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Guyana Democratic Consolidation & Conflict Resolution (GDCCR) Project

BI-ANNUAL REPORT

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Guyana Democratic Consolidation & Conflict Resolution (GDCCR) Project

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Background

As the Project entered its last year, the team undertook a thorough analysis of its scope, with a view to determining the most effective methodologies for efficient conclusion and completion of its activities.

- Several meetings with clients and stakeholders were held to review and refine priorities.
- The Expanded Strategic Objective Team (ESOT) met in January 2007, following the Lusignan massacre in which 12 individuals were killed by unknown gunmen. The focus of the meeting was on shifting priorities and on the importance of the Project being sensitive in the face of the crisis facing Guyana.
- In February 2008 after another unexplained massacre in Bartica, in which 11 persons lost their lives, the Project again regrouped and reprioritized its activities. One key activity planned for February/March, Sensitization of Stakeholders on Best Practices in Elections, was postponed after concurrence was received from the Cognizant Technical Officer (to June 2008).

Highlights and Summary of Activities

Highlights for the period under review are summarized below, grouped by Program Area. More detailed descriptions are in the body of this report.

Program Area 1: Rule of Law and Human Rights

Program Element 1.3: Justice System

Program Sub-Element: Operations of Institutions and Actions

(IR 2.3 - Administration of Justice Improved)

Mediation

- Convened a four-day, 28-hour advanced mediation training workshop for 16 originally trained attorneys/mediators, from November 28 to December 1, 2007.
- Trained 11 attorneys/mediators as trainers in a 32-hour training workshop, March 26-29, 2008.
- As part of their training, the aforementioned 11 attorneys/mediators were required to participate as trainers of the 60 professionals who were to be trained in advanced mediation in April and May 2008.
- Prepared a draft Practice Direction to circumvent the existing Rules of Procedure to facilitate the use of court-connected mediation for the consideration of the Acting Chancellor.
- Prepared a draft Practice Direction for payment of mediators for the consideration of the Chancellor (ag).
- Re-aired mediation video on TV stations, thereby sensitizing approximately 195,000 Guyanese.
- Disseminated approximately 3500 brochures on mediation to various stakeholders throughout the country.

Information Technology (IT)

- Prepared the scope of work and participated at the request of the High Court on the interviewing panel, which selected three IT specialists to work in the new IT unit. This unit was established to secure and modernize its records and contribute to reduction of the backlog.
- Installed and configured IT systems at the High Court.
- Trained four IT personnel.
- Requested approval from USAID to hire four data entry clerks who would be trained and supervised by the IT clerks trained by the Project. Overall supervision to be provided by Mr. Rasheed Mohamed, Deputy Registrar, Supreme Court of Judicature.

CD, Laws of Guyana

- Developed a scope of work (SOW) to allow the computerization of the Laws of Guyana, together with amendments up to their last revision, in a framework that is secure, simple to use, and updated.
- Trained three officials of the Office of Attorney General and five consultants to upload, refine, and approve the data.

Program Area 2: Good Governance

Program Element 2.3: Local Government and Decentralization

Program Sub-Element: Representative and Responsive Local Government

(IR 1.3: Local government reforms adopted and implemented)

Met with the Joint Task Force on Local Government to exchange views and to determine areas in which the Project would provide technical assistance to support the work of the Task Force. The Task Force had previously advised the Project in writing of the parameters of requested assistance. To date the Project has not received an official request for assistance.

Program Area 3: Political Competition and Consensus Building

Program Element 3.1: Consensus Building Processes

(IR 3: Vulnerability to ethnic-political conflict reduced)

Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM)

- Identified a consultant to sensitize GECOM Chairman, Commissioners and staff, political parties, and other stakeholders on international best practices in elections procedures worldwide. The consultant was identified after an in-depth search through contacting consultants in Ghana, Jamaica, Miami, and Trinidad and Tobago to determine their availability and interest.
- Prepared SOW and put all arrangements in place for series of workshops to sensitize stakeholders on international best practices in elections worldwide (to be conducted June 8-28, 2008).

Ethnic Relations Commission

- Convened a two-day, 16-hour training course for Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) Management on Supervisory Management, December 13-14, 2007.
- Conducted a two-day, 16-hour course on Campaign Management for 13 women from Region 5, Oct. 6-7, 2007.

Program Area 4: Civil Society

Program Element 4.1: Strengthen Democratic Civic Participation

(IR 1.2: Civic education institutionalized)

Media

Provided a grant of US\$76,800 to University of Guyana to strengthen the capacity of the Communications Unit after considering two Project proposals submitted by the University.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Collaborated with Dr. Catherine Elkins, Senior RTI Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, who visited Guyana November 26–December 2, 2007, to liaise with USAID and provide technical support to the in country team and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit.

Grants

After placing an advertisement in the media, evaluated 29 applicants for grant support and determined that approximately half met the relevant criteria for funding. As of March 31, 2008, eight which had met all criteria were funded.

Program Area Descriptions

Program Area 1: Rule of Law and Human Rights

Program Element 1.3: Justice System

Program Sub-Element: Operations of Institutions & Actions

(IR 2.3: Administration of justice improved)

There was considerable activity in Program Area 1 during the October 2007–March 2008 timeframe. This included advanced mediation training, further training and establishment of the High Court Case Tracking IT System, and establishment of a secure system to place the laws of Guyana on a CD to ensure updating and accuracy. Each is described in detail below.

Mediation

Advanced Mediation Training, November–December 2007

The Project organized and convened an advanced mediation training workshop from Wednesday, November 28, to Saturday, December 1, 2007, at the Georgetown Club. At the Opening Ceremony, the Honourable Justice Claudette La Bennett made opening remarks on behalf of the Chancellor (ag). Other speakers included Ms. Dhanmattie Sohail-Welch, Cognizant Technical Officer of USAID for the GDCCR Project, who spoke on behalf of USAID; Mr. Richard Moore, President of MDC Associates Conflict Resolution Inc., Ottawa, Canada; and Mr. Colin Chichester, Director of the Mediation Centre. The proceedings were chaired by Ms. Beverly Braithwaite-Chan, one of the more recently trained mediators who is a social worker by profession. The Opening Ceremony was reported in *The Chronicle* newspaper on November 29, 2007.



The Hon. Justice Claudette La Bennett speaking at the Opening Ceremony on behalf of the Chancellor (ag)



Ms. Dhanmattie Sohai, Cognizant Technical Officer, Democracy and Governance, making remarks on behalf of USAID

Consultant Mr. Richard Moore conducted the course for 16 previously trained attorneys/mediators. Participants included the Honourable Ms. Clarissa Riehl, Deputy Speaker of the House and Member of Parliament; and Mr. Basil Williams, Member of Parliament.

The focus of the training was as follows:

- Understanding the role of the lawyer at a mediation session.
- Helping clients to make the transition from litigation to mediation.
- Helping clients to understand that mediation is not a “free for all.”
- Using a caucus.
- Dealing with the very common and sensitive cases of families fighting over the ownership or entitlement to land and the importance of having lawyers involved in these cases.
- Engaging lawyers in, and educating them on, the mediation process.
- Dealing with the confusing messages about whether mediation is a client-led or a mediator-led process.
- Understanding the need to have people with authority at the table—especially for dealing with disputes in which governments are involved.

Key Actions for Advancing Mediation in Guyana

Several issues surfaced during the four-day course, including the following:

- The payment of mediators.
- The need for mediators to sensitize clients, lawyers, and potential new mediators about the process.

