

**Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative
Mid-Term Evaluation Report**

Submitted to:

Mercy Corps/ Georgia

**Submitted by:
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E-GCMI Mid-Term Evaluation

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIGs:	Community Initiative Groups
CIWG:	Community Information Working Groups
MC	Mercy Corps
MSI:	Management Systems International
SPIG	Social Policy Initiative Group
SPWG:	Social Policy Working Group
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEn	Ministry of Environment
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SO	Sub Office (of E-GCMI)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
EGCMI	East Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative (Implemented by Mercy Corps)
WGCMCI	West Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative. (Implemented by CARE)
COP	Chief of Party (Head of a Project)
CTC	Center for Training and Consultation
RFP	Request for Project Proposals
RFA	Request for Applications

Executive Summary

Introduction: A mid-point evaluation was conducted of the East Georgia Community Initiative, (E-GCMI) a project funded under a Cooperative Agreement by USAID with Mercy Corp, with sub grants to Horizonti Foundation and Management Systems International. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the E-GCMI and to obtain recommendations for the project direction over its next two years.

Over a four week period of team of four conducted the evaluation that included extensive individual and group interviews with Mercy Corps staff in the headquarters and the sub offices, representatives of communities and NGOs receiving grants through the project, the sub grantees, Horizonti and MSI, and organizations related to the project.

Following is a summary of the findings and recommendations of the study, organized by project component and by cross cutting areas.

Findings

The community mobilization and grants project components are largely on or ahead of their targets with 103 CIG projects completed and 81 CIG projects are under way. 81 NGOs have received grants covering 99 projects with 56 completed and 43 underway.

Findings: Community Mobilization Component

- The communities are demonstrating increased ability to undertake projects, i.e. on a limited scale to replicate the experience.
- Project have tended to emphasis physical infrastructure to the exclusion of more process, thematic or policy oriented projects, e.g. health, education;
- Economic development oriented projects have not been considered or undertaken, or at least projects with this as a primary focus.
- Projects, particularly rural projects are experiencing some cooperation and support from the local government, with both verbal and material support

Recommendations: Community Mobilization

Grant Options: Revise, at least on a pilot basis, the conditions of grants, enabling communities to propose a longer term project that would require the resources of two cycles, ie 12,000. This could be particularly helpful if a community wished to focus on a larger scale project with economic development impact., or coupled, in an appropriate manner with an expanded ACDII/VOCA partnership program. Encourage villages/screbulos to explore the development of joint projects which would benefit the entire area.

Provide increased programmatic support to encourage interaction among communities and CIGs as a means of reinforcing their leanings and expanding their perspectives of what might be done.

Findings: NGO Grants Component

- NGO grants have been primarily oriented to one shot services or projects and have not provided or required substantial commitment to organization or sector development.;
- Regional NGOs and community groups report difficulty in obtaining information and technical assistance that is more readily available to urban, Tbilisi based NGOs;
- Grant process is lengthy and is focused in Tbilisi with minimal participation by regional actors.

Recommendations: NGO Grants Component

- **Regionalize Grant Process.** Regionalize in some manner the grant making process
- **Revise Grant Terms /Conditions:** Increase the length of grants provided to NGOs and strengthen the commitment to both organization and sector development.

Findings: Social Policy

The SPIG has been active on the national level particularly in the area of education and child protection reform. This effort has focused on convening conferences and discussion regarding education and working with the ministry and parliament in developing policy alternatives and disseminating information about education reform.

SPIG has been working with the development of the local Social Policy Working groups to with SPWGs have been formed in four of the five regions of EGCM. However, thus far the local communication and information exchange capacities are limited, given the area to be effectively involved in the social policy process.

Recommendations: Social Policy

Increase the number and range of organizations and individuals involved in the Social Policy. This can be beneficial in two important areas. First it can help ensure an exchange of information regarding a broad range of social issues between the center and the local population. Second, it will increase the human resources potential for active participation in the policy formulation and implementation processes.

Strengthen the ability of local groups to identify and act upon local issues and concerns rather than focusing principally on issues which come from Tbilisi and encourage a greater emphasis on the articulation of local needs that might be addressed from local resources.

Cross Cutting Recommendations

1. **Increased Integration, Coordination and Communication among the project components.** Currently project component lack extensive familiarity and interaction with each other, thus diluting the potential for maximizing their collective impact and are not engaged with each other to the maximum degree possible. This relative isolation at the field level, as well as the central level is resulting in a loss of overall impact of the project.

A range of activities and actions can facilitate process starting for example with simple exchanges of information about the programs, areas of operation, current concerns and interests. to this to linkages among the elements of the project, e.g. among NGO Grants/ Community Mobilization Grants/ SPWG activities.

Increase communication; exchanging of information; increase number of conferences/ meetings at local levels that include all participants.

2. **Increase Emphasis on Sustainability:** Devote greater attention to sustainability issues through a program of organization assessment, increased mentoring or hands on technical assistance, demand driven training and other professional development programs that are based on a thorough organizational assessment process. Incorporate capacity development into all grants, ongoing involvement with CIGs and CIG communities.
3. **Strengthening Government Relations:** Develop and pursue a project and programmatic commitment to strengthening relations with local and national government officials and agencies. This commitment should become a basis tenet of the program and pursue with vigor by inviting the participation of government officials, both elective and appointive in project sponsored activities.
4. **Expand Social Policy Capacities.** Expand social policy related capacity beyond the SPWGs by involving other groups and individuals, e.g. the recruitment of NGOs, particularly at the local levels to assist with the gathering of information about local level needs and desires. Exploring the involvement of staff of government agencies, e.g. health workers and/or teachers, in an organized manner could be an excellent way of developing closer ties with government and of gathering, quickly, information about emerging community needs.¹

The Center for Training and Consulting, Partners in Georgia, Alkana and the Young Lawyers Association are all currently working with the project. The level and scope of their involvement could be expanded, and additional relationships, particularly with regional NGOs, could be established. The development a collaborative relationship with the coalition of NGOs that are working with handicapped children could serve as a model for ways of building and supporting thematic NGO networks.

5. **Strengthen Private Sector Recruitment and Participation Efforts.** Programmatically emphasize and support efforts to obtain private sector participation in all components of the program.
6. **Development of Public Relations Capacity.** The NGOs and CIGs could benefit from Public Relations capacity as they see to become sustainable and to increase their effectiveness in working with and influencing government and policy processes. GCM could therefore focus on the development of this capacity and, in the process, forge relations with the private sector and expand relations with such NGOs as Greenwave Radio

¹ The Revised Technical Proposal specifically mentions the desirability of incorporating a broad range of organizations throughout the project. Ref: RTA p15.

