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*MID-TERM EVALUATION*  
*OF*  
*USAID/DR DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES PROJECT (PID)*

Contract No. HNE-5832-I-00-4016-00

*Prepared for:*

USAID/Dominican Republic

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## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

In March 1992, USAID/DR entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) to administer a ten-year project in support of democratic initiatives. Cooperative Agreement 517-0265-A00-2080-00 was authorized initially for \$9,000,000 and later amended to \$9,727,000 for a period from March 12, 1992-March 11, 2002.

The purpose of the Democratic Initiatives Project (PID) is to strengthen the democratic process in the Dominican Republic by promoting a more dynamic democratic culture; facilitating and encouraging involvement by citizens in the political process; and enhancing governmental efficiency and impartiality.

The Project administration of the PID was set up on the Santo Domingo campus of the PUCMM with a resident Executive Director and staff in an Operational Unit to implement the project. The PID mandate was to solicit, award and administer subgrants to groups throughout the country in support of democracy-building activities. To date, 57 subgrants have been awarded (36 ongoing plus 21 finalized) awards ranging from \$6800 to \$176,000.

### **Purpose of Evaluation**

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the mid-term progress toward the implementation of the ten-year USAID/DR Democratic Initiatives Project (PID)(517-0265) [See Annex A for Scope of Work]. The Scope of Work asks the evaluators to take into account the Project's implementation experience to date and the Agency's revised operations procedures which incorporate management by Strategic Objectives and team orientation. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation is to review progress toward achievement of the purpose and outputs of the Project and the performance of the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) as grantee/administrator of the Project.

### **Methodology**

USAID/DR contracted Creative Associates International, Inc. to assemble an Evaluation Team to review the Project documentation and conduct interviews in the Dominican Republic with individuals involved in the implementation of the Project. [See Appendix D for documents reviewed and Appendix B for interviewees] Team Members include: Jennie Lincoln, Team Leader (Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Ga.), Danuta Lockett (Creative Associates International, Inc./Washington), Harold Sibaja (Creative Associates International, Inc./El Salvador), Jonathan Hartlyn (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Rosario Espinal (Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) and Erin Soto (USAID/W/G/DG). Enrique Roig (Creative Associates International, Inc./Washington) edited and prepared the final report. In separate visits during March and April 1996, members of the Evaluation Team attended meetings and conducted interviews in the Dominican Republic with personnel from USAID/DR, the Operational Unit of the PID and representatives from 25 of the 57 subgrantees of the Project. The final evaluation incorporates responses from an initial draft review by USAID/DR and the Projects Operational Unit of PUCMM.

## **Report Organization**

Questions from the Scope of Work were clustered into sections which addressed the same issues. Chapter I introduces the evaluation, provides the Dominican context for the Project, and explains the evaluation methodology. Chapter II reviews the administration of the Project and Chapter III analyzes mid-term progress and suggests the lessons learned.

## **Dominican Context**

The Dominican Republic has experienced a long period of authoritarian politics and high levels of social inequality which are not supportive of democratic practices in a civil society. There are trends today, however, in the Dominican Republic that suggest that generational changes are prompting a greater interest in democracy. As the Dominicans complete the electoral process of 1996, there are challenges which may impact on the democratization process. These challenges include dramatic large-scale economic and social changes, such as urbanization, economic growth, increased levels of education, growing incorporation of women into the labor force, high levels of migration as well as of return migration, and dramatic improvements in communication with and knowledge about the outside world. Seeking to enhance opportunities opened up by these factors, Dominican actors committed to democratic change have sought assistance from like-minded domestic and international organizations, including most recently USAID.

## **PID Administration**

The PID is administered by an Operational Unit housed at the PUCMM and advised by a Consultative Council. This Council of 21 volunteer representatives from a broad spectrum of society functions extremely well as an advisory board. Similarly, the Operational Unit at PUCMM manages the Project efficiently and administers the funds well. Despite its relatively small size, the Operational Unit is very professional, competent, efficient and well-regarded by the subgrantees.

## **Mid-term Progress**

As the Project enters into its fifth year there are operational issues to address as subgrants increase; and strategic issues to address as a result of this mid-term evaluation of selection procedures and awards criteria. It is clear from this evaluation that the Project is operating at a high level of productivity. Recommendations that follow in this mid-term evaluation are made only to offer technical suggestions to improve the operation of a Project that is already very impressive.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***PUCMM/Consultative Council***

1. The PID should provide an orientation for new Consultative Council members in the history and culture of the consultative group and initial councils, of the process of Project development and approval and on projects funded, perhaps through such mechanisms as a half-day or one-day retreat or participatory workshop. As part of such a retreat or workshop, the Consultative Council should be encouraged to consider how it wishes to divide up its time and whether it should seek to structure more time to focus on strategic planning issues and new initiatives.
2. The Consultative Council should consider a more conscious strategy to be an advocate for, and enhance the visibility of the PID in the country. First, it would be useful for members of the Consultative Council to visit projects in the field to become more familiar on a first-hand basis. Second, the Consultative Council should consider developing sub-committees for various functions such as outreach to new organizations for potential funding, evaluation of proposals, or determining whether and how funding operations can be streamlined.

These recommendations imply an investment of considerable time by the members of the Consultative Council. Members of the Council interviewed by the evaluators contributed to these recommendations and indicated that they were willing to dedicate the time necessary.

### ***PUCMM***

3. PUCMM should revise the Executive Director's job description. The evaluators consider that the administrative tasks imposed on the Executive Director should be reviewed 1) to reduce unnecessary administrative tasks and/or 2) to delegate some of the functions to other staff members in order to allow the Executive Director to focus more on Project Promotion and Long Term Planning.
4. The Operational Unit should hire additional staff. It is most likely, that the number of active projects will increase. One Project Officer and one Monitoring Officer are not yet enough to meet the demands of this Project. USAID and PUCMM should strongly consider adding additional staff members with project and monitoring responsibilities. Also, PUCMM should evaluate if additional staff will be needed to support the Director of Finance and Administration functions, or if some of the financial procedures can be changed without deteriorating the financial controls imposed on the sub-grantees. An example of this is communicating to all grantees that they can request advances to pay salaries (not authorized since a few months ago), and amend their grant agreements if necessary. This will reduce the amount of urgent requests of funds from the grantees to get reimbursed for the salaries paid, and will reduced the burden imposed on the grantees for finding funds every time that they need to pay salaries.

5. The Operational Unit should consider a proactive approach to soliciting projects. The proactive approach is a valid mechanism to meet the Project objectives. It can be used to solicit proposals in areas with less demand and can be used to motivate larger NGOs to implement projects with national or regional impact. The Operational Unit should seek a balance between reaching out to new groups in society which may be a higher risk, while at the same time exercising some caution by funding institutions with recognizable track records. While it is crucial to be careful and frugal with these funds, there is a risk of erring on the side of excessive caution if only extremely solid institutions are funded. A potential cost would be a lack of penetration into groups throughout the entire country and across the widest possible variety of sectors and strata of society.
6. The Operational Unit should evaluate its current expenditures to ensure an adequate pace of spending to carry it to the end of the Cooperative Agreement.
7. Given the changes in the counterpart contribution requirement by USAID, the Operational Unit should consider applying the counterpart rate of 25% to ongoing projects for which the counterpart is a burden. This could be handled with a contractual amendment for the subgrantee.
8. The Operational Unit may contribute to sustainability by organizing its archive of subgrantee publications and materials to make them more widely accessible to other organizations and institutions. Sustainability of participation in society will be supported by the PID's efforts not only to sustain the individually funded institutions, but also its effort to attend to advocacy, promotion and outreach for democracy in the country as a whole.

#### ***USAID/PUCMM***

9. USAID and PUCMM should revise the policy related to purchase of equipment for the Operational Unit. This is required in order to support the staff in their daily tasks. In addition to acquiring vehicles, the Project should consider buying additional computers, printers and a copier machine. Also, this is an appropriate time to review the regulations on equipment purchase due to the existence of a similar project funded by USAID and implemented by PUCMM, the "Grupo de Acción para la Democracia", (GAD), which was designed under more flexible policies, creating to a certain extent a feeling of discomfort among PID's Operational Unit.
10. USAID's Strategic Objective 3 team and PUCMM's Operational Unit should clarify USAID's terminology and regulations. It is recommended that the USAID Strategic Objective Team and the Operational Unit set aside some quality time together, perhaps through a weekend retreat, to clarify many of the issues, and to look for alternative solutions to reduce unnecessary steps currently followed to achieve the goals of the Democratic Initiatives Project. It may be appropriate that some members of the Consultative Council and the Selection Committee participate at such event.



**LESSONS LEARNED**

1. *The Democratic Initiatives Project (PID) overcomes Dominican fears of U.S. intentions/actions.* The PID in the Dominican Republic is an example of successful efforts to implement a democracy project in an environment which has been distrustful of U.S. policy interference in domestic affairs. The "Medio Paso Atras" (one-half step behind) strategy gave the Dominicans the lead on this Project. This strategy encouraged broader participation and a quicker sense of ownership by the Dominicans. The strategic location of the Operational Unit in the PUCMM also contributed to the legitimacy of this project for Dominican civil society.
2. *The ten year authorization for this Project is significant.* The flexibility of a ten year project allows time to prepare, define policies, write procedures, and gain credibility. Even more important, perhaps, it allows time to see results, learn from mistakes, reshape the approach and measure impact.

Many projects encounter difficulties due to short time frames during which they must organize and demonstrate results. Project implementation is hampered by the length of time necessary to produce results which may demonstrate measurable impact. In addition, given the nature of democratization projects, impact is not measurable in the short-term. There is a clear perception that changes in attitudes, values, behavior, etc. are being affected by the Project. However, the ten year authorization allows a more reasonable time frame to identify trends and to measure those changes.

3. *The Project's rigorous standards contribute to its success in both design and implementation of activities to promote a more dynamic democratic culture and to encourage citizen participation.* PUCMM maintains high standards in the subgrant proposal and award process. The efforts to reach and maintain these standards by both the potential grantees and the Operational Unit decisionmakers have had positive results in the quality of subgrant activities.

Strict criteria are followed throughout the subgrant approval and award process. Subgrants pass through numerous approval steps which often results in proposals being rewritten several times before they may be considered "technically sound." These requirements increase the workload on the staff, but also have an added educational impact on subgrantees along the proposal process. PUCMM also maintains high standards in follow-up monitoring of subgrantee activities to ensure that they are meeting their goals and objectives.

4. *The Consultative Council as a separate entity represents a major success of the PID.* It exemplifies the Project's goal to achieve a more effective, representative and participatory democratic system. The Consultative Council is a forum of active discussion in a civic and responsible fashion, where individuals representing diverse interests feel free to discuss their disagreements and reach agreements in pursuit of a common goal to enhance democratic initiatives in the Dominican Republic.

