foundation of Guyana's electoral system has always been unstable and continues to be seen as such. Just solving this perennial problem would be a quantum leap forward for the GECOM. Moreover,

solving this problem would do much to demonstrate that the work of GECOM can be trusted. Such an act could incline citizens to view other irregularities as mistakes rather than as results of deliberate, malicious actions.

Polling Place Activities and Election Day Officials

It is clear that shortcomings exist in the selection process for polling place officials. In addition, Guyana election law does not provide for the training of polling place officials. GECOM should conduct a training needs analysis (giving all stakeholders sufficient opportunity to provide input) and should develop and deliver a training program that fits stakeholders' articulated needs.

While Guyana's election law does discuss a number of important issues—the mode of voting, the voting procedure for blind and incapacitated voters, issues involving the obstruction or molestation of electors, and the procedures for closing the polls—the country's laws and regulations do not sufficiently address polling place hours, the procedures for opening the polls, or the other mechanics of voting (such as uniform procedures for counting ballots).

Creating Lead Time for Upcoming Local Elections.

The lead time required to properly conduct the cycle of electoral activities must be considered when choosing likely dates for elections. The general consensus among GECOM and those working as consultants to GECOM in Guyana is that a minimum timeline of 15 to 18 months is necessary, given the complex nature of local government elections, which in many respects present a greater administrative and organizational challenge than national elections.

Updating GECOM's Technological Capacity.

In order to produce an adequate system, GECOM should consider outsourcing the development of a voter registration system. This involves providing system specification, agreeing with the vendor on an incremental timeline for delivery of the different components of the system, testing components as they become available and keeping the commission apprised of progress.

Committee Evaluation of Data Entry Options and Other Technologies

The voter registration planning committee should review the Vision/Scope document (describing the new voter registration system) and the costs and timetables required to implement technologies, such as biometric identification of voters and geographical information systems (GIS). It should also decide what revisions to include in the new system. This planning should break projects into immediate, mid-term and long-term goals. Because of the need to modify the legal framework, and the time and cost involved in implementing biometric identification and GIS, it is recommended that the committee include these as mid- or long-term goals and not allow them to delay revision of the voter registration database procedures.

Commission Approval of Vision/Scope Document

Once the committee has decided on a rough timeline for implementation of these technologies, the timeline and the Vision/Scope document describing the new voter registration system should be presented to the commissioners for approval.

Redesign Data Structures

GECOM's database was designed to support the processes in place at the time of its design, and therefore reflects the inefficiencies of a manual process. The ID card production system from De La Rue is dependent upon a separate database, so data must be passed between the two systems.

Write Tender Document for Contracting Development

After the commissioners have approved the Vision/Scope document, the IT Manager should develop a tender document for the development of a system that reflects the approved design. The tender requirements should clearly spell out timelines, and the process should be broken up into logical modules, with release dates for each module.

Create Test Battery and Vendor Liaison Assignment

Once GECOM has reached agreement with a vendor for the development of the system, the IT Department should begin to create a series of tests to be applied to each module as it is released.

Transmitting and Announcing Election Night Results.

There seems to be general agreement that, in recent elections, Guyana has encountered problems with the announcement and transmission of results. These problems include: (1) irregular announcements; (2) some delays in transmissions of results; (3) some technical problems with the transmission of results; and (4) significant differences between the initial results announced and those officially certified. There is no clear legal regulation for transmitting the votes or for announcing the results with special regard to transparency and accountability.