Introduction

The East Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative (E-GCMI), a four year USAID funded project is at its mid point. To assist in planning and modifying the project for the final two years, Mercy Corps the lead cooperative agreement party in cooperation with USAID, is undertaking this mid-term evaluation.

The Georgia Context

Georgia domestically has an increasingly unpopular government that in the last election could only garner about two percent of the vote. There is widespread disbelief in the rule of law and voices of dissent are typically not tolerated. The population has few avenues for expressing their views, and a weak tradition of being able to influence policy and issues affecting their daily lives. Internationally a hostile and aggressive Russia that poses a daily threat confronts Georgia. Large portions of the country are effectively out of the control of the government. Social services are poor while the needs for education and health care remain high.

Project Summary

Objective: The objective of the East Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative is to contribute to the achievement of USAID/Caucasus Georgia Strategic Objective 3.1.2: Vulnerable Communities Meet Own Needs to respond to the evolving needs of vulnerable communities for social and community service delivery and to strengthen the capacity of those communities to identify and effectively address their evolving needs.²

Project Dimensions and Focus: The project encompasses three broad dimensions:

- Community Mobilization, Training and Technical Assistance and
- Grants for NGOs and communities.
- Social Policy dimension is to be integrated throughout with the project.

Under the terms of the RFP and the proposal grants are to be awarded to existing NGOs delivering community services in targeted areas **and** to newly organized community initiatives resulting from MC community mobilization activities. The grant activity and the mobilization, training and technical assistance are intended to contribute, together, to the overall purpose of the project, i.e. community mobilization.

The Mercy Corps proposal notes that E-GCMI will manage a local non-governmental sector grants program which will be fully integrated with the community mobilization strategy and objectives and will focus on capacity building of local communities to ensure that they are able to address their own needs. Access to quality health care and education, rights of women and the creation of economic opportunities were expected to be the priority areas for the attention of the project.³

Project Area: GCMI covers Samtske-Javakheti Region (SO in Akhaltsikhe Town); Kakheti Region (SO in Telavi); Kvemo-kartli Region (SO in Bolnisi); Shida-kartli (SO in Gori), Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Tbilisi with two micro districts (SO in Isani Samguri). South Ossetia also is part of the project, although work there has been delayed pending the outcome of negotiations with the South Ossetia government regarding organizational and management issues.

Project Implementation Structure: E-GCMI is structured in three components: Community Mobilization; Grants-NGO; Social Policy. The first two components are managed directly by Mercy Corps. Responsibility for the Social Policy component is with two sub-grantees, Horizonti Foundation and Management Systems International. While this structure make programmatic sense it diverts attention to the components rather than the broader Community Mobilization objectives and the results packages of training and capacity development; grants and social policy included in the proposal.

The project operates from five sub offices, one in each region, and a central office in Tbilisi. An additional office is to be opened in South Ossetia when the negotiations with the government are completed.

Mid Term Evaluation

The purpose of the mid term evaluation is to assist Mercy Corps/ Georgia by reviewing E-GCMI progress to date and providing recommendations for possible program modifications. The evaluation report is to be part of a process of setting directions and targets for the next two years of the project.⁴ The evaluation team examined the project progress in terms of the project objectives and reviewed project implementation characteristics.

² Ref: EGCMR Revised Technical Application, p. v and p. 11.

³ Ref: EGCMR Revised Technical Application, p. v and p. 11

⁴ Ref: Scope of Work for EGCMR Mid Term Assessment

Assessment Team: A four person team, two expatriates and two Georgians, conducted the evaluation. The expatriates worked full time on the evaluation for four weeks. The Georgian team members participated for about two weeks each, in the fieldwork, the team's review of findings and the workshops.⁵

Methodology of Assessment: The breadth of the evaluation required an intensive and extensive approach that incorporated the following:

- Review previous evaluations of the project;⁶
- Review of project documents from each of the components;
- Intensive interviews with project staff in Tbilisi and the sub offices;
- Focused group discussions with selected NGO staff, Community Initiative Group Members;
- Focused discussion with Mercy Corps field Staff;⁷
- Interviews (by phone) with previous senior Mercy Corps project Staff;
- Regional Workshops with representatives of NGOs, CIGs, SPWGs and the Mercy Corps sub office staff facilitated by sub office staff utilizing guideline provided by the evaluation team;⁸
- Tbilisi Workshop, with Mercy Corps Program and senior administrative staff, Horizonti Foundation staff with guidelines and focus questions provided by the evaluation team

In each region the sub-office staff arranged individual and group discussions with selected NGOs, CIGs members, Social Policy Working Group (SPWG) members and selected local government officials. In Gori the team a meeting was arranged with the ACDI/VOCA project director and a recipient of a loan and grant made available as a result of the collaboration between ACDI/VOCA and E-GCMI.

The sub-office staff selected, with the concurrence of the MC/COP and the team members, the NGOs and CIGs the team would meet. The selection criteria were that NGOs and CIGs have received a grant from MC and therefore have a base of experience from which to offer comments, suggestions and observations, that they could have representatives available on the required date to meet with the team.

To encourage openness the interviews and discussions⁹ were conducted without the participation of the Mercy Corps staff. Separate meetings were held with the staff, who also participated in the regional and Tbilisi workshops.

Organization of Report

This report is organized in two sections. The first section is components focused and presents the finding of project's qualitative and quantitative indicators; conclusions by the team, and component specific recommendations.

The second section focuses on cross cutting issues. The team elected to include this section since the initial project was presented broad dimensions, e.g. training and capacity building, grants and social policy. Furthermore, during the evaluation major themes emerged that transcend the individual components. The cross cutting section thus emphasis the potential for synergy among the components and helps focus attention on the unified nature of the project.

Community Mobilization Component

Purpose and Structure¹⁰

The Community Mobilization component is designed to assist poor communities to

- identify and prioritize their needs,
- design projects to address these needs,
- mobilize resources and implement/manage the projects in an effective and timely manner
- to develop the community mobilization skills and abilities that will enable the community to continue to address its needs after the project.