- The lawyer’s role in the use of mediation/alternative dispute resolution (ADR) before initiating court proceedings.
- Advice for clients about opening Mediation Centres or otherwise encouraging and facilitating the use of mediation throughout Guyana.
- Education for lawyers about mediation and what is expected from them and their clients, without clients being present, prior to the commencement of mediation (for the uninitiated lawyers).
- The need for a greater public relations component, as follows:
 - Engaging lawyers to seal their further participation and commitment to the process
 - Ensuring that there is country-wide public education
 - Conveying that mediation is an extension of the court process (in terms of garnering acceptance and respect for the process)
 - Providing public education and professional education
 - Establishing a professional mediators association.
- The participants completed a survey prepared by the consultant about general areas for Court Connected Mediation Project improvement, personal commitment, and justice system advancement. The results of this survey revealed that all of the trainees were highly supportive of the concept of mediation being utilized as a tool to reduce the backlog and they supported promptly promulgating the Rules of Procedure and ensuring payment of mediators.

Collaborative Communication Exercise

- On the last day of the workshop, the group discussed the possibilities of developing viable mediation practices in Guyana, and their roles as mediators/attorneys to successfully resolve settlements for clients in mediation.
- The trainer raised the possibility that this group of leaders in mediation consider taking ownership of developing a mediators association to promote the concept of mediation and the education and professional development of mediators in Guyana. The idea was warmly received.
- The participants were very open to the idea of conducting a demonstration mediation exercise for newly trained mediators, and did so on the last day of the training. This included lawyer-to-client interviews in preparation for mediation and the mediation session itself (see below). Participants viewed this as an important step for building internal capacity through “train the trainer” activities and for developing joint learning and professional development.
- The participants expressed an interest in developing a practical primer for both lawyers and clients to use in preparation for mediation. The consultant agreed to provide a template of one that is used in the North American context and participants will refine it so as to make it helpful in the Guyanese context. The Project is committed to assisting in the dissemination of the primer as part of the public education process.

Mediation Demonstration for New Mediation Trainees

- In addition to the Advanced Mediation Trainees, GDCCR also invited the 60 recently trained (June 2007) mediators to the course, and 22 of them responded. As noted above, the trainees observed two simulations conducted by the trainer and participants from the advanced training course, and GDCCR provided the observers with background material so they could understand the dispute which was to be mediated.
 - Client Preparation Simulation. GDCCR taped the simulated lawyer/client interview in which proper techniques for preparing a client to attend a mediation session were performed. Two of the advanced mediation trainees simulated the lawyer and client roles and the resulting 15-minute tape would be used for future learning purposes.
 - Mediation Simulation. Following the mock interview, the trainer and six participants from the advanced mediation course simulated mediation in a 1.25-hour session. The simulation was followed up by a one-hour debrief and question-and-answer session. Due to interest of the participants, all observers stayed for the full debriefing session, which continued for approximately a half hour over the allotted time.
- The trainer observed that the skills demonstrated in the simulations, including the taped session, were “among the finest he had seen.” The consultant considered this activity as a wonderful example of internal capacity building and development of a culturally sensitive product for training and sensitization purposes.



Mediators from both groups observing the simulation

The Chancellor (ag) agreed to the wording of a Confidentiality Agreement that would permit the participation of the other trained professionals in the mediation process and pave the way for their advanced training in April–May 2008.

At the Closing Ceremony, remarks were made by the Honourable Justice Carl Singh, Chancellor (ag); Ms. Gloria Richards-Johnson, Chief of Party, GDCCR; and Mr. Richard Moore, Consultant. The proceedings were chaired by Mr. Kashir Khan, President of the Guyana Bar Association.

The Closing Ceremony was reported on December 4, 2007, in the *Stabroek News* newspaper.



Hon. Justice Carl Singh, Chancellor (ag); Mr. Richard Moore, Mediator/Trainer; Ms. Gloria Richards-Johnson, Chief of Party, USAID-GDCCR Project; and some of the participants

Prior to the selection of Mr. Moore as the Consultant, GDCCR contacted the following other consultants to determine their availability and interest in conducting the workshop, which was approved in the 2008 Work Plan:

- Deborah Mendez-Bowen, Executive Director, The Dispute Resolution Centre, Trinidad and Tobago
- Steven Weller-Senior Consultant, Policy Studies Inc., Denver, Colorado
- Mr. Tom Kalpatoo – University of the West Indies (UWI), Trinidad and Tobago, and consultant, Ontario, Canada.

The Project received responses from Mr. Moore, President of MDR Associates, Conflict Resolution Inc.; and Mr. Kalpatoo, who was unavailable during the first quarter but indicated his availability to conduct the training in the second quarter.

The mediation brochure was completed for dissemination to stakeholders in the first quarter.

The mediation discussions between the Acting Chancellor and Professor Peter Britton, the Registrar and Director of the Mediation Centre, which had been taped in 2006, were aired on several television stations during the review period.

Advanced Mediation Training – March 2008

During March 26–29, 2008, mediation consultants Mr. Moore and Dr. Steven Weller provided technical assistance to the project. Their activities are listed below and described in greater detail later in this chapter.

- Training-of-trainers exercise for previously trained attorneys/mediators
- Mediation sensitization session in Essequibo for 30 persons from various professions
- Technical guidance to the mediation association
- Guidance on public education
- Preparation of Practice Direction regarding payment of mediators
- Preparation of Practice Direction regarding Rules of Procedure
- Recommendations to improve processes at the Mediation Centre



Ten mediation trainers and consultants

Train-the-Trainers Workshop, March 26–29, 2008

Eleven mediators/attorneys were trained as trainees by Mr. Moore and Dr. Weller, as follows.

The participants reviewed and refined the advanced mediation skills workshop and studied the creation of learning objectives and lesson plans.

They learned that learning objectives should be:

- Cognitive (what the learner will know);
- Affective (what the learner will feel or value); or
- Behavioural (what the learner will be able to do).

Learning objectives should be written in the active voice. Examples:

- Cognitive: As a result of this session, the participants will be able to explain the difference between arbitration and mediation.
- Affective: As a result of this session, participants will be able to look for more opportunities to promote settlement of cases.

- Behavioural: As a result of this session, the participants will be able to make effective use of caucuses during the course of mediation.

Once the desired outcomes of each session of the workshop were specified, the participants wrote detailed lesson plans, including content to be presented, the methods of presentation, and the use of adult education techniques. The workshop also focused on cultural issues unique to Guyana.

Other tasks completed:

- Writing of role-plays
- Use and debriefing of role-plays
- Preparation for participation as coaches and trainers in the advanced mediation skills workshop.

At the conclusion of the train-the-trainer exercise, the participants deepened their understanding of the mediation process as well as developing their ability to teach the theory and provide skills-building training in mediation. The goals of the exercise were to leave a cadre of trainers who will be able to sustain the work that has been done to date, and to develop Guyanese capacity to spread the knowledge and skills throughout the country.

A main focus of the program was to review, adjust, and adapt the training exercises, role plays, and approaches in the advanced mediation course to the Guyanese context. Participants were divided into groups for this purpose. The result was the completion of four fully adapted mediation role plays and two exercises that could be used in the upcoming advanced mediation training, and in future mediation training in Guyana.

The program also tested the newly created exercises and role plays to ensure that they worked well for the intended purposes and to train the trainers in effective adult-based training and debriefing techniques.

The trainers also reviewed and revised the draft four-day agenda for the advanced mediation training and the consultants assigned the trainees to take a role in selected parts of the training program.