The Consultative Council has played a key role in determining the success of the "medio paso atras" approach by USAID/DR. Members of the Council come from the country's major political parties, labor, and other sectors of society. The nature of this group and its decisionmaking role within the Project legitimize the Project within Dominican society and strengthen its chances for a sustainable impact.

## **CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION**

### **THE DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES PROJECT (PID)**

In March 1992, USAID/DR entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) to administer a ten-year project in support of democratic initiatives (PID). Cooperative Agreement 517-0265-A00-2080-00 was authorized initially for \$9,000,000 and later amended to \$9,727,000 for a period from March 12, 1992-March 11, 2002.

The purpose of this Project is to strengthen the democratic process in the Dominican Republic by (a) promoting a more dynamic democratic culture; (b) facilitating and © encouraging involvement by citizens in the political process; and enhancing governmental efficiency and impartiality. USAID's strategy of "medio paso atras" (or one half step behind) is clearly evident in the organization and operation of this Project.

The Project administration of the PID was set up on the Santo Domingo campus of the PUCMM with a resident Executive Director and staff in an Operational Unit to implement the Project. The PID mandate is to solicit, award and administer subgrants to groups throughout the country in support of democracy-building activities. Implementation of the PID is overseen by a Consultative Council, a 21 member governing council whose membership includes wide representation across the Dominican political spectrum. USAID maintains a "veto" role, but in fact, does give the Dominicans the lead in the Project on many levels.

The first year of the Project was dedicated to organizing both the Operation Unit and the Consultative Council which establishes policy, and reviews and approves subgrants. At the time of this evaluation, a total of 57 subgrants had been awarded (36 ongoing; plus 21 finalized). Eighty-five were under review; 58 had been rejected; and 13 events were to be funded. Sub-grant award amounts include: less than \$10,000; between \$10,000-25,000; and greater than \$25,000. The range of awards includes subgrants from \$6800-176,000.

The chapters which follow present the mid-term evaluation of the Project conducted in March/April 1996. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the context of contemporary Dominican civil society within which the PID is operating. Chapter 3 evaluates the administration of the PID and makes recommendations to streamline its operations and to strengthen its promotion strategy. Chapter 4 discusses the achievements toward Project purpose and demonstrates that the work to date is impressive. The flexibility allowed by a ten-year design has contributed to the careful crafting of a project that has taken off. The impact of this Project is likely to be seen in the longer term.

## **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the mid-term progress toward the implementation of the ten-year USAID/DR Democratic Initiatives Project (PID)(517-0265) [See Annex A for Scope of Work]. The Scope of Work asks the evaluators to take into account the Project's implementation experience to date and the Agency's revised operations procedures which incorporate management by Strategic Objectives and team orientation. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation is to review progress toward achievement of the purpose and outputs of the Project and the performance of the PUCMM as grantee/administrator of the Project.

## **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The mid-term evaluation of the PID was contracted by USAID/DR to Creative Associates International, Inc. The Evaluation Team was comprised of: Jennie Lincoln, Team Leader (Georgia Tech Research Institute/Atlanta, Ga), Danuta Lockett (Creative Associates Intl., Inc./Washington, D.C.), Harold Sibaja (Creative Associates Intl., Inc./El Salvador), Jonathan Hartlyn (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Rosario Espinal(Temple Univ./Philadelphia, Pa) and Erin Soto (USAID/W/G/DG). Enrique Roig (Creative Associates Intl., Inc./Washington, D.C.) edited and prepared final report.

During the two weeks between March 3-16, 1996, members of the Evaluation Team a) reviewed the extensive documentation on the Project (Appendix D); b) conducted interviews and attended meetings with the USAID/DR Mission Director, SO3 Team, the Consultative Council, members of the Selection Committee, PID Operational Unit staff and participants in the Project (Appendix B); and c) visited subgrantees in the field (Appendix B).

The Evaluation Team met with representatives of 25 of the 57 subgrants. Of these, 18 were in Santo Domingo and 7 were outside the capital city. Those field visits included subgrants in: Azua, Higüey, San Pedro Macoris, Salcedo, Moca, Santiago, and La Vega. One of the evaluators also met with representatives of three NGOs with subgrant proposals pending and two which had been rejected.

Members of the Evaluation Team also attended the first 1996 quarterly meeting of PID Subgrantees, as well as meetings of the Selection Committee and the Operational Unit.

Prior to their departure from Santo Domingo in March, the Evaluation Team met with the Ambassador and Senior Staff of the Embassy for a briefing and open exchange about the PID.

Members of the Evaluation Team returned to Santo Domingo on April 17, 1996 to meet with the SO3 Team and the PUCMM leadership of the PID to discuss the first draft of the evaluation. Their comments and suggestions have been incorporated into the final version of the evaluation.

## **CHAPTER II - THE DOMINICAN CONTEXT**

### **CIVIL SOCIETY IN CONTEMPORARY DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATE AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

A democratic civil society refers to the organization of a country's citizens into multiple, dense, overlapping institutions committed to pluralistic practices. It is widely assumed to rest on individuals broadly aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. To the extent that democratic politics is viewed as the mutual responsibility of state organizations, political institutions and social actors, a strong democratic civil society is a key component of democracy. Its existence can enrich democracy during normal periods and can provide an important support for democratic political actors during crises. It can also exert pressure for democratizing reforms within the state and political institutions, supporting individuals within these arenas that share a commitment to pluralistic politics.

This kind of a civil society has been weak in the Dominican Republic. A democratic civil society is more likely to be absent where states are excessively dominant and where authoritarian politics, high levels of social inequality, clientelist practices, and distrustful and conspiratorial attitudes are strong. As these features and practices have been abundantly present in Dominican history, civil society in the Dominican Republic has characteristically been weak in such key respects as scope and reach throughout society, number and strength of institutions and extent of democratic commitment.

However, there are trends and forces operating within the Dominican Republic today seeking to strengthen civil society, which can be fostered and augmented. There are many reasons to believe that civil society is in a process of dramatic transformation as a consequence of many factors. These factors include dramatic large-scale economic and social changes, such as urbanization, economic growth, increased levels of education, growing incorporation of women into the labor force, high levels of migration as well as of return migration, and dramatic improvements in communication with and knowledge about the outside world. Seeking to enhance opportunities opened up by these factors, Dominican actors committed to democratic change have sought assistance from like-minded domestic and international organizations, including most recently USAID.

As a consequence of all these factors, Dominican civil society is changing in a fluid and rapidly evolving fashion that makes it difficult to measure the magnitude of these transformations. Certainly ten years ago -- and perhaps only five years ago -- one could have confidently stated that at all levels the organization of civil society was extremely low, as was the capacity, autonomy and democratic nature of many organizations within civil society. In 1994, many observers felt that the election crisis illustrated both the over-all weakness of Dominican civil society, and its incipient emergence. This crisis served as an additional catalyst for civil society's further enhancement.

Today there is a growing emergence of a wide variety of civic and popular organizations and NGOs throughout society. Many remain fluid and uninstitutionalized and it is difficult in such a rapidly changing landscape to fully determine their strength or ability to support democracy or bring about change. At the same time, anti-democratic elements remain at the top levels of Dominican society and politics, even as authoritarian attitudes and organizations also exist throughout the country. However, future prospects are bright that an increasingly more active and democratic civil society will continue to flourish as a consequence of generational change and the concerted efforts by domestic and international groups to support democracy in the Dominican Republic.

It is widely recognized that democratic consolidation requires an effective, efficient state operating under a democratic rule of law and vigorous, effective political parties and institutions. One objective of strengthening a democratic civil society is to enhance its ability to work with actors and organizations within the state and political organizations to enhance democratic procedures and values and broad acceptance of democratic rules of the game. Ideally, and as initially envisioned by the Project Paper, there would be a simultaneous, continuous, mutually supportive process of collaboration across these arenas. Yet, the Project was also designed with sufficient creativity and flexibility to enable sequential efforts across these arenas if necessary.

### **INITIAL DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS**

As identified in the February 1992 Project Paper, the PID began with a number of important assumptions viewed as necessary to accomplish the Project goal, purposes, outputs and inputs. These assumptions at the time were valid. At the same time, the Project recognized from the beginning that it would need to modify itself in the face of changing conditions given its duration and the challenges of working across so many arenas and actors. Over a ten year period, many changes are possible, especially regarding the ability to work simultaneously with state institutions, political organizations and civil society. The Project designers acknowledged the importance of adapting to the country's changing political realities and contemplated annual working plans that would take into account both the goals and objectives of the Project and the political and social circumstances of the moment.

Important initial assumptions viewed as necessary to achieve the central goal of the Project were: political stability; no major economic decline or crises; improvement in the socio-economic welfare of all groups in society; and a well-informed public opinion.

Unfortunately, a number of these assumptions have not been fully met over the past several years. The country suffered serious economic crisis and is still undergoing a process of difficult economic reforms. As a consequence of this and of a lack of state investment in social and educational services, the welfare of poorer groups has not improved. Political stability, on the other hand, has been challenged by conflict-ridden elections.

Assumptions regarding the achievement of Project purposes included that the GODR would remain pro-democratic, did not object to Project activities and that there were NGOs and public

interest groups capable of collaborating with the Project. Although the circumstances surrounding the recent conflict-ridden elections and other state actions and policies have called into question the ability of USAID to engage in policy dialogue with the GODR in the field of democracy and governance, the other assumptions largely hold. Indeed, the number of NGOs and public interest groups which the Project can collaborate with continues to increase, in part due to the very efforts of the Project.

Project outputs assumed that GODR support of Project would be maintained, the majority of participating local institutions and groups would be effective as would both the grantee, the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM), as well as the subgrantees. With regard to the GODR these assumptions have only been partially met. This is because of the lack of political will within GODR to reform and modernize the Dominican state and the crisis-ridden reforms of political and electoral institutions.

Assumptions regarding the PUCMM and other local institutions have largely been met. The placement of the Project within PUCMM was valid and logical at the time given such factors as: the university's long history of effective collaboration with USAID; its deep ties with powerful groups in Dominican society; and the role of the Church in the form of the University's Rector, Monseñor Agripino Núñez Collado, as a mediator and builder of consensus for policy reform in selected areas. For these reasons, the informal group of prominent Dominicans out of which emerged the Project's more formal Consultative Council also strongly supported PUCMM as the most appropriate Dominican institution to administer the Project. The fact that PUCMM is the organization channeling funds for the Project has occasionally drawn attention of commentators within the country and was a source of controversy within the Church in early 1996.

Input assumptions that USAID funds would continue to be available and the GODR would continue to be eligible to receive USAID funds have continued to hold.