To achieve these purposes E-GCMI assists communities in developing a proposal for a project and provides financial and technical assistance and training. In E-GCMI "communities" is defined to include villages, clusters of villages, or sacrebulos, or, in the case of urban areas, other collections of people, e.g. housing units, schools, kindergartens, in which there is an agreed upon need and a desire and willingness to work together.

The mobilization process starts with community meetings in which problems are identified and prioritized and

⁵ See Appendix 01 Mid Term Evaluation Scope of Work for details on the composition of the evaluation team.

⁶ See Appendix 03 List of Documents Consulted

⁷ See Appendix 02 Itinerary and List of Meetings

⁸ See Appendix 06a and 07a Guidelines for the Regional and Tbilisi workshops.

⁹ There were one or two exceptions to this when government officials invited the sub office manager to joining the meeting.

¹⁰ Ref: Revised Technical Application. P. 19

members are selected for a Community Initiative Group (CIG). The CIG is ultimately responsible for the design and implementation of the project. The entire community process is guided by a commitment to involving a cross section of the community in the project. The CIG members are responsible for the implementation of specific community projects, preparing the budget, conducting bid analysis, preparing financial reports and performing other tasks required for the implementation of the project. Once selected a community is involved in a three-phase project cycle. Following the successful completion of one phase a community is eligible to re-apply for a second and a third phase. Each phase follows the same general cycle of problem identification through to implementation.

E-GCMI provides financial assistance that has been a maximum of \$10,000 per project. This amount was reduced in September 2002 to a maximum grant of \$6,000. The community is required to contribute 25 percent of the total project costs in the first cycle, 50 percent in the second cycle and 75 percent in the third cycle. Community contributions can include cash, labor, materials or other agreed upon in kind contributions. Each community is expected and encouraged to obtain contributions from a broad cross section of the community.

The preparation process for the first phase usually lasts about two months with less time being required for the second and third phases. E-GCMI provides training in project design, budgeting and project management. The sub office mobilizers work with individually with CIGs on identifying community contributions, developing plans, procuring goods, providing advice on technical aspects of infrastructure projects, and monitoring project implementation and spending. Typically the mobilizers meet with CIGs on a weekly basis and provide assistance as needed. In addition to the staff of the five regional offices, two Community Mobilization Specialists based in Tbilisi are available to assist communities.

Transparency is a key characteristic of all E-GCMI projects. As a result all CIG decisions are taken in an open meeting environment, the project budget and regular detailed financial reports are posted in an easily accessible public place and CIG meetings are open to all.

Findings

These findings include quantitative and qualitative indicators of progress related to USAID Strategic Objectives the team's regarding the implementation of the component.

Outputs: Quantitative Indicators¹¹

The progress of the community mobilization component is reflected in the following quantitative indicators.

CIG Projects

- 113 formed and functioning CIGs.
- 43 additional CIGs are in the formation process, i.e. have had an APM meeting and currently planning their first projects;
- 103 community projects completed
- 6 CIGs have completed independent projects, i.e., projects that did not have MC funding
- 2 additional CIGs are currently implementing independent projects.

Community Support

- The total value of the completed projects is \$ 2,278,048 with a community contribution¹² ratio of an average of 36.37% in the completed projects and a projected 47% for the on-going projects.
- Beneficiaries: The Total number of beneficiaries of the completed projects is 23,628.¹³

Qualitative Indicators and General Findings

Qualitative indicators provided in the Scope of Work are presented here along with the other project findings. The qualitative and general findings are presented together since they overlap or a closely related in some areas. To a large extent the information contained here is based on the interviews and workshops conducted with a sample of CIGs during the evaluation.

Qualitative Indicator: Empowerment Of Communities And Strengthened Civil Society

¹¹ These indicators are based on regular project reports and data

¹² MC did not disaggregate government, business and other types of community contribution from the beginning of E-GCMI

¹³ The collection of reliable data on the number of women beneficiaries was started in 2002 and is therefore not available for this report.

¹³ The evaluation team carried out a snapshot assessment of the community mobilization impact of E-GCMI. More detailed information is incorporated in Empowerment Impacts of GCMI-E, Kate Hamilton, 18 July 2002

Qualitative Indicator: Increased Participation of community members in transparent and accountable decision making at the local level.) The methodology of participatory community planning, mobilization of community resources and financial transparency seems to be well accepted among all the stakeholders within Community Mobilization component.

- **Participation of Women:** The level and type of participation by women in community mobilization projects was not clearly evident. CIG members and MC staff reported that women were actively involved in all phases of the projects.
- **Minority and Marginalized Groups:** No evidence of special attention given to other marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities or disabled persons. Discussions about specific involvement of these groups in community mobilization projects resulted in comments that all meetings and activities were open to all members of the community; that it was only necessary for them to come.

Qualitative Indicator: Increased levels of trust and confidence within the community¹⁴

CIG members and participating communities appear to be increasing their levels of confidence and trust. This is reflected in the following:

- Suspicion and distrust of external assistance is reportedly decreasing at the local level in communities in which the project is working. For example, some CIG members reported an initial suspicion towards MC and other external sources of assistance. This suspicion was reported as being inherited from the history of the socialist system of governance, lack of citizen's involvement and the inefficiency of current government to meet citizens' needs.
- CIG members report increased confidence in the ability of the community and increased trust among community members, and, in some cases, among the members of neighboring communities. In addition it was reported that some communities became convinced they can:
 - increase the standard of living by becoming engaged,
 - mobilize the people and other resources both within the community and from other sources (i.e. business, local government, MC);
 - have a control over the resources and
 - manage and complete the project successfully (i.e. on time, the project is functioning).
- Urban and rural CIGs that have entered the third cycle (e.g. Isani Sanguri region) reported increased confidence that they can design and run a project, mobilize their communities around it and use community mobilization methodology to approach the government and lobby for the projects in their communities.
- The transparency of the project, particularly related to finances, reportedly has increased the trust of community members, their willingness to contribute to the project, and their sense of control over the resources. The continued and increased level of community contributions tends to reinforce this view.

Levels of Contribution: The level of community trust and confidence appears to the team to be related to the willingness to participate in the project with contributions.

- **Motivation:** A high level of motivation of community members to support projects, especially in smaller communities and in rural areas the level of community contribution in the first cycle often exceeds the mandated 25 percent. (In Bolnisi region, all interviewed CIGs reported a community contribution of between 43-47% during the first project cycle.)