At the wind-up of the course, during the evaluation section, several trainees opined that the new advanced mediation training course was superior to the one taught in November 2007. The reason for this was that the Guyanese trainees had made the course more culturally sensitive. In addition, all agreed that they had deepened their own understanding of mediation theory and sharpened their skills in discrete conflict-resolution techniques, so that they would be able to teach them in the advanced courses.

Rules of Procedure

On Friday, March 28, 2008, the consultants and the COP met with Ms. Sita Ramlall, Registrar, to discuss the existing Rules of Procedure. They studied the existing Rules and

prepared a draft practice direction which will not affect the existing Rules of Procedure but will provide a mechanism for making mediation a court connected measure. The draft document was discussed with the Project and Chancellor, and submitted to the Chancellor for his consideration.

Sensitization Session at Essequibo – March 31, 2008

On Monday, March 31, 2008, the consultants, accompanied by members of the GDCCR team—Mr. Kashir Khan, President of the Guyana Bar Association; Ms. Jamela Ali, Attorney and Practicing Mediator; and Mr. Colin Chichester, Director of the Mediation Centre—visited the High Court in Suddie, Essequibo, for a sensitization exercise on mediation.

Thirty persons from the community participated. Ms. Richards-Johnson, COP, gave opening remarks on behalf of the Project while the Honourable Justice Dawn Gregory Barnes gave remarks on behalf of the Chancellor (ag). The consultants, President of the Bar, practicing mediator, and director of the Mediation Centre gave remarks from their individual perspectives.

The program was enthusiastically received by the audience, several of whom commented that communities like Essequibo lend themselves to community mediation since there are long-standing family ties and people have a tradition of settling differences amicably. Lawsuits are utilized as a last resort. Members of the audience included Ministers of Religion, Justices of Peace and Commissioners of Oath, senior police officers, lawyers, town clerks, businessmen, and farmers.

Many in the audience requested that mediation training be conducted in the Essequibo area. It was noted that the High Court at Suddie has a room earmarked for a Mediation Centre. Five hundred mediation brochures were distributed in Essequibo.

Proposed Mediation Association

In preparation for the late March visit of the international consultants, the Project provided technical assistance to convene a meeting of all trained mediators at the Tower Hotel on January 18, 2008. A task force of seven persons was established to move the process forward. Approximately 70 persons participated. On March 14, at 15:00 hrs, the task force met to report to the plenary to refine the issues related to the establishment of a Mediation Centre. Approximately 40 mediators participated.



Some members of the mediation task force

The task force met with Mr. Moore and Dr. Weller at the GDCCR office on March 25, 2008, to discuss the issues related to its establishment. The consultants provided the following documents from Canada for the guidance of the body:

1. Natural Code of Conduct
2. Natural Mediator Rules
3. Canada By-Laws
4. Code of Ethics
5. Natural Arbitration Rules
6. Disciplinary Procedures
7. Background documents

Public Education

The consultants provided guidance to the Project related to public education about mediation. A video prepared as part of the training is to be edited and aired as part of the public education program.

Payment of Mediators

After the consultants met with the Registrar and discussed the matter at length, the ideas regarding the formula for payment of mediators were fully discussed with and well received by the Chancellor. The consultants prepared a Practice Direction for the consideration of the Chancellor (ag).

Mediation Centre

The consultants made recommendations on improving processes of the Mediation Centre and handling disposition of cases more efficiently. In addition, the Project provided the Mediation Centre with a telephone/fax/copying machine. In addition, 1000 mediation brochures were distributed to the Mediation Centre.

Follow-Up Requirements

- Advanced mediation training for approximately 50 mediators was scheduled for April (first session – April 2–6, 2008) and May (second session – May 14–17, 2008).
- Basic mediation training for 25 Justices of the Peace and Commissioners of Oaths was scheduled for May 21–24, 2008.
- Establishment of a mediation association was scheduled for June 2008.

Estimated Completion Date

- July 31, 2008.

High Court Case Tracking System/IT Support

Background

In October and November 2007, at the request of the Registrar, the Project participated on the interviewing panel at the High Court to select the IT personnel for a new IT section of the High Court, which will take responsibility for maintaining the Court's IT system designed by the Project. Hiring of IT personnel was a condition for RTI to continue to provide technical assistance and ensure that the tracking system designed and initiated by the Project would continue in a sustainable manner. The IT personnel were hired by the High Court in December 2007 and began working the first week of January 2008. The hiring of the personnel allowed the return of the RTI IT advisor in March 2008 to continue the implementation of the case tracking system at the High Court. The case tracking system not only will modernize and secure the cases, but also should contribute to the reduction of the backlog through more effective case management.

The computerization of the Registry of the Supreme Court of Guyana is an important step to speed up and bring stronger security and accountability to the workings of the judicial system in Guyana. RTI started working on this component in April 2005 and IT infrastructure and systems development have been updated.

Two Dell Power Edge servers were procured to act as main and backup processing units for the Registry. Together with these servers, a tape backup unit and DVD-ROM units were purchased for permanent and offsite data storage and backup. The servers are housed in a steel rack and provided with a rack-mounted uninterruptible power supply (UPS).

Also, network switches, patch panels, wireless cards, and access points were acquired.

The Registry was networked by a local company under the supervision of RTI staff; 24 new network connections were added, covering all the areas of the Registry, to accommodate the existing computers and to provide an adequate margin for additional computers.

Six computers and two laser printers, from a total of 12 assigned to the Registry, were installed and configured to access the initial version of the system. These computers

replaced existing and very outdated units, and will allow the users to practice with the flight sheet tracking system as they would do in a live environment.

A DSL-based Internet connection was provided to the Registry, with a one-year contract paid by the GDCCR Project. This connection currently allows RTI staff to perform remote monitoring and operation of the servers, will enable the safeguarding of critical information in remote data centres, and will provide e-mail and Web access to selected users.

The first version of this system was developed according to the assessment made in April 2005, and the application was published to internal users in the Registry to gather comments, handle requests for changes, and allow the users to familiarize themselves with the future application in a “real” environment.

As requested in the project plan, in 2006, three positions were created within the Supreme Court for IT specialists. These positions (one junior manager and two technicians) will support the Information System for the Registry of the Supreme Court of Guyana, and other units within the Supreme Court. The creation of these positions was key to the smooth implementation of this system, and the delay in their creation and fulfilment created a major delay for this component.

While the first batch of computers was being set up, it became clear that power supply problems existed at the Registry office, and are most likely caused by a low circuit capacity. While the computers and printers were able to operate, the use of the printers was usually triggering the UPSs, due to the increase in power consumption.

The only valid long-term solution, and RTI’s recommended approach, was to perform a complete inspection and upgrading of the electrical cabling at the Registry office, running a new circuit for both computers and printers. This was completed in 2007, and the power supply at the Registry office has been normalized. While this does not exempt the Registry from the occasional power cut affecting Georgetown, it provides a much more stable environment to deploy these systems.

System Development

The main development and debugging tasks were moved to an offshore consultant, to assist the GDCCR Project in finalizing both the system at the Registry and the publication of the Laws of Guyana.

Mr. Lachezar Hristov, based in Bulgaria, will provide the bulk of the development work for collaborating with RTI and Registry staff, and receiving feedback on the use of the system.

Data Migration

During the past two years, and by the initiative of Mr. Rashid Mohammed, Deputy Chief Registrar, the Registry has been using a basic system developed in MS Access. Over

time, this system has captured enough information on existing cases, and should not be ignored when a new system is implemented.