### **CHANGES IN THE PID SINCE CONCEPTUALIZATION**

The initial goals of the Project were to promote efforts to strengthen the democratic system in three main ways. It envisioned a permanent program of education for democracy, especially for the promotion of citizen participation; it also envisioned a series of actions in support of institutional reform and modernization of the state to enhance efficiency and impartiality and similar support for changes of political institutions. It also saw the need for supplementary activities to foster the above goals.

The PID has funded activities in support of all these areas of change. However, as a number of initial Project assumptions have not been fully met the PID has shifted the emphasis it places on different priorities and goals. Fortunately, the Project was purposefully designed in a flexible fashion to enable it to adapt its strategic purposes both in the short-term and, if necessary, in the long-term.

As a consequence of the lack of political will by the GODR either to engage in serious policy dialogue or to carry out reforms leading toward state modernization or political/institutional renovation, the PID has gradually emphasized more goals focused on education for democracy within civil society, at the individual and organizational level. The projects it has funded in democratic education and in support of popular organizations and other groups in civil society unquestionably fit within the original conception of the program; however, they were initially envisioned as only one of a more ambitious set of sub-projects to be funded.

Over time, as assumptions have not been fully met and circumstances have changed, a number of important projects have been supported in the areas of state reform and modernization, of changes in political institutions and of support for the establishment of public pressure for free and fair elections. However, not as many of these have been supported as may initially have been envisioned (e.g., with regard to the implementation of the civil service law or professionalizing and strengthening the power of the judiciary) or of changes in political institutions (e.g., with regard to political institutions, reforming political parties, including their internal structures and campaign financing). However, as circumstances change the priorities can and should also change, enabling a sequential focus on the key areas of the Democratic Initiatives Project if not always a simultaneous one.

In sum, the Project mechanisms of constant monitoring and evaluation, including the role of the Consultative Council and the establishment of annual plans of action with clearly stated priorities, have enabled the PID to establish a strategy which should continue to be valid for the short and long-term. Assuming these mechanisms continue to operate in an appropriate active fashion, the PID should continue to be able to shift from sequential to simultaneous strategies of change across the state, political institutions and civil society as circumstances allow. However, it will require clarity of vision at all levels of the Project to ensure that inertia does not set in and that Project assumptions continue to be evaluated and the goals adjusted over time as they have up to now.

## **CHAPTER III - PUCMM AND PROJECT ADMINISTRATION**

The administration of the Democratic Initiatives Project (PID) is directed by the PID Operational Unit located at PUCMM. A unique aspect of this Project is the Consultative Council, a broad representative governing council drawn from numerous sectors of Dominican society. The following discussion identifies these entities and explains how the PID functions.

### **CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL**

#### ***Background***

The PID emerged from a deliberate process of discussion and Project elaboration which USAID officials initiated with a broadly representative group of prominent Dominicans, including intellectuals and university officials, and leaders in the business community, and among NGOs and popular organizations. This group came to form an informal Consultative Group which played a determining role in preparing and shaping the Project proposal. Rather than USAID driving the process and Project, perhaps artificially, USAID officials consciously opted to allow this group to determine the exact nature, pace and evolution of the Project, a philosophy known informally as "medio paso atrás" ("half a step behind"). Once the PID was approved, many members of the Consultative Group continued on as members of the Project's Consultative Council. Although the original consultative group was broadly representative of Dominican civil society, the 21-member Consultative Council was expanded in order to include individuals identified with the country's major political parties, and subsequently to have individuals closely associated with organized labor. The number has been large enough to assure that there has been basic representativeness of major sectors in the country, but not so large as to make the council unwieldy. It also permits the Consultative Council to function with a quorum of 11 members, which it almost always has been able to achieve.

#### ***Findings***

##### **Broad Representation on the Consultative Council**

The Consultative Council has not only been broadly representative, it has also served itself as an outstanding example of the goals of the Project in terms of exemplifying democratic and institutional practices. One of the initial goals of the Consultative Council was to ensure that it would practice internally what it wanted to achieve externally, both in terms of establishing clear and transparent rules of the game and in terms of encouraging frank, democratic discussions. Because of the varied membership first of the consultative group and then of the Consultative Council, "people began with fear and distance from each other," as one of the first Consultative Council members told evaluators in an interview; however, this same individual suggested that since the first year of PID's operation, the Consultative Council has been marked by a spirit of working together

in a joint cooperative effort. Similarly, the first year of the Project was spent carefully preparing operational and grant procedures and developing an ethical code and conflict of interest rules that would apply for members of the Consultative Council.

Because of the role, nature and procedures of the Consultative Council, it has also played a crucial role helping to legitimate the PID within the country. Initially, it helped reach out to new groups and possible grantees in the country from an institution, the PUCMM, and a source of funding, USAID, which had more legitimacy among elite sectors of the population than popular ones. Helping the Consultative Council to play this legitimizing role has been the fact that neither the PUCMM nor USAID have been viewed as imposing decisions on the Consultative Council. To date, no Project approved by the Consultative Council has been turned down by either PUCMM or USAID; at the same time that the Consultative Council has turned down proposals endorsed by the PID's Operational Unit.

### **Functions of the Consultative Council**

The Project Paper details eight major functions of the Consultative Council. Three of these the Consultative Council has continued to meet without any apparent problems. With regard to the function of assuring the widest possible participation of sectors, the Consultative Council itself continues to represent just such a forum of representation, dialogue and conciliation. A review of the minutes of Consultative Council meetings indicates that the Consultative Council has also continued to receive quarterly technical, financial and other reports and to approve the annual working plans submitted by the Project's Operational Unit.

Another four functions delineated are that the Consultative Council is intended to propose new initiatives; follow the progress of the Project and guide its orientation; give advice on the policies, goals and standards of the Project; and examine and express views on proposals recommended by the Operational Unit or by the different Selection Committees. With regard to these goals, the Consultative Council had an outstanding start. Through a careful, deliberate process, it determined priorities, established criteria and screening processes, and extensively debated the merits of different projects and proposals presented to it. This process initially slowed the approval of projects and the expenditures of funds on them, but appears to have been extremely beneficial in creating a solid, respected institutional structure and process.

As time has evolved, however, there has sometimes been a tension among these different goals, as the Consultative Council must apportion its time among them. How much attention should be devoted to individual project proposals, and how much to considering new initiatives, broader strategic goals or over-all policies? From interviews and a review of the minutes of the meetings, it appears that there is often spirited and detailed debate with regard to whether specific projects should be funded. This time consuming process has been reduced somewhat due to the fact that as the number of funded projects has grown, it was determined that smaller projects would no longer require Council approval.

The eighth critical function of the Consultative Council is to contribute to a better image of the PID within Dominican society. It is less apparent that the Consultative Council has paid conscious, focused attention to this crucial task. As the PID continues to draw sometimes critical national attention, this will be vitally important.

### ***Conclusions***

The PID's Consultative Council is functioning extremely well. It is adequately carrying out its responsibilities and Consultative Council membership is rotating as stated in the Cooperative Agreement. The Consultative Council is confronting challenges in a number of these areas. Part of this is due to the changing nature of its membership. The Consultative Council has had an appropriate policy regarding a 3-year term limit for its members while seeking to insure a mix of continuity and change in membership from year to year. The Consultative Council named for the 1995-96 year is the fourth council since the Project began. As a consequence, 11 members which had 3 years of experience on the council rotated off and only 8 members from the previous year's council stayed on (with only two of these having had more than one year's experience). This was the lowest number of continuing members from a previous year in the history of the Project (in 1993-94, 14 continued from the previous year; and in 1994-95, 13 did).

The Consultative Council clearly represents a major success of the PID. It has been an outstanding example of the goal of the Project, a site of active discussion in a civic and responsible fashion, where individuals representing diverse interests have felt free to discuss their disagreements and reach agreements in pursuit of a common goal of enhancing democratic initiatives in the country.

### ***Recommendations***

1. PUCMM and USAID should provide an orientation for the new Consultative Council members in the history and culture of the consultative group and initial councils, of the process of Project development and approval and on projects funded, perhaps through such mechanisms as a half-day or one-day retreat or participatory workshop. As part of such a retreat or workshop, the Consultative Council should be encouraged to consider how it wishes to divide up its time and whether it should seek to structure more time to focus on strategic planning issues and new initiatives.
2. The Consultative Council should consider a more conscious strategy to an advocate for, and enhance the visibility of the PID in the country. First, it would be useful for members of the Consultative Council to visit projects in the field to become more familiar on a first-hand basis. Second, the Consultative Council should consider developing sub-committees for various functions such as outreach to new organizations for potential funding, evaluation of proposals, or determining whether and how funding operations can be streamlined.

These recommendations imply an investment of considerable time by the members of the Consultative Council. Members of the Council interviewed by the evaluators contributed to these recommendations and indicated that they were willing to dedicate the time necessary.

## **PUCMM-THE OPERATIONAL UNIT**

### ***Background***

The Operational Unit under the PUCMM is directly responsible for the day-to-day administration of the PID. The Unit is managed by an Executive Director, supervised directly by the Executive Vice-Rector of the PUCMM, at the Recinto Santo Tomás de Aquino. The Unit is composed of 8 staff members; 1 Executive Director, 1 Director of Finance and Administration, 1 Project Officer, 1 Monitoring Officer, 1 Auditor, 1 part time Legal Advisor, and 2 administrative support staff.

The Unit directs all aspects of the Project, advertises and promotes it, administers the funds, conducts its financial supervision, supervises the implementation of activities, keeps close contact with the NGO community, coordinates the technical revision of proposals, revises the selection criteria as needed, coordinates meetings for the Consultative Council and the Selection Committee, prepares technical and financial reports, responds to requests from USAID, the Consultative Council, the Selection Committee and the sub-grantees, produces a quarterly bulletin, and sponsors quarterly meetings with the NGOs.

The PID Cooperative Agreement with USAID was signed on March 12, 1992. The Operational Unit's first Executive director was Lic. Rafael Toribio. During his period as Executive Director, the Operational Unit, established credibility within the NGO community, defined policies and procedures, hired personnel, and jointly with the Consultative Council, designed a code of ethics. The first subgrant awarded under the PID was given to Siglo XXI, an established civic-minded think tank, in September 1993 to formulate a common agenda on electoral and political Reforms.

In June 1993, the current Operational Unit's Executive Director replaced the previous director under the PUCMM. Since then, the Executive Director, jointly with the other PID staff members has assisted in the design and awarding of 57 sub-grants, 13 activities, and the reviewed of approximately 200 proposals. In addition, the Operational Unit has conducted courses on proposal writing around the country, has made 121 monitoring visits to existing subgrants, and has attended 54 events organized by the subgrantees.