While the motivation to support community projects appears to be high, both rural and urban CIGs have expressed concern over the requirement of a contribution of 75% in the third cycle. The CIGs note that available resources may be significantly drained in the early cycles, that later projects are likely to be increasingly sophisticated projects and therefore require skills, knowledge and levels of funding financing that are not readily available.

There was some suggestion that it is easier for urban CIGs to mobilize the higher contribution amounts due to a larger pool of relevant skilled labor and the easier accessibility of other donors.

- **Scope of Community Contributions:** Initial community contributions have included volunteer labor, transport, and money. In addition, there were reports of some communities obtaining project assistance from business, other donors and local government.

Findings: Government Involvement and Relations: The following findings group relate primarily to government and government community relations.

Qualitative Indicator: Improved Community-Government Relations

- Community mobilization projects appear to have maximum impact on the local government when community members with the participation of the sacrebulo initiate them, **or** when the sacrebulo initiated the community mobilization. e.g. in Bolnisi region sacrebulo members mobilized other communities to raise resources necessary to implement the gas pipeline project. One reported result of this is that a higher level of involvement of sacrebulo can increase the potential for local government adopting the community mobilization model as a governance approach.
- Local and regional governments are reported to not feel compelled to become more participatory or accountable to their citizens. A Bolnisi gangeboa by increasing the transparency of public spending and administrative changes in taxation increased the percentage of tax revenue and the business sector contribution for community improvement projects.

Qualitative Indicator: Increased Government Community Collaboration In Addressing Community Needs

- Sacrebulos expressed an interest and demonstrated commitment to the community mobilization projects. This was particularly evident in the by a willingness to make financial, material or labor contributions to a project.¹⁵
- There appears to be a difference in the type of contribution made by rural and urban governments. Rural sacrebulos reportedly have greater access to non-cash governmental resources that can be made available for projects, e.g. surplus or unused pipe and materials or the use of government owned forests and land. Urban local government officials lacking such resources are required to provide financial resources. In both situations, the financial resources available to local government are very low as a result of limited sources of income.
- The sacrebulos suggested that the approach of addressing community needs by mobilizing a variety of local resources as is done in the projects, may be useful in their future operations. However, they are not clear how this might be operationalized on a broader scale.

Qualitative Indicator: Increased influence by CIGs on local/sacrebulo level government

- The team found little evidence that CIGs are aware of how they might influence sacrebulo level government for assistance through such approaches as advocacy, coalition building and lobbying. Some CIGS reported, however, that the activity of the community mobilization projects has prompted action or support by the local government.
- Urban CIG expressed the belief that the formation of CBOs would give them more credibility to represent their interests/needs. CIGs as viewed as civil initiatives that “scan” the ideas of the communities. For wider representation it is believed that a more formal body is needed. Although potential for CBOs is seen CIG members lack skills in the formalization process, NGO management, advocacy and coalition building.

General Project Findings

The evaluation team examined the project from the perspective of its overall purposes, processes and characteristics that affect the overall project. Following are these general findings related to the Community Mobilization component.

Skills Development: Rural CIG members appeared to be limited in their ability to apply their community development or social policy issues skills to more generalized situations or problems. In addition, these CIGs appeared not to be aware of the process and potential of developing and using other partners in their projects.

Awareness of Social Policy Issues and Resources: An underlying goal of the project is to increase awareness by CIG and community members of social policy issues and development. The evaluation suggests that CIG members are:

¹⁵ See Appendix 05 for a summary of government contributions to community mobilization projects.

- largely unaware of social policy reforms currently being undertaken in Georgia
- not clear what governmental departments are responsible for which of the community issues.

A lack of information about social policy issues and resources appeared to be greater among rural women. Interviewees reported that men tend not to share even available information with. For example in one community the men interviewed had a general idea of which governmental department to turn to regarding community infrastructure problems. Women, on the other seemed to lack this information. In addition, even though the primary school principal was a CIG member, female members with school age children stated that they did not know about current education reform discussed during the interview by the men.

Information Sharing: Traditional methods of information sharing, such as newspapers and/or TV, are not necessarily adequate for the overall population. Creative and targeted approaches not utilized yet (be it for the individual citizens, communities, within different levels of government)

Conclusions: Community Mobilization Component

The community mobilization component has demonstrated significant success in encouraging and supporting community projects and laying the seeds for continued citizen initiatives at the local level. Training and the provision of assistance by the mobilizers appear to have contributed to the successful completion of the individual projects. Local and regional governments have provided encouragement and endorsement of projects as well as tangible support in the form of money, equipment or materials and have expressed a willingness to assist with additional projects within the limits of their resources. Thus the opportunity exists for the project and the CIGs to actively nurture government support at the local level. The further development of relations with government and among CIGs and with other groups remains a need. The communities can also benefit from additional encouragement with focused economic development projects, and with exploring projects that go beyond physical infrastructure.

Recommendations: Community Mobilization Component

- Support additional and expanded skill building and networking opportunities for CIG members (such as coalition-building, negotiation)
- Formalize the government contribution for the community projects as a means for gaining commitment of government to participation.
- Increase the level of local government participation in the process of identification of priority projects, designing and implementing it. This can help increase the local government sense of ownership of community projects, strengthen relations with CIGs, NGOs and other civic activities and facilitate a learning process among governmental officials.
- Support the development of public education and public relations activities designed to inform the public, NGOs and the private sector on the role of local government and its various departments and other sector related issues.
- Explore the possibility of establishing or strengthening linkages between E-GCMI and the Urban Institute implemented Local Government Project.
- Explore the possibility of enabling communities to undertake larger projects, the equivalent of a phase two and a phase three project simultaneously. This could be a means of assisting communities to focus on a broader range of projects and placing greater emphasis on developing economic opportunities.

NGO Grant Component¹⁶

Purpose and Structure: The E-GCMI NGO grant is designed to assist NGOs through a program of grants, training and technical to provide specific social services and support the development of a viable NGO sector as part of the overall community mobilization process.

The GCMI NGO Grants component is composed of two parts, grants and training. The Requests for Proposals (RFPs) if the central program structures of the components. Registered Georgian NGOs can respond to the RFPs

¹⁶ Note: The NGO grant component discussed here focuses on one of the two grant award tracks mentioned in the Revised Technical Application, i.e. Awards to existing NGOs delivering community services in targeted areas. Reference: Revised Technical Assistance, p. 36

issued. The RFPs typically incorporate a request for the provision of a specific service. Starting with the fifth round of RFPs, in October 2002, the RFPs will also include a general capacity building dimension.

