

GRENADA CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

FINAL REPORT

USAID GRANT NO. 543-0013.2

## OBJECTIVES :

Back in 1985 a grant agreement was struck between the Grenada Chamber Of Industry And Commerce and USAID. The purpose of this USAID GRANT was essentially to provide support for private sector development through the processes of institution building and programme strengthening. In essence, the grant sought to enhance the Chamber's ability to speak with a unified voice on behalf of its membership and the private sector in general; to strive to provide a forum for discussion on national issues of concern and/or interest to all members of the private sector; to aid in the collection and more efficient dissemination of pertinent information to the private sector, with a view to facilitating greater participation from that sector in the national economic development thrust. Another component of the grant provided resources for strengthening the Chamber as an institution, as well as to improve the level and range of available services which the Chamber could offer to its membership.

The principal project elements included, a private sector research project, the preparation of a business information booklet, financial support to participate in trade shows such as the Robbin show and the Miami Trade and Investment Promotion Conference and Exposition on the Caribbean, newsletter support, personnel support, coverage of office expenses related to programme activities, assistance to procure furniture and equipment for the Multi Media Training Centre and financial assistance to purchase a photocopier.

When this project was started, membership of the Chamber was dominated entirely by business entities represented by IPA individuals. The expansion of the membership base, coupled with increased membership participation were then identified as two critical areas to be worked on during the grant period.

## EXTENT TO WHICH OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED :

Over the last few years, the Chamber has undergone a process of critical self-examination, with a view to building a more vibrant and united private sector organisation which would be better able to satisfy the needs of its members and the community at large, as well as to promote orderly growth and development of the business sector as a vehicle for accelerating the pace of national economic expansion. In an effort to lay the base for accomplishing these broad objectives, the Management Council of the Chamber recognised the need for a revitalisation of the committee system in order to complement the work of the secretariat. A total of eleven committees were therefore formed with each being charged with a specific area of responsibility.

Of the diverse activities undertaken by the Chamber over the period, membership development has been a particularly robust and rewarding exercise. Total membership increased from roughly 122 members in 1985 to 184 members by the end of 1987. This, to a large extent, was achieved through a series of well orchestrated membership drives co-ordinated by the committee charged with such responsibility, along with hard work put in by other leading Chamber officials.

Government/Chamber relations, which have periodically experienced some measure of strain in the past - on account of the introduction of certain fiscal measures - have shown significant signs of repair in more recent times. The submission to government of recommendations to be considered for inclusion in the 1988 Budget, by the Chamber engineered Private Sector Economic Affairs Committee (PSEAC), is indeed testimony to the improving relationship. This, is the very first time in our nation's history, that the private sector has been called upon to perform such a task. Even more recently, the PSEAC, on which is represented most of the major private sector organisations, meets quarterly with chief government technocrats in order to monitor the performance of the economy and to make recommendations on economic policy matters.

The Chamber has also stepped up its "PR-machinery" over the last few years with a view to sharpening the image of the organisation, planting the seeds for greater private sector co-operation and ultimately unity, as well as to stimulate greater membership participation.

Despite tremendous efforts expended in other areas, the Chamber continues to improve its system of disseminating information to its members, co-ordinating various activities and programs, as well as in representing the business community on a host of diverse issues.

The Chamber's Junior Achievement Programme, which was launched nearly two years ago, also continues to grow from strength-to-strength. The major problem facing this programme at this time however, is one of locating permanent space to run the programme.

In essence therefore, it is not difficult to discern that the Chamber is on the move. There are, however, a few remaining areas of difficulty which need to be addressed, if the organisation is to continue to grow at a palatable rate.

#### **PROBLEMS IN ACCOMPLISHING OBJECTIVES :**

It would be remiss of me not to mention, that there is an ever increasing need for organisations such as the Chamber to become more self-supporting, given the fact that donor funds are on the decline. It is therefore necessary, that members who often claim to derive benefits

from Chamber membership also recognise the need to remit annual subscriptions; and to remit them on a timely basis. Considering the fact that membership dues account for the largest proportion of the Chamber's meagre revenue sources, this ought to be an important consideration. Too often it has been observed that members have been negligent in making payments. If the Chamber is to develop into a vibrant organisation, it must be capable of managing its own financial affairs. In addition, increased membership participation in Chamber activities and functions must be intensified.

**DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY LINE ITEM :**

PROGRAMMES	APPROVED BUDGET	MODIFIED BUDGET
Private sector Research	\$ 5581.00	\$ 200.00
Bus. Info. Booklet	\$ 4000.00	\$ 4000.00
Trade Shows	\$ 30000.00	\$ 27230.08
Small Bus. Training	\$ 15000.00	\$ 13810.36
Newsletter	\$ 5000.00	\$ 5000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 59581.00	\$ 50240.44
OPERATIONS		
Personnel	\$ 76398.00	\$ 76398.00
Office Equipment	\$ 0.00	\$ 16404.99
Tele.	\$ 3000.00	\$ 326.26
Stationery/Supplies	\$ 4301.00	\$ 4301.00
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Sub-Total	\$ 84199.00	\$ 97930.25
INVESTMENT		
MKTC Furnishings/A/C	\$ 5000.00	\$ 4478.30
Photocopier	\$ 10000.00	\$ 8075.00
Sub-Total	\$ 15000.00	\$ 12553.31
OTHER DIRECT COST	\$ 2511.00	\$ 567.00
TOTAL	\$161291.00	\$161291.00

## BASIC OUTCOMES :

In conclusion, the project has basically achieved its broad objectives, for it has given the organisation the type of assistance which was needed in order to develop its institutional framework. It is quite true that total private sector unity has not been achieved over the life of the project. Nonetheless, the formation of the Private Sector Economic Affairs Committee, the brain child of the Chamber, can be regarded as an important channel where the voice of the private sector could be transmitted to the right quarters.

Given the Chamber's financial health, a slightly longer period of financial support would have been desirable. Nonetheless, I wish to re-iterate that the project was indeed a worthwhile and successful venture. The upgrading of office equipment, as well as the computer, which we were able to procure with the aid of grant funds, are already making a significant contribution towards the improvement of work quality and efficiency levels within the Chamber's secretariat.