It is for that reason that one of the tasks assigned to Mr. Hristov is to perform the migration from the previous system to the one being developed by RTI. This will save a considerable amount of time in the implementation stage. It is estimated that 10,000 cases are registered in this system, even if not all possess complete information, or if some are not in a format that will allow for migration to the new system.

Server Installation

The servers that were delivered in 2007 were installed and configured to run the system. During the setup process it was discovered that one of the servers had a faulty motherboard. The RTI advisor, with the help of the local IT staff, requested the necessary replacements (the server was still within the warranty period). The new parts were delivered to Guyana and replaced by the IT Manager.

Having these two servers up and running will provide the Registry with a stable computing base. Both servers have registered software, dual power supplies, dual processors, and multiple disks, providing excellent fault tolerance. The provision of two servers was to prevent a complete outage if one of the servers should fail.

With shipping and delivery times hovering around 2-3 weeks, having a completely redundant system is the only option for such a key component.

IT Staff Interviewing and Training

About 50% of the advisor's time spent at the Registry was devoted to training the new IT staff on the hardware and software infrastructure, and particularly on the installation and use of the Registry system. The skill level of the staff varies, and some levelling will be necessary.

The current IT manager clearly had more experience, and in collaboration with him a training schedule was set up to encourage the technicians to achieve a technical certification by the end of the year, with the possibility of having the Project cover the examinations. This has not yet been confirmed.

System Rollout

A final test release was installed on the Registry servers and is currently in use and accessible by all the computers in the Registry network. The staff has been trained in the management of the system, creation of accounts, and backups.

The RTI advisor is in close contact with the IT manager regarding bugs that may be discovered, and suggestions that need to be incorporated into the system based on the usage experience of the Registry staff.

So far, the system has proved to be very simple to use (a key requirement given the high turnover at the Registry office) and very stable. Mr. Hristov will remain engaged in the

project until its completion, and will work on any issues that are discovered in the system.

Future Steps

Amendment of pertinent laws

The Project is awaiting an update on the process to reform the laws that guide the way in which causes are to be processed at the Supreme Court. This requirement has been outlined to the former Chancellor (ag) Justice, Carl Singh; Mr. Ian Chang, current Chief Justice; and Mr. Ceciel Dhurjon, Chief Parliamentary Counsel.

This is a very important step, and until this reform is completed, the proposed system cannot be used without having to enter data in the traditional way—that is, using the cause books which this Project is aiming to replace. Given this task constraint, the ultimate factor deciding the system's full utilization start date will be the amendment to the Laws of Guyana.

Handover of the system

The final version of the system should be handed over to a local firm or to the technical staff at the Registry before the end of the period of performance of the GDCCR Project. Currently it is not clear if the IT staff at the Registry will be able to support the system, but it should be noted that the current IT manager, Mr. Steven Backreedy, has considerable software development experience and could be an ideal candidate.

Data entry of existing cases

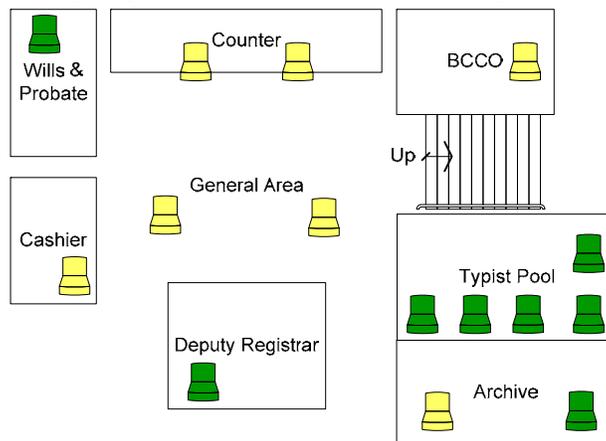
The accession of the existing records into the system will demand an extra effort, which ideally should be performed by staff hired for this purpose.

It is therefore recommended that a team of four data entry staff be hired for a period of three to four months to work solely on this task.

Completion of the computer rollout on the lower floor

Most of the computers donated by USAID to the Registry have been installed next to the server room, on the first floor of the Registry where the IT and data entry staff is located. During the coming months, the remaining computers will be installed on the lower floor to allow for more people to enter data into the system and to start using it for cause-related queries.

Exhibit 1. Present and projected locations for computers



The above diagram shows the present location for computer terminals at the Registry (green) alongside the computers to be added before the completion of the project (yellow).

The monitors provided by USAID had an unusually high rate of failure, and needed to be replaced. By the time the advisor left Guyana, there were six monitors awaiting repairs. The price of the needed repairs (as confirmed by two stores in Georgetown) is very similar to the cost of new units, so the Registry is being encouraged to acquire new units rather than replacing the existing ones.

Action Taken

During his visit to Guyana March 5–19, 2008, RTI advisor Mr. Pablo Destafanis installed and configured the servers. He also trained the IT staff. A final test release, installed on the Registry servers, is currently in use and accessible by all computers in the Registry network. The staff has been trained in the management of the system, plus creation of accounts and back-ups. SOWs were prepared by the Project to hire five data entry clerks to assist in the inputting of data.

Results

- The Deputy Chief Registry, junior manager, and two IT technicians were trained at the High Court on the hardware and software infrastructure and particularly on the installation and use of the Registry system.
- Servers were installed and configured to run the system.
- A request for approval to hire five data entry clerks was submitted to USAID in the form of a SOW.
- The data entry clerks are expected to report to work on Monday, April 14, 2008. Each is expected to input approximately 600 cases per month.
- 170 cases were input in the month of March 2008.

Follow-Up Requirement

- The final version of the system is to be handed over to a local firm or the technical staff of the Registry before conclusion of the GDCCR Project.
- Data entry clerks are to input approximately 600 cases each per month.

Estimated Completion Date

July 15, 2008.

Laws of Guyana

Background

In several meetings held with the office of the Attorney General in 2007, the Project and the Attorney General agreed on the methodology for refining the CD with the Laws of Guyana and establishing the Law Revision Unit. The discussion focused on the methodology to be utilized, use of personnel, and the counterpart contribution of the Attorney General's office.

Following the Law Order Revision (LOR) of 1977, the Laws of Guyana underwent a new revision in 1998. The process involved revising the entire set of Laws of Guyana and updating them according to the amendments that were passed since the previous LOR.

At the end of this process and as a separate task, the scanning and digital storage of the entire Laws of Guyana was commissioned to a company from Barbados. This company returned the first set of laws in electronic format.

This first set of laws contained some mistakes, mostly due to omission of laws or part of laws during the scanning process; this is estimated to amount to 10% of the total number of laws.

During early 2004, another attempt was made to create an electronic version of the Laws of Guyana; this was done by National Democratic Institute (NDI) with the help of local consultants and personnel from the Attorney General's office.

The work was to be based on the 1998 CD-ROM, adding to it the amendments for the following years.

This attempt aimed to do a "one-time-only" version of the Laws, and no proper updating procedures were put in place. The resulting product was a hard-to-navigate electronic version of the Laws with the amendments up to the year 2002, in which many of the original omissions from the 1998 version were still not corrected.

First Talks with the Attorney General – 2005

In April, 2005, RTI presented an initial proposal to the Attorney General to restart the production of the CD of the Laws, using the digitized subset of laws left from previous

attempts. This subset required a thorough revision and correction before they could be used for this project.