Progress To Date: Four rounds of RFPs have been issued, as of September 2002, out of the eight planned for the life of the project. The grants are planned to be evenly distributed between Tbilisi and the regions. Grant sizes have ranged, with few exceptions, between \$5,000 - \$12,000 in the first RFP; \$1,000-\$15,000 in second round, \$3,000-\$20,000 in the third round and \$2,000- \$20,000 in the fourth round. Through the first four rounds of grants the projects have ranged in length from 2 to 3 months to a maximum of 12 months.¹⁷ The majority of the grants are for services or activities that are completed in a very short period of time, e.g. 3 months or less.

Grant Selection Process: The selection of grant awards is conducted by a Review Committee consisting of E-GCMI NGO grants staff, MC COP, MC sector directors, Social Policy Advisor, SPIG member¹⁸ and two representatives of NGOs. The committee reviews the proposals, in accordance with a transparent score sheet that highlights the criteria for the respective RFP. After the review is completed all applicants receive written notice of the actions taken and comment on their grant application. The entire program is based in Tbilisi with no regional offices have no influence on the design of the RFPs or decision-making power during the selection process.

Grant Focus: The first RFPs were open in that they did not specify either sector or service. This approach was to allow the NGOs to focus on projects consistent with their mission rather than chasing highly targeted funding. The second round of RFPs mentioned vulnerable groups, e.g. elderly, women and children. However, no guidelines or specific needs were identified that should be addressed through the grants.

With the third round, E-GCMI slightly modified its emphasis. In this round the focus was on NGOs with previous experience with similar projects and required a 20 percent match of funds by grant recipients. The grant sizes, project duration and the generic thematic approach remained constant with earlier rounds. At this time a further condition introduced was a focus on NGO grants to the communities **not** covered by the community mobilization component of E-GCMI.¹⁹

E-GCMI is currently changing the RFP design, distinguishing between generic RFPs i.e. ones with a greater focus on social policy and sustainability oriented and grants with a greater emphasis on capacity building. This latter focus is in part a response to an apparent lack of interest of the sub-grantees for the previously organized trainings and to focus more on the demand driven training.

In the early round grant recipients were provided two mandatory training sessions:

- 1) Financial Management and Compliance (conducted by MC staff)
- 2) Institutional Development and Strengthening (conducted by CTC).

For third round sub-grantees the second mandatory workshop was changed to the “ Role of NGOs in the Civil Society”, conducted by the Center for Training and Consultation in Tbilisi.

Organization Structure: The NGO grants component is managed by the MC NGO grants department in Tbilisi. The Grants Officers, Grants and Compliance Manager and Grants Director carry out program and financial monitoring. Two regional grants officers (in Telavi and Gori) were added during 2001 (May and October respectively). In addition to monitoring sub-grantee activities, the grants officers assist sub-grantees in developing financial reports, advise them on program changes and alert the Tbilisi Grants Management about issues encountered in the field. Since the staffing increase in the Grants Department, program monitoring visits to sub-grantees usually occurs once a week.

Findings²⁰

¹⁷ Summary Table of the issued RFPs in Appendix 08

¹⁸ During the RFP#4 review, Sub-officer Managers started participation in the NGO Grants Review Committee as non-voting members and on rolling bases.

¹⁹ MC Grants Program RFP – Round III (September/October 2001):”please note that communities who have skills and ability to address their own needs will not be considered under this RFA mechanism. MC works with them through its community mobilization team”.

²⁰ This “findings” section is organized around MC identified quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Outputs: Quantitative Indicators

Thus far in the project the grants activity has included:

- 81 NGOs and 99²¹ projects funded in the four RFA rounds (target 138 grants)²² with 59 percent of the projects lasting less than 6 months.
- 56 completed projects with a total value of \$ 715.390 of which 30 % was contributed by the NGOs or raised from other sources
- Total # of beneficiaries: 75.342 (37% women, 18% youth.²³

NGO Qualitative Indicators and General Findings

Qualitative Indicator: Networking

Networking supported by E-GCMI through organized workshops and conferences is reported to have resulted in specific follow up activities among the sub-grantees. Examples of this networking activity is working on the framework for the de-institutionalization of high-risk children, inclusive education, and visiting other NGOs dealing with the same or similar problems in other regions.

There is no concerted E-GCMI effort to support the development of networking among NGOs and other sectors (i.e. NGOs, CIGs, private sector and government) at the national or regional level or among sectors.

Qualitative Indicator: Organizational development:

Indications of increased organizational and management capacity by NGOs include reports of E-GCMI staff that:

The quality of proposals received in RFA rounds 3 and 4 were significantly improved as a result of MC organized proposal writing workshops, written feedback, MC mentoring and change of focus to more experienced NGOs.

The sub grantee financial management systems and overall capacity for managing USG funds improved following participation in Financial Management workshops, MC financial mentoring and monitoring and repeated grants to selected NGOs;

Organization Development workshop: Despite the improvement of management functions, the Organizational Development workshop required of grant recipients was characterized as more of a networking opportunity (“we met NGOs from other regions”) than a practical means for identifying and addressing specific organizational development issues, approaches and plans. The most common comment heard during the assessment regarding the workshops was that “we heard how we can work better”. Further probing did not bring specific answers regarding what participants learned nor the use of any learning following the workshop.

No organized E-GCMI follow-up has been provided or reported with to re-enforce and assist with the application of the new skills and institutional and/or service development.

Qualitative Indicator: NGO Sector Development

On a broad scale GCMI has not placed significant emphasis, through its grants activity, on NGO Sector development in Georgia. The grant activities for example, have not included or required active participation by the grantees in sector related activities. Rather, E-GCMI support for sector development has focused primarily on providing general NGO training and requesting matched, and diversified, funding sources. (See for example RFP Nos. 3 and 4).

Moreover, during the selection of repeat grants, a core group of experienced 20 NGOs emerged, mostly dealing with children-related issues. A coalition has reportedly been formed and has an office in Tbilisi, and serves to promote communication among the NGOs. Yet, E-GCMI currently does not have a clear approach for supporting or encouraging these organizations to develop closer relations with each other or other emerging groups in the same field.

²¹ Another 6 projects are approved and ready to be signed. Data from these projects not included in the report

²² Regional distribution of grants and project included in Appendix 05

²³ Reliable data is not available for elderly, ethnic minorities and IDP beneficiaries.