### **Findings**

#### **Subgrant Proposal Process**

In its fourth year the Operational Unit approved more funds in grants than in the first three years of the Project together. Although, it should be noted that no grants were awarded during the

first 18 months of the Project due to the time it took the PID and the Consultative Council to become operational.

So far the PID has been able to pace the level of demand to its existing capability. Since the beginning of the PID, project beneficiaries have adjusted to requirements imposed on them, such as: high expectations for writing proposals, numerous steps for approval of grants, strict reporting and monitoring requirements. Sub-grantees complained about the time a proposal takes to be approved, and the many times a proposal is returned back with requests for changes. However, in many of the interviews the feeling was that as difficult as it was to get the proposals approved, and the many times the proposals were returned with additional requests, they (the institutions) learned to write good technically sound proposals. Moreover, the level of detail that the proposals required has made their job much easier during Project implementation and for evaluation purposes.

Currently the PID has 85 proposals waiting for approval, 55 are for grants of less than \$10,000, meaning that they only need the approval the Operational Unit and of USAID; and 30 are over \$10,000 and need to be reviewed by the Consultative Council. Of the 30 proposals over \$10,000 awaiting approval, 15 are over \$25,000; therefore, they need to be evaluated by a Selection Committee before they are presented to the Consultative Council.

If the Consultative Council approves six proposals per month, and currently has 30 proposals waiting, it will take the Consultative Council five months to approve the last one of the pending proposals. This assumes that the proposals are ready for the Selection Committee which is not the case.

### **The Operational Unit Staff**

The *Executive Director* is responsible for managing the Operational Unit, promoting the Project, administering the funds, supervising the Project activities, maintaining close ties with the community, coordinating the proposal reception process, revising selection criteria, coordinating the Selection Committee meetings, coordinating the Consultative Council meetings, preparing annual plans, coordinating internal evaluations, and being a liaison between the PUCMM and USAID.

Many of the tasks of the Executive Director require writing documents for the Selection Committee, the Consultative Council, USAID, and the sub-grantees. Keeping the paper trail, and keeping the stakeholders of the Project informed is very time consuming. Among the responsibility areas that require further attention from the Executive Director are "Project promotion" and "mid and long term planning". (These two areas will be discussed further in this evaluation report.)

The *Project Officer's* main responsibility as spelled out in his contract reads: "Responsible for turning, within a reasonable time, a good project idea into a final proposal, technically sound, (with objectives, quantifiable goals, chronogram of activities, monitoring mechanisms, and impact evaluation, among others) including budgets aligned to PID regulations (related to both; grant and counterpart funds)." The workload of the Project Officer is heavy. Of the 85 proposals awaiting

approval at the time of this evaluation, 20 have not yet been reviewed by the Project Officer for the first time. Moreover, the evaluators found in interviews with the sub-grantees and the PID Operational Unit that proposals are being returned to the institutions for changes up to three or four times before they are considered "technically sound". This means that the Project Officer has to review the proposals 3 to 4 times until a proposal meets the desired standards.

The *Monitoring Officer's* main responsibility is the supervision and evaluation of the sub-projects. The Monitoring Officer is required to visit the projects once a quarter for monitoring purposes, not including attending activities organized by the sub-grantees.

Currently there are 36 active projects. Assuming that this number won't change within a year and assuming that the monitoring officer will attend, in addition to the quarterly visits, at least one of the activities organized by the institutions, the Monitoring Officer will be required to make (36 x 5) 180 visits to sub-grantees during the year. This, added to the officer's other responsibilities (attending meetings, writing reports, teaching courses, etc.) and the wide-spread location of the grantees, makes this task very difficult to handle by only one person. Moreover, due to Cooperative Agreement regulations and the way that the PID was initially conceptualized within the austere norms and regulations of the PUCMM, the Operational Unit has no vehicles of its own. Therefore, in most of the cases the officer makes use of public transportation which limits, even more, the number of visits that can be made within a quarter.

When the grantees were asked about the monitoring function, they had very positive feelings about the assistance that the Monitoring Officer provides during the sub-projects implementation. They praised the commitment of the monitoring officer, but expressed that they would like to see more of the monitoring officer at their activities. One of the interviewees said that he felt so bad about the fact that the Monitoring Officer has no transportation to go to some isolated communities that in several occasions he has loaned him their institution's vehicle.

*Other staff:* The Finance and Administration workload has greatly increased since the expanding of the small initiatives projects. This trend is very likely to continue given that monthly financial reports are submitted to USAID. The Auditor and the Legal Advisor functions seem to be adequate for meeting the current needs of the Project.

### **Equipment Purchases**

Due to Cooperative Agreement provisions, PID is not entitled to purchase equipment with Project funds. Although the Cooperative Agreement allows PID to rent vehicles, most of the visits are made using public transportation, or using PUCMM vehicles, if available.

Currently, the Project operates with four 286 computers, which do not permit using the more sophisticated programs currently available in the market for word processing, data bases, spreadsheets and graphics needs. These programs are needed to handle the quantity of information

processed by the Operational Unit. [Note: Vice-Rector Mejía indicated to the evaluators that the university is preparing to install an internal computer network which would alleviate some of these difficulties.]

For the amount of paper that this Project is required to maintain and the amount of documents it is required to produced for 21 Consultative Council members and 36 active sub-grantees, it is almost inconceivable that the Project does not have its own laser printer. Moreover, it does not have a copier at their offices, copies are made at the PUCMM Vice-Rector's office downstairs. So, every time that there is a consultative council meeting the secretary spends days going up and down the stairs, while sharing the copier with other offices.

### **PUCMM Understanding of USAID Terminology and Requirements**

The Operational Unit at the PUCMM in its fifth year of operation is not yet clear about USAID procedures and regulations. Even today, the Operational Unit is finding out that many requirements that they imposed on themselves and on the sub-grantees are not really required by USAID. Among the ones noticed when conducting this evaluation are definitions such as: Who is a direct beneficiary and who is an indirect beneficiary? What is considered equipment and what is considered office supplies? What are accounting minimum requirements for granting funds? Is the Operational Unit allowed to advance funds to subgrantees for payment of salaries, or not? Can an existing subgrant be amended to extend the implementation period and the funds be made available?

In interviews with Operational Unit staff and with sub-grantees, it was perceived that most of the rigid controls and regulations imposed by the Operational Unit which directly affect the sub-grantees exist due to an USAID requirement. In the past, it was also perceived that some regulations are there depending on who the Mission Director or the Comptroller of the day may be. The evaluators were told that PID's regulations, therefore, are kept rigid as a safeguard against changes in USAID policy, USAID personnel or priorities of USAID personnel.

### **The Long Term Vision/The Proactive vs. Reactive Approach**

During the start-up phase of the Project, the strategy employed was characterized to the evaluators as "a thousand flowers blooming" strategy, i.e. scatter spread the seeds and see what comes up. The Operational Unit operates in a reactive mode to proposals submitted.

The Consultative Council and the Operational Unit establish the priority areas for subgrants each year. The priority areas selected for the current year are: Democratic Education, State Reform, Governance and "Autogestion" (self-governance), and Civil Society Strengthening in the Electoral Process. However, the main focus of attention this year seems to be Democratic Education. Proposals are not being submitted in the other areas. Can the Operational Unit play a more proactive approach in order to receive proposals in some of the other areas of attention? These questions have raised two opposing responses and are important to future strategic planning for the PID.

### **The Rate of Spending**

One of the questions that first emerged, after noticing that the PID's proposal awarding mechanisms were lengthy and rigid concerned the rate of expenditures. Would PID be able to spend the funds allocated for grants at its current rate of spending? It was interesting to find out how little information there is available at PUCMM and USAID about the funds available in the grants line item of the particular cooperative agreement. This Project works by yearly budgets. It focuses on the current year only, and there is not an easy way to access information on how much the Project has spent until now in the different line items, nor how much money is available by line item. The evaluators found out that at the end of the fourth year, the Project has spent only 18% of the funds assigned for grants in the budget.

### **Counterpart Contribution**

When the PID became operational, the counterpart contribution ("contrapartida") required of a subgrantee by USAID was 50%. This effectively meant that PID funded projects that could meet "matching funds" requirements. In practice, this requirement was so severe that USAID responded favorably to the Operational Unit's request to reduce the counterpart contribution to 25%. This amount may include funds from other donors.

### **Conclusions**

The Operational Unit has more proposals to process and more sub-projects to monitor than ever. Despite its relatively small size, the Operational Unit has been able to manage the Project efficiently and administer the funds well. The Operational Unit team is considered very professional, competent, efficient and, regarded by the sub-grantees interviewed as a committed and caring group of people, always attentive to their needs and willing to help. The team works hard and is always available to the different stakeholders within the PID, it is highly energetic and motivated, and very well regarded by its sub-grantees. The Operational Unit has proven to be responsive to the needs of USAID, the Consultative Council members, the Selection Committee, and the sub-grantees.

PID has strengthened the proposal writing, planning and monitoring skills of the institutions, thereby strengthening their institutional capacity.

The USAID/DR Mission has made quantum leap achievements in relation to the reengineering process, reducing unnecessary policies and regulations, and motivating efficiency. These changes, however, and the new thinking of the Mission do not seem to have been communicated clearly and effectively to the PUCMM's Operational Unit for some reason.

The Project rate of spending during the fourth year was higher than the one for the first three years added together. If the Project maintains the current rate of spending, all Project funds will be used by the year 2002.

### ***Recommendations***

1. PUCMM should revise the Executive Director's job description. The evaluators consider that the administrative tasks imposed on the Executive Director should be reviewed 1) to reduce unnecessary administrative tasks and/or 2) to delegate some of the functions to other staff members in order to allow the Executive Director to focus more on Project Promotion and Long Term Planning.
2. The Operational Unit should hire additional staff. It is most likely, that the number of active projects will increase. One Project Officer and one Monitoring Officer are not yet enough to meet the demands of this Project. USAID and PUCMM should strongly consider adding additional staff members with project and monitoring responsibilities. Also, PUCMM should evaluate if additional staff will be needed to support the Director of Finance and Administration functions, or if some of the financial procedures can be changed without deteriorating the financial controls imposed on the sub-grantees. An example of this is communicating to all grantees that they can request advances to pay salaries (not authorized since a few months ago), and amend their grant agreements if necessary. This will reduce the amount of urgent requests of funds from the grantees to get reimbursed for the salaries paid, and will reduced the burden imposed on the grantees for finding funds every time that they need to pay salaries.
3. USAID and PUCMM should revise the policy related to purchase of equipment for the Operational Unit. This is required in order to support the staff in their daily tasks. In addition to acquiring vehicles, the Project should consider buying additional computers, printers and a copier machine. Also, this is an appropriate time to review the regulations on equipment purchase due to the existence of a similar project funded by USAID and implemented by PUCMM, the "Grupo de Acción para la Democracia", (GAD), which was designed under more flexible policies, creating to a certain extent a feeling of discomfort among PUCMM'S Operational Unit.
4. USAID's Strategic Objective 3 team and PUCMM's Operational Unit should clarify some of USAID's terminology and regulations. It is recommended that the USAID Strategic Objective Team and the Operational Unit set aside some quality time together, maybe through a weekend retreat, to clarify many of the issues, and to look for alternative solutions to reduce unnecessary steps currently followed to achieve the goals of the Democratic Initiatives Project. It may be appropriate that some members of the Consultative Council and the Selection Committee participate at such event.