Present Situation

Based on the assessment made in 2005, it is estimated that 75% of the existing laws may already be available in electronic format, with amendments up to the year 2002.

This subset can be used as a starting point, and it may help reduce the workload required to create a complete scan of the laws and its amendments. RTI is confident that by using a proper workflow, sound scanning techniques, and a clear updating mechanism, it is possible to obtain a finalized version of the CD of the Laws of Guyana in under 6 months. This will require both strong planning and commitment from the stakeholders, for both management and execution.

Working Plan

RTI advisor Mr. Destafanis developed a scope of work that would allow the compilation of the Laws, together with their amendments up to their last revision, in a framework that is secure, is simple to use, allows easy updating of the body of laws by the Attorney General's office, and is not fixed to a single publishing format.

In order to make this project sustainable, the same office that now updates the paper edition of the laws needs to be able to update its electronic counterpart in the future. To enforce this, RTI has strived to secure the participation of the staff at the Attorney General's office on both training and work sessions.

Main Objectives

- Compile a complete set of the Laws of Guyana in electronic format that is syntactically and semantically correct and complete, and an accurate depiction of the Laws on paper.
- Amend the initial set to their last revision, while developing an updating system that can be used on an ongoing basis to review, approve, and publish future revisions.
- Create a distributable version of the Laws that provides a simple interface and search functions.

Extent of the Body of Laws

RTI's initial estimation is 10,000 pages. The Attorney General's office has confirmed this and provided a "catalog" of the current laws. They have also provided a priority listing for the different sets of laws. This will allow for prioritization of the most commonly consulted (and amended) laws.

The last attempt to produce a CD of the Laws of Guyana resulted in a series of Portable Document Format (PDF) documents, most of which are locked. This "lock" allows the information to be seen but prevents it from being printed or exported to other formats.

Although it is possible to circumvent this “lock,” the quality of the documents previously scanned is dubious and it is possible that all the laws will need to be scanned.

Classification

In collaboration with the officials of the Attorney General’s office, the final format for the electronic version of the Laws has been agreed upon. This includes the organization of the different sections, the searching abilities, publication formats, and updating mechanisms.

The technical tools and the processes used need to be detailed and documented properly to enable them to function as the guides to the maintenance of the Laws.

At a minimum, the format will define:

- How documents will be scanned, and how images will be named, stored, and post-processed
- Text mark-up on the scanned documents, based on the current page layout on the books with the Laws of Guyana
- Desired presentation format
- Desired indexing and search capabilities for the final application
- Procedure to correct the existing electronic publication, and to incorporate additions and amendments
- Procedure to allow the periodic or ad hoc publishing of the Laws in different media.

One of the main criticisms of previous electronic versions of the Laws of Guyana was the difficulty in finding information and navigating through the contents. The GDCCR Project understands that in order for this publication to become an effective tool, it needs to be user-friendly and precise in the search for legal information.

An adequate index, based on the organization of the Laws together with a full-text index, has been added, to ensure accessibility from anywhere in the publication. This electronic catalogue will complement the traditional chapter-based index and will allow for searches based on words, phrases, and logical expressions.

Presentation Format

The Laws will be available both online and on CD-ROM. A portable, CD-based Web server will be added to the distribution to allow duplication from two different presentation formats.

As noted earlier, the aim was to compile the Laws of Guyana, together with the amendments up to the last revision, in a framework that is secure, is simple to use, allows easy updating by the Attorney General’s office, and is not fixed to a simple publishing format.

Actions Taken

The advisor:

- Established procedures including unlocking the CD before coming to Guyana.
- Met with Attorney General, Permanent Secretary, Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel, and Senior Counsel to ensure that he had their commitment to the process.
- Provided training to Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Senior Counsel, Law Revision Clerk, and five consultants hired by the Project.
- Developed electronic scheme to be followed by the trainees.
- Continues to monitor the activity from overseas on a regular basis.
- Acquired a catalogue of Laws from the office of the Attorney General.
- Prepared a Gantt chart of activities.

Results

- Five consultants were trained.
- Three employees of the Attorney General's office were trained.
- In March 2008, five Acts were revised and five Acts sent to the Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel for approval.

Follow-Up Requirement

Consultants are continuing to input laws.

Estimated Completion Date

July 31, 2008.

Program Area 2: Good Governance

Program Element 2.3: Local Government and Decentralization

Program Sub-Element: Representative and Responsive Local Government

(IR 1.3: Local government reforms adopted and implemented)

Local Government

On Tuesday November 27, 2007, the CTO, COP, M&E specialist, and members of the Project team met with the Joint Task Force on Local Government. The Task Force indicated that it would welcome technical assistance from the Project in the following key areas:

- Assistance to the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to refine legislation and draft bills.
- Public sensitization of the work of the Task Force on the bills being considered.

After not receiving a formal request in writing for assistance, on January 3, 2008, the Project wrote to the Task Force requesting a response and advising of its time constraints since it was due to conclude in September 2008. In the interim, the Project collected resumes from legal drafters and spoke to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to determine the parameters of required assistance. To date the project has received no request from the Joint Task Force on Local Government, the Presidential advisor or the Chief Parliamentary Council.

Action Taken

The Project has recommended to USAID that this activity be deleted from the FY 08 Work Plan since there has been no response from the stakeholders.

Results

Awaiting response from USAID.

Follow-Up Requirement

Handle in accordance with USAID recommendation.

Estimated Completion Date

June 2008.

Program Area 3: Political Competition and Consensus Building

Program Element 3.1: Consensus Building Processes

(IR 3: Vulnerability to ethnic-political conflict reduced)

Electoral Reform

All arrangements have been put in place for Mr. Eugene Petty, Organization of American States, Miami, to visit Guyana to sensitize stakeholders on international best practices in elections. Because of the security crisis which developed in Guyana in January and February 2008, the Project requested Mr. Petty to visit Guyana in March or April 2008. The consultant, however, advised of his unavailability until June because of other commitments. The SOW has been approved by the CTO. The CTO and COP agreed to defer the exercise until June 8–28, 2008. Mr. Petty is expected to complete the following activities:

- a three-day workshop for GECOM Commissioners and Secretariat
- a three-day workshop for political parties
- a one-day sensitization workshop for stakeholders
- a one-day workshop for donors.

The consultant initially retained by the Project, Mr. Carl Dundas, informed GDCCR that he was no longer able to provide assistance during FY08 since he had accepted a long-term position in Ethiopia.

In October 2007, GDCCR had contacted the following well-known experts on electoral reform to ascertain their interest and availability to conduct sensitivity seminars on international best practices in electoral reform and possible modernization of GECOM.

- Mr. Noel Lee, Former Director of Elections, Jamaica
- Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, Chairman, Ghana Elections Commission
- Ms. Joycelyn Lucas, Former Chief Elections Officer, Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Eugene Petty, OAS

Mr. Petty, Electoral Administrator and long-term representative for the OAS Election Mission to Guyana in 2006, agreed to:

- Review the Dundas needs assessment and other pertinent reports
- Make recommendations on international best practices worldwide.
- Visit Guyana in June 2008 to conduct the aforementioned meetings.

Action Taken

Once country clearance is granted, arrangements will be put in place for workshops.

Results

Not applicable

Follow-Up Requirement

Convene workshops and facilitate meetings with stakeholders.

Estimated Completion Date

June 30, 2008.

Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC)

Training in Supervisory Management

As stipulated in the FY08 Work Plan, the Project conducted a training program for the Ethnic Relations Commission on supervisory management. This was in keeping with continued efforts to build the capacity of the ERC to better serve in consensus-building processes and to reduce the vulnerability to ethnic conflicts in Guyana.