Limited information among NGOs related to relevant NGO activities, resources, and a potential role in the society or policy reforms is a further reflection of the lack of a developed NGOs sector. A central clearing house of information, i.e. a national or region specific general directory of NGOs is not typically available to regional NGOs or is not up to date

This lack of information and awareness is particularly acute in the regions. For example, grantees in the regions expressed a general **awareness** of other NGOs within the region, but limited interaction with them. Similarly, they reported that they were not well informed about other E-GCMI sub-grantees or funded projects in the same areas. The notable exception was in Gori.

Qualitative Indicator: NGO-Government Relations

The development of effective working relationships between government and NGOs will be a key to sustaining the gains that are being made in community mobilization. However, strengthening NGO-government relationships at either the local or national level has not been a part of the past NGO Grants component strategy. Local and regional governments expressed some awareness of the work of specific Georgian NGOs in their area and in some cases have provided assistance, i.e. rent free space or sponsoring events. Generally, however, they lack ideas on how to partner with NGOs for the community benefit.

Currently NGOs do not perceive local nor regional governments as partners. While some report having received government funding for events they mostly view government as ineffective, poor and corrupt. The team did not find evidence of MC working towards changing these perceptions among the stakeholders.

Qualitative Indicators: Community Participatory Approach

Apparently as a result of MC's focus on community participation, some supported NGOs are beginning to involve community members (beneficiaries or clients) in their project design activities. Reportedly, some NGOs, after being prompted by MC, redesigned their proposals after actually talking to the community (i.e. Civil Society Support Center in Gori).

Qualitative Indicator: Sustainability

An indications that the E-GCMI supported NGOs are acquiring some of the resources that will be required for future sustainability is that the requested 20% funding match after the RFP round 3 generally resulted in sub-grantee's ability to identify alternative funding sources and/or include volunteer labor.

Capacity Building: A variety of sustainability related needs emerged during the evaluation, particularly in the area of capacity building.

E-GCMI is not taking a systematic human capital building strategy, particularly with service related organizations or in terms of strategic collaboration with other NGO sector related programs in Georgia. At the same time, NGOs do not seem to either understand or appreciate the value of provided learning opportunities.

The team did not undertake a through assessment of the reasons for the low training demand.

Public Relations and Information: Although a portion of the awarded grants is usually allocated for the NGO PR activities, no systematic strategy exists to support NGO presentations of their roles, activities or achievements to the public. Increased visibility and a general understanding of the NGO role in the society is vital for sustainability

Income Generating: Some NGOs are beginning to consider income-generating activities as a potential for the financial sustainability. They, however, need support in developing business plans, and assistance in setting up and managing these activities.

Short Term Grants: The short-term nature of the funded projects (59% last less than 6 months) does not nurture either organizational or service sustainability.

Grant Mechanism: MC has developed a thorough, flexible and well functioning grant-making mechanism with regular RFAs, a review committee consisting of MC and NGO experts, detailed score sheets and written feedback to the NGOs. The grants are relatively evenly divided among Tbilisi and the regions.

Grant Size and Length: Relatively small size of grants and short project cycles (from 1-12 months) are a good starting approach to supporting NGO initiatives. However this approach places constant pressure on NGOs to look for funding; contributes to the short term, activity-oriented approach; and makes it difficult for the NGOs to engage in longer-term strategies. The approach also makes it difficult for Mercy Corps to develop a longer-term human capital and institution building approach and to design appropriate monitoring mechanisms for tracking institutional and service-related changes.

Grant Review Process: Grant review process and decision making is concentrated in Tbilisi, with little or no input from the field offices and other regional stakeholders. A newly developed practice of having the sub office managers participate in the grant review is a good first step towards inclusion of regional perspectives. In order to develop potential for sustainability of sub grantees and their services, alternative funding sources will need to be identified and cultivated both nationally and regionally.

Short Term Perspective: NGOs view the effectiveness of their projects in terms of out-puts and short term projects. This approach contributes little to sustainability either of the organization or the project/ service.

The side effects of the focus on experienced NGOs are (a) lack of accessible funding mechanism for the less experienced NGOs, (b) programmatic gaps in certain region with no history of previous NGO activities and (c) lack of potential partners in some regions for MC and /or local government to address the local needs. The approach does support the development of the NGO sector potential support NGOs.²⁴

Conclusions: NGO Grants Component

The NGO Grants component of GCMI focused primarily on the provision of grants and assistance to NGOs for specific limited projects or services, particularly those reaching or affecting marginalized or highly vulnerable groups. It was neither the intent nor focus of the grants component to actively support the sustainability of the NGOs, the projects or services supported, the NGO sector or a specialized sub sector, e.g. NGOs focusing on disabled children. The technical assistance provided to the NGOs was primarily training focused on project planning and financial management and not on larger capacity building or sector supporting issues.

Recommendations; NGO Grants Component

- Redesign the RFAs to target longer term (18 months) programs versus short term projects and thereby enable NGOs to look at the strategic for service provision that can last after E-GCMI
- Redesign the RFAs to focus more on sectors/policy and region specific issues. Conduct a research to identify these issues.
- Move the grant selection process to the regions and involve local stakeholders in the grant review process, particularly local/sacrebulo or gangeoba/government representatives (to facilitate the learning process among government officials on transparent grant giving and to foster linkages among NGOs and local government for potential future funding of existing services /increase governmental understanding of NGOs as potential partners for meeting community needs/)
- Increase the result-orientation of the sub-grants (rather than output orientation) both in terms of service and organizational development (to encourage the development of long-term vision and the sense of achievements among the sub-grantees)
- Staff NGO grants department with expertise in organizational development and relevant services, to be able to properly monitor and technically support the sub-grantees
- Tailor training provision to the identified needs, and focus on both organizational development and professionalization of services

Social Policy Component²⁵

²⁴ Mercy Corps will need to clarify which approach it wishes to pursue during the next two years.

²⁵ Underlying Strategic Question: How to Create a Durable and Effective Mechanism for Grassroots involvement in both policy reform and implementation. Reference: Mid Term Evaluation Scope of Work

The Social Policy Unit involves two separate organizations, MSI and Horizonti, as sub grantees to focus on Social Policy. As initially envisioned MSI was to be a source of technical assistance and a Social Policy Advisor for the Social Policy Initiative Group, which would be a part of Horizonti Foundation.