5. The Consultative Council and the Operational Unit must undertake strategic planning to address whether it would be more likely to achieve PID objectives for the year 2002 following a proactive approach. The "thousand flowers blooming" strategy has been successful until now. However, there are priority areas that have not yet received attention, and regions where there is no PID presence yet. The proactive approach is a valid mechanism to meet the Project objectives. It can be used to solicit proposals in areas with less demand and can be used to motivate larger NGOs to implement projects with national or regional impact.
6. PID should evaluate its current expenditures to ensure an adequate pace of spending to carry it to the end of the Cooperative Agreement.
7. Given the changes in the counterpart contribution requirement by USAID, the Operational Unit should consider applying the rate of 25% to ongoing projects for which the counterpart is a burden. This could be handled with a contractual amendment for the subgrantee.

## **PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR AWARDING GRANTS**

### ***Background***

One of the main functions of the Operational Unit is the coordination of the technical review of proposals presented by institutions. The process involves the development of criteria for writing proposals, the review and analysis, and the appropriate processing of the same.

The Operational Unit focuses its attention on developing sound projects from the proposals received and provides feedback to the institutions with unsuccessful proposals to help them meet PID award standards. Although this process strengthens the institutions, it consumes the Operational Unit's time and resources and delays the approval process in several cases up to a year.

### ***Findings***

#### **Award Selection Procedures**

The selection criteria for awarding grants has evolved since the beginning of the Project becoming more responsive to Project demands and speeding up the grant award process. The following is the approval mechanism revised and approved by the Consultative Council on February 28, 1995.

*1st STEP (common to all proposals).* Institutions interested in funding from PID will first discuss the profile of the proposal with the Operational Unit's Executive Director. If the profile is approved, the institution will write the proposal based on the guidelines designed for such a purpose.

After this, the Project Officer is responsible for reviewing the proposals submitted to PID until they are technically appropriate (sound) to be presented to the following evaluation instances.

*2nd STEP (common to all proposals).* Once the proposals are considered technically appropriate by the Executive Officer and the Projects Officer, and before they are submitted to the following approval procedures, they must be: a) evaluated by PID's internal auditor for financial and administration conditions; and b) evaluated by the legal advisor for legal status. Both evaluators will write a report to the Executive Director with comments and recommendations which will be attached to the proposals requests.

*3rd STEP.*

Proposals under US\$10,000:

Proposals under \$10,000 are evaluated by the Operational Unit staff and a representative from USAID. The approved proposals are then submitted to PUCMM's Executive Vice-Rector for approval or rejection of the decision. If approved by the Executive Vice-Rector, PID's Executive Director will write an executive summary of the proposal and send it to USAID for final approval. USAID is expected to communicate its approval or objection in a written letter of implementation within a 15 day period.

Once the letter of implementation is received, the Operational Unit will issue a Grant Agreement, which will be signed by the grantee and the PUCMM. In every instance, the Operational Unit will inform the Consultative Council of the decision.

Institutions with social but no legal status in the country which are interested in accessing PID's funds, are allow to apply solely for grants under \$10,000.

Institutions interested in accessing funds from PID for activities such as seminars, workshops and any other type of events of a few days duration, are required only to complete a special form designed for this purpose. This form requires less detail and specifications than the "Guide for Writing Proposals for Grants under \$10,000" given to the interested institutions. Also, as with the small projects, the activities approved by the Operational Unit will be sent to USAID for final approval.

In all cases, letters of rejection of projects and activities are sent by the Executive Director to the applying institutions.

Proposals over \$10,000 and under \$25,000:

Proposals within this range of funding are evaluated by the Operational Unit, first. If the proposal is approved by the Operational Unit, an executive summary is prepared and submitted to the

Consultative Council for approval. If the proposal is approved by the Consultative Council, PID's Executive Director will send an executive summary to USAID for final approval. USAID will communicate, again through an implementation letter, its final decision within 15 days.

If approved, the Operational Unit will issue a Grant Agreement, which will be signed by the institution and PUCMM.

In all cases, letters of rejection of projects and activities are sent by the Executive Director to the applying institutions.

Proposals over \$25,000:

This type of proposal includes an additional step after the proposal is approved by the Operational Unit and is submission to the Consultative Council. These proposals are presented to a Selection Committee in charge of conducting a more in-depth analysis of the proposal. If the proposal is approved by the Selection Committee, an executive summary is prepared and submitted to the Consultative Council for its approval.

If approved by the Consultative Council, the executive summaries are submitted to USAID for final approval. As in the previous cases, USAID is required to communicate its approval or objection through a project implementation letter within a 15 days period.

If approved by USAID, PID will issue a grant agreement signed by PUCMM and the institution.

In all cases, letters of rejection of projects and activities are sent by the Executive Director to the applying institutions.

### **Decisionmakers in the Award Process**

The *Operational Unit* is the first gatekeeper in the subgrant proposal review process. The Executive Director is the first point of contact for a potential subgrantee and the first approval necessary for a proposal to proceed. If the concept of the proposed project meets with the Executive Director's approval, it is forwarded to the Project Officer for his review. If not, a letter a rejection is sent by the Executive Director.

The *Selection Committees* are composed of PID's Executive Director and three technical expert members chosen by the Operational Unit with the approval of the Consultative Council and USAID. These committees review proposals of more than \$25,000.

There is a Selection Committee for each priority area established by the Consultative Council every year. Although, the Consultative Council sets several priority areas every year, proposals are

received basically for Democratic Education activities, requiring the expert advise of just one of the Selection Committees.

When evaluating proposals the Selection Committees look for sustainability of the proposed activities according to the project purpose and strategy, and administrative capacity and financial viability of the institution submitting the proposal. After completing the evaluations, the Selection Committee submits the proposals, and a report with its opinion, to the Consultative Council for its review and decision.

The USAID Project coordinator attends the Selection Committee meetings as an observer with "voice, but no vote."

The *Consultative Council* receives proposals with favorable technical recommendations from the Operational Unit staff and the Selection Committees. The Consultative Council meets once a month to review proposals. An average of six proposals are presented to the Consultative Council at each session. Five days before the monthly meetings the Consultative Council members receives sets of the proposals, including recommendations made by PID's staff and the Selection Committees, for their review. If the proposals are approved at the monthly meetings, they are then submitted to USAID for final approval.

Once approved by the Consultative Council, USAID receives executive summaries of the proposals and is expected to communicate its approval or objection through a Project implementation letter within a 15 day period.

### **Proposal Preparation Guidelines**

Institutions interested in applying for funds from PID are required to write proposals based on guidelines prepared for this purpose. PID has different sets of guidelines depending on the amount of funds requested by the institution. There is a guide for proposals over \$25,000, one for proposals over \$10,000 but less than \$25,000, one for proposals of less than \$10,000 and one for events of less than \$10,000.

*Proposals over \$25,000:* These guidelines require information related to general data of the institution, the board of directors, legal status, description of the organization (including information on internal regulations such as accounting, internal controls and procurement; operation plans; and yearly budgets), a description of the proposal (including justification, general objectives, specific objectives, goals, activities, benefits to the organization, duration, human resources, project beneficiaries, impact indicators, sustainability, chronogram of activities, and budgets related to grant and counterpart funds.

Also, the institutions are required to show that they are capable of implementing the Project, and of meeting a whole set of guidelines "requested by USAID" in relation to accounting procedures.

*Proposals over \$10,000 and under \$25,000:* The guidelines for this range of funds requires as much information as the one designed for grants over \$25,000. The exceptions to the one for grants over \$25,000, are that the information requested on internal procedures, operation plans, incorporation, and financial reports is optional, and needs to be presented to PID only if available, and that the accounting requirements are not as rigid.

*Proposals under \$10,000:* The guidelines for this range of funds requires the same information as the one for grants over \$10,000 and under \$25,000

### ***Conclusions***

Although PID has sped up the process for approving proposals, the process mechanism is still lengthy and the steps necessary for awarding a proposal are numerous. This elaborate process and the high standards requested for proposal writing delay the awarding process in some cases up to a year. While the high standards requested of the institutions in proposal writing builds institutional capacity, the PID is not always able to process revised and improved proposals in a timely fashion.

### ***Recommendations***

1. USAID and the Operational Unit should consider a simplification of the subgrant approval process.
2. PUCMM, USAID and the Consultative Council should develop a set of criteria for the first gatekeeper function. This will allow the Operational Unit to object to profiles or proposals which do not meet the agreed criteria for a PID proposal, without risking being perceived as making a subjective decision.
3. The guidelines for writing proposals should be revised to reflect the relative level of effort. The level of detail and conditions required of an institution requesting grants over \$25,000 should not be the same required from an institution requesting less than \$10,000. The requirements for proposal writing for projects of less than \$10,000 should be reduced in order to make them less threatening to small institutions, and to encourage them to submit proposals.

The guidelines should include examples of general objectives, specific objectives, and goals in order to help the institutions understand the differences among them.

When institutions are asked to indicate impact indicators in their proposals, the guidelines should include a definition of an impact indicator, provide examples, and state the purpose for requesting them.

The guidelines should be self explanatory to the reader and have as much information as necessary to convey the message.

Similarly, the information requested on sustainability should be revised with USAID in order to define what it is really expected from the institutions in relation to this area.

4. The Consultative Council should consider focusing its role on strategy, promotion and outreach and review of large proposals. While its review of all proposals initially helped to establish PID legitimacy, the increased number of proposals at the time of this evaluation overburdens the volunteer Consultative Council.
5. The Operational Unit should revise its procedures to allow subgrant renewals without interruption if the subgrantee is meeting performance and financial requirements.

## **CHAPTER IV - MID-TERM PROGRESS**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARD PROJECT PURPOSE**

#### ***Background***

The PID was conceived in the context of a plan for political change at the macro and micro levels in the Dominican Republic. As stated in the original Project Paper, the goal of the Project was to promote a more effective, representative and participatory democratic system in Dominican society. The fundamental objective of the Project was to promote efforts to strengthen the Dominican democratic system by increasing citizen awareness and participation, and improving the efficiency and impartiality of the State. Within this framework, the expected impact of the Project included the creation of a national awareness that would lead to the reform and modification of the State, and the strengthening of the capacity of the institutions of Dominican civil society to plan and take future actions, thus helping them to become decisive actors in national political life.