The training was conducted on December 13-14, 2007. All eight of the supervisors/managers of the ERC participated. The departments represented were:

- Investigation
- Public Relations
- Finance
- Public Education
- Administration.

The training was conducted by Consultant Mr. Wesley Vanvelzen. Modules covered were: definition of a supervisor, leadership and supervision, communication in supervision, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) self-analysis, problem solving, and decision making.



Participants at the ERC supervisory management workshop

In their evaluations, the participants expressed gratitude and deep appreciation for the training and topics covered. They also requested follow-up training on relevant topics.

Chairman Bishop Juan Edghill and Chief Executive Officer Ms. Christine King of the ERC also expressed gratitude for the Project's response to their request for this training and reiterated the need for additional training.

Program Area 4: Civil Society

Program Element 4.1: Strengthen Democratic Civic Participation

(IR 1.2: civic education institutionalized)

This very active project component produced results in the following areas: women in government, civic education, partnerships, the International Development Partners (IDP) Working Group, and the media. Each of them is discussed below.

Workshops – Women in Local Government

The Project concluded a series of workshops designed to empower women in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to participate in the local government elections and decision making by conducting the final workshop for Region 5 on October 6-7, 2007. Thirteen women

participated. This final workshop was one of a three-part series, and incorporated sessions entitled “Leadership Skills,” “Understanding Local Government,” and “Campaign Management.” The majority of the events took place in June, July, and September 2007. Over 120 women participated, including councillors, housewives, nurses, teachers, community activists, etc. Due to the lack of availability of a proper venue, Region 5 was omitted from the simultaneous implementation during the September 29-30 timeframe. That event took place in October 2007.

Training of Trainers – Women in Local Government

The Project will complete all five modules of the manual for women in local government. To this end, a training of trainers’ workshop was conducted on March 2, 2008. The focus of the training was on effective use of the media. This module continues a five-module workshop for the preparation of women in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to participate in local government elections and decision making. The project had taught three modules during the last fiscal year. Topics covered were leadership skills, understanding local government, and campaign management. The facilitators for those three workshops will be contracted again for continuity.

Action Taken

The first workshop in the regions was scheduled for March 2008. However, due to the unavailability of the participants because of their involvement in the house-to-house registration being conducted by GECOM, the activity was postponed.

Follow-Up Requirement

The final workshop will be on negotiation skills.

Estimated Completion Date

It is estimated that both workshops will conclude by June 2008.

Civic Education Training of Leaders in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10

On February 26-28, 2008, the Project implemented its training-of-trainers activity on the *Civic Education Manual* at the Tower Hotel. Ms. Bonita Harris was contracted to facilitate the workshop. Fourteen persons representing various organizations from Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 attended.

The facilitator thought it prudent to follow the content and methodology of the manual, for the following reasons:

- To give each potential trainer the experience of participating in a genuinely participatory training course
- To provide a model for participants to emulate in conducting their own training sessions
- To test the manual as a whole, as well as individual exercises, in practical real-life and real-time terms

- To verify, once again, her conviction and experience that a well-thought-out and clearly laid-out participatory training process that engages each participant can positively transform individuals and groups—even in a period as short as three days.

To provide the backdrop for the three days, the facilitator did two self-awareness exercises which allowed the participants to acknowledge that they knew little about their bodies, and others, and that there is a minimal focus on issues surrounding us. Consequently, participants were encouraged throughout the sessions to keep their hearts and minds open to new information, opinions, and perspectives on the factors behind the issues, and on challenges and problems facing Guyana and Guyanese, and to suspend the tendency to judge, label, and condemn.

Action Taken

A scope of work was prepared and submitted to the CTO for approval of this activity. This activity is scheduled to commence in April and conclude in June 2008.

Result

All 15 of the exercises were covered in whole or in part. It must be noted that commitments were made by the participants during the training of trainers to start using the manual in their different areas of operation—e.g., the University of Guyana (UG), church, schools. Thirty-seven manuals were distributed to facilitate the process. Feedback from the participants revealed that one session was held for 13 members of the University of Guyana International Affairs Association (UGIAA) in March 2008 and another for approximately 80 persons was held during a church conference at the World Vision New Testament Church of God. Both groups used modules of the manual and have plans for another session in April 2008. Reports are to be submitted.

Follow-Up Requirement

The Project will continue to monitor the use of the manuals and measure the output until the conclusion of the program in September 2008.

Additional Civic Education Training of Leaders in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10

In preparation for the next phase of the implementation of the civic education manual, the Project has planned to implement six two-day workshops for leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10. Trainers from the just-concluded training-of-trainers' workshop held February 26-28, 2008, facilitated by Ms. Harris, will serve as facilitators.

Action Taken

A scope of work was prepared and submitted to the CTO for approval of this activity.

Result

Awaiting approval from CTO.

Estimated Completion Date

This activity is scheduled to commence in April and conclude in June 2008.

Networking/Partnership Groups

The project recognizes that civil society should play a vital role in contributing to citizens' democratic rights, well-being, and development; GDCCR therefore continues to strengthen citizen participation in policy and decision making. CSOs in Guyana have been trying in their individual organizations, with some amount of success, to participate in decision making; however, there is still much to be done. The Project from its inception envisaged that the creation of networks could help. It must be noted, however, that networks have been tried and have fallen short (e.g., NGO Forum). It was for this reason that the Project focused on ways of working together (networking/ partnering) rather than on the creation of new networks.

In order to foster networking/partnering, the Project planned and initiated a six-month program on networking/partnerships to build the capacity and credibility of CSOs. This commenced in January 2008 with a workshop titled Building Partnerships for Development Between the Private and Civil Society Sectors, held April 15-17 at the Tower Hotel and facilitated by Ms. Audreyanne Thomas. Twenty-eight participants from 22 CSOs in Guyana attended the event. Noteworthy was the presence of participants representing the Essequibo, Georgetown, Central Berbice, and Regional Chambers of Commerce.



Participants at networking/partnerships workshop

Participants were exposed to the art and science of networking/partnership. The sessions were enriched with shared knowledge on decisions and theories posited at many conferences, summits, and declarations that relate to good governance and development. These include: the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Paris Declaration. Topics on economic and human development, good governance, and aid effectiveness were also covered.



Participants at networking/partnerships workshop

Participants were also taught the principles of partnership and the need for partnerships in development

Action Taken

In order to put into practice the structure and principles covered during the workshop, participants were placed into groups around three themes: women, youth, and differently abled. The groups were expected to work together for the duration of the six months, during which time they would practice the principles of networking/partnership while implementing an activity and deepening their learning experience. Each group was expected to submit a concept paper on its respective activity and submit it for potential funding by GDCCR. Ms Pamela Nauth has been contracted to monitor and facilitate the aforementioned process and to ensure the smooth implementation of the activities.

General Comments

Some final comments from participants must be highlighted. After the first workshop, Ms. Jean Bacchus from the Georgetown Chambers of Commerce said, “It is the first time in my life I have sat in a room with such rich learning. The right people were chosen; this was a value added for me.” Other comments after both workshops were as follows:

- There was a high level of commitment and passion exhibited during the programme.
- There was different and better collaboration in this workshop.
- It was motivational—It was good to know people are still passionate about Guyana.
- The expertise of the presenter was of an exceptionally high quality and I am satisfied that the programme was well thought out and presented.
- This program reinforced the importance of working together for a better Guyana.
- This workshop had all the right ingredients: knowledge, excellent presentation, interesting, and innovative.