Purpose Structure of the Social Policy Unit

The purpose or focus of the Social Policy Unit is to assist and develop the ability of communities and organizations at local and national levels to obtain and disseminate information regarding social issues and to develop the ability of individuals, groups and communities to advocate for and influence social policy implementation and direction.

To achieve these objectives the project supported the establishment of two related groups. A Social Policy Component was formed within Horizonti Foundation. Formally the Social Policy Initiative Group (SPIG) was formed at the national level group within the Horizonti organization and linked to Horizonti's regional organizational network. At the local level Social Policy Working Groups have been established.

The formation of these working groups²⁶ proceeded from the formation of Community Information Working Groups within the CIG areas comprised of individuals identified by Horizonti. Subsequent to initial discussions, the CIWGs were transformed into Social Policy Working Groups (SPWG) in July 2002 with subcommittees on Health, Education and Social Protection.

The intention and design has been for the two groups to be closely linked, with information being exchanged both ways. SPIG has served to provide information about national level government activities and reforms to the SPWGs which would in turn ensure that it was passed to local levels, i.e. villages and sacrebulos.

SPIG programs and activities have focused on identifying major national needs and reforms, building upon the Horizonti's existing knowledge and programs of, conducting a local level stakeholder analysis and separate studies conducted by consultants on social projects and program. SPIG is structured and focused around three major issues: Health, Education and Social Welfare, with particular emphasis upon Child Welfare.

The SPWGs similarly have been structured around the same three issues, serving as a conduit of information to and from the national level. SPWGs, which are composed of volunteers, face a daunting task if they are to effectively serve an effective communication function and provide assistance in organizing or supporting advocacy or other policy effecting efforts. With about 16 members per SPWG it will be difficult for the SPWGs to be in touch with and assist even the 162 villages that are now participating in the MC Community Mobilization project.

Sustainability of Social Policy Actions

The prospects for the sustainability of the Social Policy Interest Group and the local Social Policy Working Groups are unclear. SPIG reports that it does not have a strategy or plan for operations beyond 2004. Two SPWGs mentioned a possible transformation into a CBO/NGO and seeking additional grant money from unspecified donors while others indicated they had not thought about the question or expressed a desire to continuing as a loose coalition of individuals and groups. These comments, however, were not associated with any specific plans. Given that the formation of the SPWGs was just completed in July 2002, and that in one Region a SPWG has not yet been formed, it is not surprising that sustainability is not yet a high priority.

A further question about the sustainability of the social policy unit activities is that neither SPIG nor the SPWGs are actively seeking the support and involvement of other groups or individuals with their programs.

Findings Outputs²⁷

SPIG has focused primarily on information and information dissemination between the national and local levels, and between NGOs, Ministries and parliament with particular reference to Education and the Education Reform, Health and Social Welfare and particularly Child Protection. Specific actions have included:

The Preparation of SPIG Social/ Child Welfare Strategy undertaken with the guidance of the Social Policy Advisor.

Information Dissemination²⁸ Members from the communities reported that, at least in the area education, they are more aware of reform efforts and programs. It is not clear whether they also had or felt they had more information regarding social sector issues in general.

Linkages with Other EGCMI Project Components: There appears to be little integration or interaction by SPIG or the SPWGs with either the Community Initiative Groups or the Mercy Corps supported NGOs. Within regions there is very limited awareness among SPWGs of the CIGs and NGOs and very little, of any, priority given to contacting them or attempting to work with them.

During the assessment the point was made that while de facto coordination may be weak, attempts have been made to establish and support mechanisms, i.e. formal meetings and for a in which information could be exchanged and coordination effected.

Partnership Relationships: As the project started the partners were faced with the necessity of clarifying project focus level, i.e. national and grassroots, the meaning and interpretation of social policy and social policy change, and the meaning of advocacy and its role in the project. A Mission Statement was adopted in 2001 that has formed the working basis for the project. There seems to be agreement that the partner relationship issues affected the level of achievements during the first two years of the project.

Conclusion: Social Policy Component

The Social Policy Component has made a noteworthy start in the project with the formation of SPIG, the identification of national issues on which to focus and on going efforts to work with the government at the national level on drafting or revising social legislation. At the local level the SPWGs have started work on the dissemination of information about social and educational issues and collecting information from the local level. This focus is consistent with the strategy of focusing initially on information dissemination, to be followed by advocacy efforts. At both the national and local level there is a need to focus on the future; to examine and develop approaches for citizen involvement more broadly in the policy process, to initiate or support plans for expanding social policy resources and for planning for sustainable activities and programs beyond the life of the project.

Recommendations Social Policy Unit

Local Level Needs: Encourage and support increased emphasis on the identification of local level social policy needs and interests and their presentation to sacrebulo, district, regional and national government levels. This can help broaden the range of issues considered

Breadth of Involved Organizations: Encourage the expansion of the number and range of individuals and organizations engaged in the Social Policy component. This can help ensure effective communication from the communities to the sacrebulo, regional and national levels of government and other social policy stakeholders, offer greater opportunities for the involvement of government officials and employees, and contribute to the prospects for sustainability of the work of the component.

SPIG/SPWG Roles and Responsibilities: Assist the SPIG and the SPWGs in clarifying and expanding their vision of the roles and responsibilities that will be most effective in terms of the overall goals of the component, examining and developing approaches for citizen involvement broadly in the policy process, initiating plans for to expand social policy resources and planning for sustainable activities and programs beyond the life of the project.

²⁷ SPWG Community-based approach to social policy development, implementation and monitoring regarding community priority needs

²⁸ Qualitative Indicator: Increased awareness of citizens regarding social sector reforms; Improved flow of social sector information to community members; Achieving child rights in relation to access to education for disabled children and de-institutionalization of children as a result of initiatives by CIGs and NGOs following participation

Partners' Roles, Responsibilities and Performance: Clarify roles, responsibilities and standards of performance of the sub-grantees to reduce misunderstandings and to build trust.

Cross Cutting Issues

Throughout the evaluation and in the Revised Technical Application, a number of cross cutting issues emerge or are raised. Typically these reflect the broad Community Mobilization focus of the RTA and the broad areas incorporated into it. Each of the following issues has emerged in more than one of the component areas presented above. They are presented here to help reinforce the importance of focusing on project as a whole, as well as its constituent parts.

Integration, Coordination and Linkages: ²⁹

In the examination of each component a recurring theme that emerged was that the components were not sufficiently integrated, coordinated or linked. It was suggested by some that this was not a central condition of the proposal from the outset.