The goal of increasing the democratic nature and governability of the Dominican political system entailed: the identification of problems, the analysis of different options for the solution of problems, the search for concrete possibilities of intervention, and the development of training and educational activities. The assumption was that the activities supported would achieve by the end of ten years a broad acceptance of democratic values by all citizens, as well as by grassroots, professional, labor and business organizations; a greater degree of information on the political system among citizens; and a more effective and open government.

The Project Paper identified two priority areas of work: democratic education for the promotion of citizen participation, and actions in support of state reform. The stated goal was to work with the entire Dominican population, yet the Project defined as target groups women, non-traditional NGOs, and grassroots organizations. As was discussed in Chapter II, the Operational Unit is responsible for implementing the PID by awarding subgrants to these groups.

Thus, in addition to evaluating the function of the Operational Unit, this mid-term evaluation addressed questions designed to analyze the Project impact including:

- 1) number, caliber and socio-demographic categories of people directly and indirectly benefitting from the Project;
- 2) type of organization reached by the Project (indicating geographic reach, etc.;
- 3) name and activity recognition or awareness of the Project in civil society organizations working in the field of democracy; and
- 4) impact of the Project on desired target groups.

To measure impact, the Project contemplated a baseline survey on values, attitudes, beliefs and opinions about Dominican democracy and institutions; and periodic surveys to measure and

evaluate compliance of the Project's purpose and achievement of its goals. The DEMOS survey provided the baseline on values, attitudes, beliefs and opinions about Dominican democracy at large.

## ***Findings***

### **Categories of people benefitting from Project**

According to statistics provided by the Project's Operational Unit, 1,442 institutions have benefitted directly from the Project, with a total of 17,292 direct beneficiaries and 140,288 indirect beneficiaries. The Project shows a major shift in activity in 1995, with 57 percent of all direct beneficiaries and 56 percent of all indirect beneficiaries falling under this year.

Most of the direct beneficiaries reside in the urban areas, 68 percent between 1992-1994 and 74 percent in 1995. The funded subgrants, however, are not primarily concentrated in the City of Santo Domingo. In 1995, 26 percent of all subgrants in operation were in Santo Domingo and 76 percent in the interior.

About 50 percent of direct beneficiaries are members or leaders of community-based organizations at the neighborhood or municipal level. More revealing of the impact of the PID on lower-income groups is that of a total of 57 subgrants funded to date, 53 subgrants, or 93 percent, were either carried out by popular groups (15 subgrants) or worked with popular groups (38 subgrants).

The distribution by gender has been more favorable to men than to women, but an increase in the number of women direct beneficiaries is evident in 1995. The distribution of direct beneficiaries by gender was 59 percent men and 41 percent women between 1992-1994, and 56 percent men and 44 percent women in 1995. The number of organized women leaders who are direct beneficiaries of funded subgrants has declined from 15 percent in 1992-1994 to 6 percent in 1995. But the percentage of peasant women who are direct beneficiaries has increased from 5 percent in 1992-1994 to 10 percent in 1995; as well as the percentage of women microentrepreneurs, reaching 10 percent of direct beneficiaries in 1995.

### **Type of organization reached by the Project and level of impact**

The PID has funded subgrants in various regions and provinces in the country. Of the total number of subgrants in operation in 1995, 30 percent (the largest concentration) were in Santo Domingo. This is a reflection of the large concentration of the population in the capital city, but the data also shows that a significant number of subgrants have been funded in the interior, even if they have been scattered throughout the country, with most provinces having received funding for just one subgrant. Beyond the National District of Santo Domingo, the regions most benefitted by the

number of subgrants funded are the North/Central and the South. This is understandable since these are the most populated regions in the country outside of Santo Domingo.

*Subgrants in Operation in 1995 by Geographical Region*

	Number	Percentage
National Level	1	2.1
Santo Domingo	14	30.4
North/Central	12	26.0
South	13	28.2
East	2	4.3
West	4	8.7
Total	46	100.0

The list of subgrants funded indicates that the PID has reached beyond the traditional NGOs recipients of USAID grants. Yet the primary beneficiaries continue to be the best-known and more established NGOs and social organizations in the country. Given that many of these organizations were not traditional recipients of USAID grants, the PID has contributed to establish a link between those organizations and USAID through the PUCMM.

Proposals have been received and funding has been granted to large NGOS capable of exerting national impact, yet the subgrants undertaken by these organizations have mostly concentrated on a specific city or region of the country. For instance, of the subgrants in operation in 1995, only one is being carried out at the national level. On the other hand, since most subgrants funded work with a specific target population rather than being agenda-setting, the subgrants carried out in Santo Domingo do not necessarily have a national impact.

**Awareness of the PID among Dominicans**

The PID has utilized various means to advertise: news briefs/short newspaper reports, television appearances of the Executive Director, gatherings with organizations of civil society, services provided to NGOs and social organizations, and the distribution of a bulletin. Based on the newspaper clips kept by the PID Operational Unit, the promotion of the Project in the written media has evolved unevenly. The number of references to the Project made in newspapers between 1992 and 1995 were: 39 in 1992, 17 in 1993, 13 in 1994, 51 in 1995. In 1992, most of the reports provided general information about the Project or focused on the suspicion that the Project generated among those critical of USAID funding and intentions in the Dominican Republic. In 1993 and 1994, the Project had less prominence in the media. In 1995, the Project regained relevance: there was more information about the Project activities and there were a number of articles commenting on the

data provided by the DEMOS survey. Most of the articles for every year appeared in two newspapers: *Hoy* and *El Siglo*.

In the past, the PID Executive Director participated in various television programs to promote the Project. However, at the moment, the Executive Director is relying less on these appearances to promote the Project, in part because following those appearance, an avalanche of applications have arrived from individuals and organizations who do not qualify for funding.

The Project has also been promoted through gatherings held by the Operational Unit with organizations of civil society (a total of 34 have been held to date, most of them outside Santo Domingo), and by holding workshops on "proposal writing," geared to applicants or potential applicants from NGOs and social organizations (a total of 9 workshops have been held to date).

A bulletin, "Iniciativas" is published four times a year and concentrates on reporting on PID activities. The bulletin is mailed to some NGOs and social organizations, but most of the distribution is done personally, either at events organized by the Project or handed in to potential grantees who visit the PID offices.

### **Impact of Project on Desired Target Group**

While more men than women continue to benefit from the Project as direct beneficiaries, the Project has improved the percentage of women who are direct beneficiaries from 41 percent in 1992-1994 to 44 percent in 1995. A total of 9 subgrants, or 16 percent of all the subgrants funded, have been granted to major women's NGOs, such as, CIPAF, MUDE, CENSEL, and ADOPEM, to work with women. The number of direct beneficiaries in the categories of women microentrepreneurs, peasant women, and women leaders has increased from a total of 1,500, or 20 percent, in 1992-1994 to 2,525, or 26 percent, in 1995.

With the data available it is impossible to determine the economic background of the beneficiaries. Yet, assuming that most members of neighborhood associations, unions and peasant organizations belong to lower-income groups, it can be said that the majority of the direct beneficiaries belong to the less-privileged socio-economic groups in Dominican society. Yet, exactly how the Project may be helping them to benefit from the democratic process is difficult to determine with the data available.

### ***Gender note:***

Democracy is an inclusive process and should bring into the political process a broad cross-section of society. Gender equity is fundamental to a democracy. If women are not participating in the political process in equal numbers to men, then they are not adequately represented. Therefore, the political system that exists is not fully representative of women in society.

In the Dominican Republic, women make up half the population. Data from the 1994 DEMOS survey of political culture and democracy in the DR suggest that women are not participating in the political process in numbers proportionate to men. Considering the following data:

- o Fewer women (33%) than men (67%) participate frequently in meetings to resolve problems at the local level.
- o Fewer women (38%) than men (62%) participate in community or neighborhood organizations of any kind.
- o Fewer women (27%) than men (73%) attend meetings of political parties. More women (56%) than men (44%) have never attended a political party meeting.
- o More women (59%) than men (41%) have no interest in politics.
- o More women (58%) than men (42%) participate in religious organizations (Catholic or Evangelist).

### *Conclusions*

The PID had a slow start in 1992-1994, with the level of activity increasing by 1995. Most direct beneficiaries reside in urban areas, but the subgrants funded do not concentrate in the city of Santo Domingo. Subgrants have been awarded in other areas in the country, particularly, in the North-Central region and in the South. While the subgrants funded have not focused on the poorest segments of society, most of the beneficiaries reside in "barrios populares," where incomes remain low.

The distribution of beneficiaries by gender remains favorable to men even though the percentage of women beneficiaries improved in 1995. The Project is reaching women. To date the total number of direct beneficiaries who are women is 43%. The number of direct beneficiaries who are women increased from 41% in the first three years to 44% in the fourth year. While this trend is encouraging, it is far from adequate if the PID is to fulfill the spirit of the Project goals and objectives. The work with women leaders has declined as shown by the number of direct beneficiaries of funded subgrants.

The PID has expanded the scope of organizations receiving USAID grants, yet most of the recipients continue to be the best-known and more established NGOs and organizations in the country. While grants have been provided to large NGOs capable of exerting national impact, the subgrants funded have focused on specific target populations or regions rather than on agenda-setting at the national level.

General information about the PID and controversies about the Project have appeared in daily newspapers, but very little has been published about the institutions and activities funded.

The DEMOS survey by itself, as a baseline survey, does not allow for a measurement of the current impact of the Project on democratic culture and practices of the direct and indirect beneficiaries. In this sense, its utility for this mid-term evaluation is limited. Unfortunately, the periodic surveys that were originally contemplated have not been conducted, thus making impossible an assessment of changes in values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions even among direct beneficiaries of the Projects funded.

### ***Recommendations***

1. Overall, if the PID is to meet the stated goals by year 2002, it needs to be more *pro-active*. It needs to identify systematically target groups and regions, as well as themes related to democratic education and state reform in order to motivate the community of NGOs and grassroots organizations to apply for funding.

The PID should continue to fund the best-known and most established NGOs and organizations in the country, but it should allocate this funding more strategically..

*Geographic reach.* More subgrants should be funded in all regions of the country. Special attention should be given to highly deprived regions in the Eastern and Western parts of the country, where very few subgrants are currently funded.

*Gender gap.* Given that women have been excluded from positions of leadership in most social and political organizations in Dominican society, the distribution of beneficiaries by gender should shift to favor more women. The PID should set a target for the Project in regard to the percentage of direct and indirect women beneficiaries. The target should be sufficiently high (a level over 50%) to increase the levels of women's participation so that they are participating in the political process in numbers proportionate to men. Use the data, desegregated, from the DEMOS survey to target based on need.