Results

Several planning meetings were held with the groups, at the end of which three concept notes were submitted to the CTO for approval.

Follow-Up Requirement

A second workshop, titled “Managing and Sustaining Partnerships,” is planned for April 15-17, 2008 at the Tower Hotel, to be facilitated by Ms. Audreyanne Thomas.

Estimated Completion Date

It is estimated that this entire program on networking/partnership will conclude in July 2008.

International Development Partners Working Group

At the recommendation of the USAID Mission Director, Mr. Peter Hubbard, GDCCR Civil Society Specialist Daune Pratt attended a joint meeting of the International Development Partners, hosted by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on October 15, 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the challenges faced by civil society in Guyana, current IDP interventions to support civil society, and the supportive role that could be played by IDPs. Representatives of CIDA, the European Union, the British Department for International Development (DFID), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and USAID attended the meeting. The participants agreed that a working group should be set up to:

- Identify available studies or other diagnostics on civil society in Guyana
- Identify, in greater detail, donor programs or initiatives that target civil society in Guyana
- Identify key issues that are blocking further progress or advancement by civil society in Guyana, which collective action by donors could help address.

Ms. Pratt attended the meeting on the Project’s behalf and was further assigned by Mr. Hubbard to attend meetings of the civil society working group. The working group met four times and prepared a concept note for presentation to the large group in December 2007. The IDPs in Guyana have agreed to work towards facilitating the realisation of a role for CSOs in national development that is consistent with the principles of aid effectiveness.

Media Freedom and Freedom of Information

In September 2007, the Project received a Proposal from the University of Guyana’s Communications Unit for the amount of US\$48,337 to provide financial assistance to assist 60 enrolled students to graduate from the Communications Program.

In October 2007, a second proposal was received from the same unit, but from a different group. The second proposal requested funding for:

- The upgrading of the offices and repainting of the centre; enhancement of the general surroundings
- Acquisition of textbooks
- Student computer lab
- Student newspaper production
- Student print production lab
- E-delivery system
- Training workshops for local journalists
- Podcast training for broadcast students
- Communications Club
- Research support for staff and students
- Equipping of radio and television studio to provide practical training for students
- Capacity building for staff through research and training stints
- Provision of training opportunities and internships for students.

The amount of the second request totalled US\$188,200.

On October 23, 2007, the Project team met with the following individuals to discuss the second proposal: Dr. Michael Scott, Dean – Communications Department; Dr. Paloma Mohamed; Ms. Carolyn Walcott; Ms. Alexis Stephens; and Mr. Terrence Esseboom. GDCCR informed the university that it had received two proposals from the same division and requested clarity on which group had the authority to represent the university. The Project was subsequently advised by Dr. Marlene Cox, Director, Office of Resource Mobilization and Planning, that she had been requested by the Vice Chancellor to look into the matter and would advise the Project about the decision taken by the university.

In December 2007, a reformulated concept paper addressing the modernization of the Communications Unit was submitted to the Project for its consideration. The total amount required was US\$376,826 over a three-year period. The Project's grants committee reviewed the proposal and agreed to meet with the university representatives in January 2008 to further discuss the proposal.

In April 2008 the Project awarded UG a grant of US\$76,800. In May 2008, a print suite was procured. All arrangements were being put in place to purchase a TV studio through the RTI headquarters in North Carolina to ensure compliance with RTI procurement policies. The following workshops in collaboration with UG and the Guyana Press Association (GPA) were planned for April 18–May 24, 2008:

Workshop (1): Effective News Gathering and Production – Friday, April 18, and Saturday, April 19. Target: 20 reporters and editors from all media countrywide.

Topics:

- Sources and news gathering
- Preparation for interviews
- Interviewing styles
- Questioning techniques and strategies

Workshop (2): Writing for Media – Friday, May 9, and Saturday, May 10. Target: 20 reporters and editors from all media countrywide.

Topics:

- Fundamentals of English usage
- Fundamentals of writing
- Writing for media is special
- Writing for radio
- Writing for television
- Writing for print
- Writing for the Web
- Writing news stories and features

Workshop (3): Research for Media – Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17. Target: 20 journalists from all broadcast media countrywide.

Topics:

- Why research?
- Sources of information (news groups, libraries, commercial data bases, wire services and archives)
- Program evaluation
- Audience evaluation

Workshop (4): Presentation Techniques – Friday May 23 and Saturday May 24. Target: 20 presenters from all broadcast media countrywide.

Topics:

- Presenting for radio
- Presenting for television
- Conducting effective interviews
- Delivery and use of body language
- Presenting in special circumstances

The workshops were designed to strengthen the GPA and to update the skill sets of practicing media practitioners with a view to improving democracy and governance in Guyana.

The following additional workshops were also planned:

- Covering Socially Sensitive Issues – April 24–26, 2008
- Training of UG Staff and Students in Utilizing a Print Suite – April 21–27, 2008
- Training of UG Staff and Students in Utilizing a TV Studio – May 11–18, 2008

The scheduled presenters were Professors Vibert Cambridge, Sandra Haggerty, Patricia Cambridge, Janice Collins, Frederick Lewis, and Samuel Girton from the University of Ohio; Mr. A.B. Poole of University of Guyana; and Hon. Arnold Nicholson, Senator and Former Attorney General of Jamaica. Ms. Kojo Nnambi, Professor Jeff Cumberbatch, and Mr. Donald Trotman had also initially agreed to participate.

Action Taken

SOWs were submitted for CTO approval and all arrangements put in place. The TV studio and print suite are being sourced in accordance with USAID procurement policies.

Results

UG, GPA, and the Project continue their collaboration to make these events a success.

Follow-Up Requirement

Continue to put arrangements in place.

Estimated Completion Date

May 24, 2008.

Grants Management¹

Summary of the Grants Program

By end of the second quarter of the fiscal year the position of the grants program was as follows:

- Total grants program budget – US\$1,000,000
- Total of grants awarded – US\$748,000
- Total grants disbursed – US\$588,886
- Number of applications to date – 56
- Number of applications approved – 22

The discussion of grants to CSOs below is organized according to the Program Area each supports.

Program Area 1.3: Justice System

Program Element 1.3.4: Access to Justice

Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic (GLAC)

During October 2007–March 2008, the clinic provided legal aid services to clients as follows:

- Interviewed 829 prospective clients, of whom 495 were females and 234 were males
- Provided legal advice to 417 new clients
- Provided legal advice and representation to 390 new clients
- Referred 74 clients to other agencies for appropriate assistance, mostly Help & Shelter and Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
- Represented 160 clients out of Georgetown.

Analysis of the civil matters dealt with during the period revealed that:

- Divorce made up approximately 30 to 35% of the matters.
- Domestic violence was very common
- Division of property, estates, and maintenance ranged from 3 to 5%.

Criminal matters for which assistance was given included rape/carnal knowledge, robbery, theft, assault, and disorderly behaviour. There were two instances of assistance for murder/manslaughter during the period.

¹ Please note that the grants support the program areas.

Another application submitted by Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic was treated not as a grant under the small grants program but as an unsolicited grant, for just over US\$10,000. The purpose of the grant was to purchase computers and office furniture and equipment required to operationalize GLAC's offices set up in the regions to increase its outreach to persons in depressed circumstances, and who need legal assistance.

Action Taken

On recommendation by the Project, the grant was approved by USAID. Procurement had commenced by end of March 2008.