In examining the proposal and the early documents several factors have become clear:

First, throughout the project proposal integration, close linkages and coordination among the project elements were mentioned repeatedly as being essential to the achievement of the program objectives.³⁰ A high level of coordination/ integration among the elements of the project was expected and intended, at least in the spirit of the proposal.

Second while there remains a lack of clarity on the issue, CIGs, NGOs and SPWGs each reported that they have little awareness or interaction with each other at the field/local level. Comments from SPWG reinforced that they were not familiar with the CIGs in the areas, or the NGOs receiving Mercy Corps assistance. This lack of information about other project components has meant that there the components have not been taking each other into consideration in terms of decision making and other activities.

Third, it is likely that there is a difference between the experience at the headquarters and the field levels. In the central office, for example, it was reported that the Social Policy Advisor and the Community Mobilization Manager participated with the NGO grant review committee in awarding NGO grants, and were able to thereby help ensure some level of coordination or integration. Yet, from field comments this does not seem to have been shared at the field level.

Fourth, it was suggested during the evaluation that a lack of integration or close coordination in some areas reflected a need for all of the components to start quickly. One implication of this is that the assumption that the communities, community groups and NGOs would identify social issues that would feed into and influence the work of SPWGs and of the SPIG, was not realistic. They were all starting their work together.

The situation is reportedly improved today. The MC program staff hold program-focused meetings that address program areas and issues and seek to promote mutual awareness among the program components.

Where and how can the components interact and feed on one another is a key question made more difficult by their separate organizational identities narrowly defined goals and objectives and sharply focused nature of their activities. As noted at the Tbilisi assessment workshop, not everything can or should, be coordinated since each component has responsibilities that do not always lend themselves to coordination. Yet in terms of maximizing the GCMI impact, closer coordination, which can lead to more effective use of both human and financial resource, is essential.

Internal Networking: Regular regional meetings, such as those held in Gori, are a potential mechanism for identifying common issues and building issue-based coalitions.

²⁹ See: Section IV of Proposal: MC Integrated Program Strategy and Target Group. Ref Revised Technical Application. p 13

²⁹ See for example, pg. 51 of the Revised Technical Proposal.

²⁹ Ref: Intermediate Result 2.3.2

²⁹ See for example, pg. 51 of the Revised Technical Proposal.

Conclusion

The lack of integration among the GCMC components is reflected in the mutual lack of awareness of the other components. It also reflects a low level of awareness among Mercy Corps Staff of the components and the expectation that the components should collaborate to maximize the impact of the project and to extend its activities and leanings throughout EGCMC.

Dimensions of Integration: Toward a working and workable definition; range of behaviors associated with and moving toward integration.

Relations with Government: Involvement of and relations with government at national and local levels³¹

A key dimension of the GCMC is the recognition that some level of coordination and involvement with the government is vital to the long-term effect of the project. This amount and form of work with the government varies, but there are some signs that positive, mutually supportive relationships are being forged. At the local level the villages and the sacrebulos reported working relations with the CIGs were being established. Government support, sometime financial or material and other times simply verbal or other encouragement was reported by some CIGs and NGOs.

Need for Information: Government officials, sacrebulos, gemgebulos and Governors and Deputy Governors commented that a key element from their perspective was the provision of information about ongoing and planned activities.

CIGs reported no direct contact with the national government. The Ministry of Health requested more information about project information in the regions and districts. The Ministry of Education has been in villages with the SPWGs, but has not been targeted to the CIG villages.

Local Government: The relationship of CIGs with regional government apparently varies greatly. The community mobilizers and CIG members can do more to involve the regional gamebao throughout the project

Coordination with USAID's SO teams and other donors

At the regional level SPWGs expressed little awareness of the USAID program foci although they tended to be aware of other donors e.g. the World Bank and International NGOs within the region. It was not clear from the assessment how much the SPWGs, NGOs or CIGs were aware of other donors and their activities in the GCMC area. There were, however, frequent requests from local government officials, NGOs and some CIGs for additional information about other donors and how to contact them.

Economic Opportunities

Increasing economic opportunities is a concern that permeates the proposal. GCMC activities have addressed this issue, either directly or indirectly. Community infrastructure development projects are likely to have some positive effect on the economic conditions in the respective communities. The improvement of irrigation systems, for example, is presumed to have assisted in the cultivation of additional crops and thereby contributed to the overall economic condition of the affected communities.

Discussions with CIG members did not focus on improved economic conditions as a major outcome of the projects. Yet some did recognize the potential economic benefit of the infrastructure improvement. Some MC staff suggested that there were indirect economic benefits from community mobilization efforts, but that these have not been adequately reported, or recognized by the communities.

Several NGOs cited a need and desire for information regarding the development of small businesses that could assist them in sustaining themselves. At present they were not sure how to proceed, although they did have several ideas, based principally on the availability of donated equipment, e.g. dental equipment which could be used for a dental clinic for handicapped children, and made available to the public on a fee for service basis.

ACDI/VOCA – GCMC Pilot Project: Pilot project collaboration between GCMC and ACDI/VOCA appears to offer promise for improving economic conditions in the targeted communities. Through the project a grant from GCMC is coupled with a loan from ACDI/VOCA to enable a business to expand in some way. The grant assists

³¹ Ref: Intermediate Result 2.3.2

the business by making it possible to obtain a loan at more favorable rates than even the basic ACDI/VOCA program offers. The project thus far has focused on cooperative ventures that were reportedly resulting, at least indirectly, in increased employment, production and service opportunities.

The economic impact of the pilot project should be examined more closely. The team was informed, but could not confirm, that at least one pilot project was successful in creating additional jobs, and of course representing additional economic value within the community. How the community has benefited from this is not clear.

In several interviews the question of local laws and taxation questions were raised as an area affecting economic growth and opportunity. This could be an area that could be raised and explored through the SPWGs and SPIGs and be a means for fostering closer collaboration among the CIGs, NGOs, Private Sector and the government.

Gender and Minority

Infuse each set of activities with an awareness of impact on women, including women's organizations and leaders into key project programs.

Recommendations

Strengthen, at all levels, relations with government, including a mutual awareness of roles, activities and responsibilities. The inclusion of government officials in a variety training and professional development activities with NGOs and CIGs could be an effective an informal way to achieve this goal.

Increase mutual awareness and collaboration among the E-GCMI components and further explore how and where collaboration can be attained. The current program staff and discussion meetings appear to be a positive development and are worth nurturing.