2. The goal of increasing the democratic nature and governability of the Dominican political system requires major endeavors. To meet the challenge, after the Consultative Council has set the strategic objectives of the Project and specified its priorities, formal announcements soliciting proposals for funding within the priority themes should be distributed to NGOs and other organizations of civil society.

3. The PID should utilize the media more effectively to publicize the institutions and activities that are funded.
4. To measure the impact of the Project on values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions on democracy, a baseline survey of direct beneficiaries, both before and after they participate in the activities, should be funded by the Project. The DEMOS survey is valuable to understand the characteristics of Dominican political culture, but not as a yardstick to measure the impact of the Project. Subgrantees work with small and specific target groups that do not necessarily reflect the characteristics of the entire population measured by the DEMOS survey.

### **IMPACT INDICATORS FOR 1996/97**

On March 12, 1996, the Evaluation Team met with the SO3 team members and discussed in detail the indicators presented in the R4. The evaluators concluded that overall the indicators selected for the PID and the program as defined in the R4 are very good. Most of the indicators have established baselines. Some of the indicators, however, need a footnoted definition and two are somewhat unnecessarily repetitive.

The use of the Gallup Omnibus Surveys in some years and the DEMOS survey in other years is feasible. However, the Mission needs to ensure that the sample taken in the Gallup poll uses the precise questions from the DEMOS survey to elicit data from both instruments that can be compared to measure progress and trends. Otherwise, any attempt to compare data year by year will be flawed.

#### ***Measurement***

Together, the SO3 team members and evaluators concluded the following based on questions put to the evaluators in the Scope of Work:

#### **Are the indicators identified reflective of *Project impact*?**

Indicator No. 1: Eligible voters who voted.

Recommendation: Define with a footnote the precise meaning of "eligible."

Indicator No. 2: Eligible voters intending to vote.

Conclusion: SO3 probably doesn't need this indicator because the information it yields is more useful if it is collected during a pre-election period and used to target voter education or "get out the vote" campaigns prior to election day. Also, the actual data collected to date shows small (3% and 5%) differences between the people who are "intending to vote" and the people who "voted."

Recommendation: Discontinue this indicator.

Indicator No. 3: Citizens involved in lobbying for democratic reforms.

Recommendation: At a minimum SO3 team should define "involved" and "lobbying." A better indicator to capture citizens involvement may be Indicator number 4. Alternatively, in order to capture civil society's influence in reforms, the Mission should consider an indicator like "number of new GODR-Civil Society Organizations (CSO) consultative mechanisms established" or "number of changes made as a result of CSO advocacy or participation."

Indicator No. 4: Citizens active in NGOs and/or community groups.

Conclusion: This indicator is fine.

Recommendation: Define the term "active"

Intermediate Result No. 3.1: Civil society engages GODR and the public in promoting and shaping democratic reforms.

The team discussed the possibility of utilizing a reform tracking system or chart design to capture the multitude of progressive steps involved in the introduction, passage and implementation of reforms.

Indicator No. 1: Draft reform regulations introduced.

Recommendation: This indicator is fine. SO3 team needs to recognize, however, its limitation of only tracking laws, one type of reform.

Indicator No. 2: Public hearings held on draft reform legislation.

Recommendation: This indicator is fine. SO3 team should define "public" to include not just the formal Congressional hearings but media, fora for public debate, etc... SO3 team may want to consider an indicator to capture the number of different avenues CSO have for expression regarding pending legislation, for example, "the number of consultative mechanisms established/used...."

Indicator No. 3: Active, broad-based, NGO/community groups network(s) created for ROL, DR and GC&B lobbying purposes.

Recommendation: Change the wording slightly because indicator is not clear. Define "active" using the same criteria in Indicator No. 4. Define "broad-based." If an NGO has a very narrow membership or focus, i.e., is not broad-based, but is created for lobbying purposes, will it count toward this indicator? IS an NGO counted that was established for service delivery purposes but has taken on an advocacy role? SO3 team may want to consider an indicator that captures collective civil society action by measuring: "number of new consortia, umbrella organizations, federations and coalitions formed" and/or "degree of influence CSO have in pending/passed legislation" (expert panel to judge CSO influence).

Indicator No. 4: Public engaged by NGOs/community groups network(s) in ROL, DR, and GC&B lobbying efforts.

Recommendation: This indicator may not be needed given the other indicators capturing civil society interaction with the state regarding democratic reforms.

Intermediate Result 3.2: Strong public pressure for free and fair elections.

Indicator No. 1: Polls monitored by trained citizens placed by a national electoral observers network.

Recommendation: This indicator is fine.

Indicator No. 2: Active municipal citizens' election coalition committees in support of the electoral process.

Recommendation: The unit of measurement is number of committees. This does not measure how "active" these committees are. Define "active" in measurable terms.

Indicator No. 3: Breadth of societal support for the citizens' election coalition.

Recommendation: This indicator is fine. Define "societal support."

Indicator No. 4: Citizens' election coalition advocates engaging respected, neutral, trained citizens to man the polls.

Recommendation: Change the word "neutral" to "nonpartisan" and "man" to "staff." The verb "engaging" should be changed to "engage." Define the terms: "respected" and "engage."

**Does the Project include reasonable mechanisms to gather information?**

The Project includes reasonable mechanisms to gather the information needed to keep track of both progress (e.g. number of training sessions held, etc.) and impact (increase in the number of people participating in the political process regardless of the level). Subgrantees report to the Operational Unit every three months who in turn reports to USAID on a quarterly basis. While the reports are rich in data for process indicators, measures of impact -- increase in participation -- are absent expect for brief qualitative statements.

The Gallup poll and DEMOS survey will measure national level changes in participation. USAID and the Operational Unit can weigh the differences in national trends, disaggregated, to infer the impact the PID is having on the target population. However, as discussed below in the review of the DEMOS Survey, additional measures must be designed to focus on direct and indirect beneficiaries to accurately reflect impact. Conclusions can then be drawn about the appropriateness of the Project approach as well as, to some extent, influence Project has had on national level trends.

**Can the indicators accurately measure the Project impact on Dominican democratization?**

The indicators can be accurately measured in longitudinal studies such as the DEMOS survey and the annual Gallup polling, revised as suggested above, aimed at measuring both quantitative and qualitative increases in awareness, changes in attitudes and behavior or participation in the political process at the local, regional or national levels.

**Are the indicators broken down by gender?**

All the data collected to date for the indicators are desegregated according to gender. All planning documents indicate this practice will continue.

**ADEQUACY/UTILITY OF *DEMOS* SURVEY**

***Background***

The 1992 Project paper explains the importance of carrying out a survey of values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions concerning Dominican democracy and major political and social institutions early in the Project period. Such a survey would contribute essential baseline data to provide an empirical frame of reference and a basis of determining changes in these factors over time.

### ***Findings***

The first of three programmed surveys, called DEMOS-94, was carried out over a seven week period from January to March, 1994. It was implemented after an extensive review of the literature on democracy and authoritarianism in the country had been carried out (a review published as the book *Estado de situación de la democracia dominicana*). Results from the DEMOS survey were published in a summary volume highlighting key results and in a more extensive book providing methodological background and a more complete set of sample answers.

DEMOS-94 was very carefully designed and implemented. An extensive questionnaire was developed by the team of researchers based on past surveys taken in the country and in Brazil and El Salvador, as well as on the review of past work on Dominican democracy cited above. The questions in the survey were intended to explore social and political values and opinions broadly related to democracy, as well as the political practices of Dominicans.

The survey was based on a random sample of 2,426 respondents (subsequently weighted for age groupings and sex). Because the promised collaboration from the government statistics office which had recently carried out the 1993 census never materialized, the research team instead used an excellent 1991 survey to which it was given access as its frame of reference. There is every reason to believe that the methodology resulted in a sample that was representative of the Dominican population 18 years and over living in the country at the time of the survey.

The multiple questions of the survey highlight the extent to which authoritarian attitudes and practices are still found within the country, especially among certain strata of the population such as those residing in rural areas, with lower levels of education, and with lower socio-economic status. Authoritarian views were also more likely to be expressed by women than men and by the oldest and youngest groups in the sample. The survey also underscored the extent of dissatisfaction with state institutions such as the judicial system and the willingness of the population to consider reforms that would improve the country's system of justice, strengthen the powers of municipal authorities and create new mechanisms of participation.

### ***Conclusions***

The DEMOS survey provides important benchmark indicators of the extent and nature of participation by Dominicans in political parties and other kinds of organizations. Thus, by itself, DEMOS-94 provides a crucial contribution to knowledge about democratic attitudes, practices and aspirations in the country. As part of a series of surveys drawn from similar kinds of samples with questions worded in the same fashion, DEMOS-94 will generate an valuable set of data regarding the evolution of the population across these issues over time.

DEMOS-94 and the subsequent surveys are likely to be a major contribution to a much more profound, desegregated and empirically based understanding of Dominican political culture and its

evolution over the short term than has been possible to date. These surveys will also provide useful information to determine priorities, targets and the nature of support bases for PID and other change-oriented programs. Their contribution to the success of the PID should be understood more in this context than as a principal means of determining the success or failure of the PID, especially over the short-term.

Slight changes in the nature of responses to these surveys over time are not the most appropriate indicator of the kind of reach that PID is having; modest changes are likely to fall into the surveys' margin of error, especially as more discrete portions of the sample are examined and the sample error inevitably increases. Thus, although the PID is reaching a large number of direct and indirect beneficiaries and is expected to have a multiplier effect, it is unlikely that the effects of PID subgrants can be accurately measured by means of representative samples of the entire country's adult population.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The DEMOS surveys should be continued to track changes in national trends. Additional questions should be added to the surveys to target subgrant beneficiary populations to determine the impact of the PID.
2. Additional data to measure the success of PID subgrants may be collected through targeted survey instruments on a selected sample of subgrants. For example, one possibility would be for a sample or the population of intended direct beneficiaries of a given subgrant and a sample of non-beneficiaries drawn from the same target population (in terms of such variables as region, age, level of education, socio-economic status, etc.) to be surveyed before the first group participated in the planned activities or subgrant and then afterwards. This effort would require careful planning and elaboration to ensure that a measurement instrument was created that was both valid and reliable; targeted surveys not requiring panel-type data might also be attempted.
3. The Operational Unit should continue to have the subgrantees measure the process indicators. Each subgrant, however, should include in its design, an indicator of impact. The Operational Unit should be responsible for measuring the impact indicator once the subgrant has ended. They could, for example, hire someone within the university to interview a representative sample of beneficiaries six months after the end of the subgrant to determine if the increases in participation achieved through the subgrants have been sustained. Then, those impact measures should be reported to USAID on an annual basis.