Result

To be measured. This effort is expected to contribute towards the target for number of people visiting U.S. Government-supported legal service centres serving low-income and marginalized communities. In this case the support involved is particularly the GLAC's outreach (into the regions) program.

Follow-Up Requirement

Visits to the newly set up offices will be necessary, as will a handing-over ceremony. The number of persons visiting these offices supported by U.S. Government funds will be monitored.

Estimated Completion Date

The actual procurement process could take two to three weeks, so that completion can be by the end of April 2008. The effects of the grant will be monitored until the Project ends in September 2008.

Program Area 3: Political Competition and Consensus Building

Program Element: Consensus Building and Dialogue Processes

The Project continued to support the CSOs which had earlier benefitted from grant support for building capacity and for executing their work programs. To date only two grants remain current: the Guyana Volunteer Consultancy and the Guyana Forum for Lifelong Learning.

Guyana Volunteer Consultancy (GVC)

The GVC conducted a workshop on conflict resolution for 25 persons—11 males and 14 females—at Trinity Parish Hall located at Henrietta, Essequibo, March 4-5, 2008. This activity contributes towards the target for number of groups trained in inclusive consensus-building techniques with U.S. Government assistance.

Guyana Forum for Lifelong Learning (GFFLL)

The GFFLL conducted a three-day workshop on conflict resolution and advocacy during October 24-26, 2007, for 25 participants drawn from six youth groups in New

Amsterdam. The workshop, which was executed as a component of the Leadership Development Program of GFFLL, was aimed at enhancing the understanding and skills of the participants in conflict resolution and advocacy, and enabling them to use these skills in their communities.

During March 2008, one workshop on Leadership Development – Module 2, two workshops on Debating Skills – Module 3, and one workshop on Conflict Resolution and Advocacy – Module 4 were conducted by the Forum. The workshops on leadership development and debating skills were held at the roadside Baptist Church Skills Training Centre, No. 68 Village Corentyne, Berbice. The workshops on debating skills and on conflict resolution and advocacy were held at the Guyana Women’s Leadership Institute, Cove and John, East Coast of Demerara. All of the workshops were of three days’ duration.

- Leadership Development: March 3-5, 2008, for 27 persons (12 males and 15 females)
- Debating Skills: March 7, 8 & 10, 2008, for 24 persons (9 males and 15 females)
- Conflict Resolution and Advocacy: March 14, 15 & 20 for 18 persons (6 males and 12 females)
- Debating Skills: March 17 -19, 2008, for 25 persons (13 males and 12 females).

Action Taken

Monitoring and guidance were provided towards the foregoing activities.

Results

This series of training contributes towards the target for number of groups trained in inclusive consensus-building techniques with U.S. Government assistance. This is, however, an intermediate achievement, since the groups have begun to focus on issues for placing on the agenda of the relevant decision makers.

Follow-Up Requirements

These grantees require continued guidance to ensure that their activities culminate in the achievement of their specific higher level targets.

Estimated Completion Date

The end date for these grants is (latest) end of July 2008.

Guyana Press Association

During November 2007, the GPA hosted a one-day training workshop for 18 persons (12 males and 6 females). The sessions—which included TV editing, camera work, and video production and lighting—were facilitated by Ms. Cathy Hughes, Managing Director; and Mr. Anthony Scotland, Senior TV Producer, of Mega Productions.

Sub-Grants Program

During March, eight grants, which included seven small grants resulting from a request for proposals, and one unsolicited grant were awarded generally for the purposes of facilitating CSOs' initiatives aimed at direct representation on specific issues, and consensus-building and dialogue processes. These small grants were for not more than the sum of 1 million Guyanese dollars (i.e., US\$5,000), and their end dates do not extend past July 2008. The CSOs' proposals include contributions of at least 10% of the overall budget. Details of these grants are as indicated below.

Program Area 3: Political Competition and Consensus Building

Program Element: Consensus Building and Dialogue Processes

Grant Programs

Ascension Temple of Truth was awarded a grant for "Empowerment of Residents of Lodge and Its Environs to Become Change Agents in Their Communities." Funds were required for training 30 persons in leadership, conflict resolution, and advocacy skills. Trainees will use the new skills to identify and agree on main relevant issues affecting them within their communities, and to conduct activities aimed at placing these issues on the agendas of the decision makers.

GUYBERNET received a grant for "Youth Development/Governance." The grantee is required to produce contact kits for training transformational leaders, and to promote conflict transformation in selected schools on the East Coast of Demerara. This activity is expected to contribute towards the targets for consensus-building processes assisted by the U.S. Government, and towards the number of groups (in this case, youths) trained in consensus-building techniques.

National Youth Development Network. This grant is for "Creating a Document of Policy Recommendations for Youths by Youth." The grant is funding focus group meetings, general consultation meetings, travel, facilitators, and preparation of a youth policy recommendations document. This project is expected to contribute towards the target for number of consensus-building processes assisted by the U.S. Government, and the drafting of a Youth Policy Recommendations Document for submission to the government.

East Bank Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme. This grant is for "Community-Based Deafness Awareness Training." Expenses are related to designing and producing training materials on deafness awareness, conducting training, and organizing a public symposium on deafness. This activity is expected to contribute towards the target for number of consensus-building processes assisted by the U.S. Government.

Program Area 4: Civic Participation

Grant Programs

Youth Aflame. This grant is for a “Training and Advocacy Project for Linden Youths.” It is expected to contribute towards the target for consensus-building processes assisted by the U.S. Government, and advocacy. Advocacy is not only a target but also a contractual obligation related to citizen participation in decision making.

DEVNET. This grant funds “Online Network Formation and Information Sharing.” Funds are required to design and build web forums, facilitate online lab sessions, coach participants, and pay for the operating costs related to those activities. This project is expected to contribute towards the overall strengthening of the CSO body through formation of an online forum for discussion, information sharing, and advocacy. Also CSO representatives will be capable (through hands-on training) of using IT for the foregoing purposes.

Hopeful Steps – Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme. This grantee aims to develop a cadre of 50 child ambassadors (within Georgetown) to promote the rights of the child. Funds are required for supplies, cost of workshop, supplies, local transportation, and a project co-ordinator. The project is expected to contribute towards consensus-building processes. There will be a summit involving children with and without disabilities. Other spin-offs will be increased public awareness, plus the fact that 50 child ambassadors will be left as advocates within the Georgetown community.

Of the small grant applications received, 7 of 29 (or 24%) have been deemed suitable for recommendation to CTO USAID, while at least one or two more may have some potential subject to being reformulated, if there is still time.

Action Taken

On recommendation by the Project, the grants were approved by USAID.

Results

No results yet. Monitoring will determine the contributions of each of these towards the stated targets.

Follow-Up Requirement

Grantees’ work programs will commence in the month of April and guidance and monitoring will be provided.

Estimated Completion Date

All sub-grants are scheduled to end on or before July 31, 2008.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

Dr. Catherine Elkins, Senior RTI Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, provided technical support to the GDCCR team and the M&E Unit during November 26–December 2, 2007. The purpose of the assignment was to enable the Project to satisfy contractual requirements and to assist in the determination and agreement concerning means of measuring performance. During the course of the assignment, Dr. Elkins held discussions with the CTO and the Project team. In collaboration with the M&E Unit, draft recommendations on the indicators were presented to the CTO for her consideration. There was agreement in principle between the CTO and the Project team on the mix of indicators presented, subject to her suggested adjustments. The document remains a work in progress.