### **SUSTAINABILITY OF PARTICIPATION SUPPORTED BY PID**

#### ***Background***

The PID seeks to have a long-term impact in support of democracy in the Dominican Republic. For this reason, issues regarding the sustainability of the Project beyond the ten year period of funding are extremely important. At the same time, it is important to understand sustainability along different dimensions. The most critical dimension relates to whether the over-all levels of democratic action and organizational activity that PID helps to initiate are sustainable over time. Another dimension relates to the sustainability of the subgrantee organizations that are direct beneficiaries of the Project.

### ***Findings***

The Project has been paying very careful attention to the sustainability of the subgrantee organizations through its extremely careful screening and funding processes. The Operational Unit has pursued a rigorous process of proposal and budget preparation which has also been combined with high levels of required counterpart funding (50%, lowered to 25% in February 1996). These processes and requirements may well have led many worthy organizations to decide not to seek funding and prevented other equally worthy ones from doing so. Most NGO subgrantees were critical of the 50% counterpart funding requirement, though not all supported a reduction to 25% for all subgrantees.

Yet, it is also true that successful NGO subgrantees, especially those of smaller scale or with less experience in requesting outside grants, all felt they had emerged as much stronger institutions from their collaboration with the PID. This usually has included an often lengthy process of proposal preparation and review, including not only the careful analysis of Project objectives and methods but also the required evaluation of their accounting procedures.

All subgrantees interviewed spoke highly of the quality of the assistance they received from the Operational Unit. A number of subgrantees, however, complained of the delays they often experienced and what appeared to be sometimes excessive demands regarding proposal detail or accounting requirements. Overall, subgrantees emphasized that although they found the process often frustrating, tedious and slow, they emerged as institutions with much stronger abilities to plan and carry out programs and with much clearer concepts of their own financial condition.

### ***Conclusions***

The PID has successfully played an institution-building role for a number of the subgrantees in the program, enhancing their long-term sustainability. This is an important success of the program that should be highlighted. Subgrantees, in response to requirements and recommendations from the PID, have almost all tightened their financial controls and accounting procedures and formalized their record-keeping and reporting functions.

In subgrants designed to increase participation of citizens in the political process, concern for sustainability of Project activities is secondary. Of primary concern is the sustainability of citizen

participation in the political process -- in decisions that affect their lives, in joining groups that can represent collective interests, in selecting people who represent their interests, etc...

This Project is supporting activities which raise citizens' awareness about their rights and responsibilities and couples that action with the political process. Once people act within the political system either as individuals or in organized groups, interact with local authorities, and are successful in solving local problems, they will be much more likely to continue participating to solve other problems. At some point, the interaction between society and state become sustained. The concern, therefore, is not that the activities themselves are sustainable, rather that the participation fostered by the activities be sustained. Once participation is sustained, the funding for activities should not be needed.

### ***Recommendations***

1. Sustainability of the Project must refer not to whether each and every organization funded will continue to survive and to thrive, but whether the kind of institution-building and level of activity in support of democracy generated by PID will continue through these funded organizations and through others. This means that activities devoted to cross-fertilization of subgrants and programs, outreach, and promotion continue to be central to the broader goal of Project sustainability.
2. The PID should seek a balance between reaching out to new groups in society which may be a higher risk, while at the same time exercising some caution by funding institutions with recognizable track records. While it is crucial to be careful and frugal with these funds, there is a risk of erring on the side of excessive caution if only extremely solid institutions are funded. A potential cost would be a lack of penetration into groups throughout the entire country and across the widest possible variety of sectors and strata of society.
3. The PUCMM may itself contribute to this sustainability by organizing its archive of subgrantee publications and materials to make them more widely accessible to other organizations and institutions. Sustainability of participation in society will be supported by the Operational Unit's efforts not only to sustain the individually funded institutions, but also its effort to attend to advocacy, promotion and outreach for democracy in the country as a whole.

**APPENDIX A**  
**SCOPE OF WORK**

**APPENDIX B**  
**LIST OF INTERVIEWS**

## **Interviews/Meetings**

### **U.S. Embassy/USAID**

Donna Hrinak, Ambassador  
Brooke Holmes, Consul General  
Jeffrey Kammerer, Defense Attache  
Milton Drucker, Economic Counselor  
Dennis Linskey, Political Counselor  
Brad Wride, Political Section  
Cesar Beltran, USIS

### **USAID**

Marilyn Zak, Director  
Collette Cowey, (PRG)  
Manuel Ortega (DGT)  
Marina Taveras (DGT,PRG)  
Maria Teresa Rivero (DGT, Project Assistant)  
Maritza Rodriguez (CON)  
Douglas Ball (EDT/DGT - ROL)  
Thelma Camarena(DGT/EDT)

DGT Team Meeting  
Strategic Objective 3 Team Meeting

### **Proyecto para el Apoyo a Iniciativas Democraticas (PID)**

[Democratic Initiatives Project]

### **Consultative Council (Current and Former Members)**

Magaly Caram  
Eduardo Latorre  
Tom Lluberres  
Carlos Pimentel  
Braulio Portes  
Arelis Rodriguez  
Ana Selman  
Rafael Toribio

Operational Unit

Radhames Mejia  
Mu-Kien Sang  
Mirna Diaz  
Roberto Gonzalez  
Mariano Rodriguez  
Jose Cuello  
Cesar Fañas

Selection Committee

Francisco Polanco  
Jorge Cela  
Juan Tomas Tavares

PID Sub-Grantees Visited

Project Number	Name
001/019	Fundacion Siglo XXI
003/057	Centro de Investigacion para la Accion Femenina (CIPAF)
005/033	Union de Vecinos Activos (UVA)
008/032	Centro de Estudios Sociales Juan Montalvo, S.J.
009/031	Asociacion Cultura Popular (ACUPO) Radio Santa Maria
014	Oficina Tecnica de Salcedo
015/051	Fundacion Nacional para el Desarrollo de la Juventud Rural, Inc. (FUNDEJUR)
016	Fundacion Falconbridge
017	Confederacion de Trabajadores Unitarios (CTU)
018	Fundacion Dominicana para la Solidaridad, Inc.
021	Centro de Servicios Legales para la Mujer (CENSEL)
028	Proyecto Integral Comunitario, Inc. (PROICO)
034	Educadores Unidos del Cibao, In. (EDUDELC)
035	Colegio Cristo Rey
036	Equipo de Educacion Popular y Comunicacion Alternativa (EPCA)
037	Asociacion para el Desarrollo de la Provincia Espailat, Inc. (ADEPE)
039	Obispado de Nuestra Señora de la Altagracia (Depto. Pastoral Juvenil)
042	Mujeres en Desarrollo (MUDE)
043	Fundacion Institucionalidad y Justicia (FINJUS)

Other NGOs

Association Pro-Fundacion de Estudios Dominicanos (APROFED)

Fundacion de Educacion y Desarrollo (FEDES)

Centro Pastoral de Produccion Audiovisual (CEPA)

Fundacion Dominicana para la Promocion y Accion Social (PROPAS)

Junta Popular de Organizaciones Barriales y Comunitarias (JUNTAPO)

**APPENDIX C**

**SUMMARY OF PID SUBGRANTS APPROVED (7/01/93-3/30/96)**

**APPENDIX D**

**DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

## **Documents Reviewed**

### USAID/Dominican Republic

Project Paper. Dominican Republic Democratic Initiatives Project No. 517-0265. March 11, 1992.

Cooperative Agreement No. 517-0265-A-00-2080-00 signed between USAID/DR and the Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) March 12, 1992. Pending: 13 previous amendments to be incorporated in 14th amendment to produce a complete revised/updated Cooperative Agreement.

Results Report and Resource Request FY 1995-1998 (R4).  
February 1996.

### USAID/General

Democracy Officer's Desk Reference. Center for Democracy and Governance [n.d. circa 1996]

### PUCMM/PID/Operational Unit

Quarterly Reports submitted to USAID:

Oct-Dec 1992 Jan-Mar 1993 Jan-Mar 1994 Jan-Mar 1995  
Apr-Jun 1993 Apr-Jun 1994 Apr-Jun 1995  
July-Sept 1994 July-Sept 1995  
Oct-Dec 1994 Oct-Dec 1995

Los Primeros Cuatro Anos de un Proyecto Novedoso 1992-1996. PID/PUCMM/USAID.  
Marzo 1996.

Iniciativas Boletín trimestral del Proyecto para el Apoyo a Iniciativas Democráticas (PID)

Manual de Procedimientos Para la Aprobación de Propuestas. (PID/PUCMM/USAID) [n.d.]

Formulario de Evaluación e Informe Trimestral. PID/Unidad Operativa.

Ejemplos de intra-PID comunicaciones:

Programacion tentativa para los Encuentros Trimestrales con los proyectos financiados por el PID. Comunicacion entre la Directora Ejecutiva y los miembros de la Unidad Operativa. 11 de enero de 1996.

Comunicacion de la Directora Ejecutiva a Marilyn Zak, Directora USAID con respeto a la acta de la reunion del Comite del Fondo de Pequeñas Inciativas en su sesion celebrade el día 23 de enero de 1996.

Acta de la Reunion Ordinaria del Consejo Consultivo celebrada el 2 de febrero de 1996.

Lista de la Propuestas en Condicion V Ano 1995 - Comunicacion de la Directora Ejecutiva a Marilyn Zak, Directora USAID que enumera las propuestas que han sido desestimadas entre el 1 de enero al 31 de diciembre de 1995. (13 de diciembre de 1995)

Resumenes Ejecutivos. Documentos internos para cada proyecto del PID.

Duarte, Isis; Brea, Ramonina; Tejada H., Ramon; y Baez, Clara. Cultura Política y Democracia en Republica Dominicana. Santiago, Republica Dominicana: PUCMM, 1996.

Duarte, Isis; Brea, Ramonina; Tejada H., Ramon; y Baez, Clara. La Cultura Política de los Dominicanos - Entre el Autoritarismo y la Democracia. Santiago, Republica Dominicana: PUCMM, 1995.

**APPENDIX E**  
**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

## List of Acronyms

CSO:	Civil Society Organization
GODR:	Government of the Dominican Republic
NGO:	Nongovernmental organization
PID:	Democratic Initiative Project
PUCCM:	Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra
R4:	Results Reports and Resource Request (FY 1995-1998)
ROL:	Rule of Law
SO3:	Strategic Objective 3 Team (USAID/DR)
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/W:	USAID/Washington
USAID/W/G/DG:	USAID/W/Global Bureau, Democracy & Governance
USAID/DR:	USAID/Dominican Republic

**APPENDIX F**

**USAID POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR AWARD OF ASSISTANCE INSTRUMENTS TO  
PVOs AND NGOs FOR DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**