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LTBA

Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

# **VEGA Armenia Long Term Business Advisors**

## **Quarterly Report (July 1 – September 30, 2006)**

**LEADER WITH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT (LWA)  
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*Implementing Organizations:*

INSTITUTE OF  
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**Report Submitted: November 22, 2006**



## **Summary:**

Since our last report, a site visit was completed by IIE in June 2006 and extensive meetings held with the concerned Mission CTOs for this activity, John Caracciolo and Diana Avetyan and the Economic Growth Officer, Rolf Anderson. We welcomed the opportunity to explore new opportunities for placements. A modification authorized IIE to provide four Advisers for the period starting November 2006 for a 10-month assignment. This report will cover the wrap-up period of the previous group of four volunteers and our selection and placement of four new volunteers.

## **Completed:**

Since the last report, VEGA-LTBA (Armenia) has accomplished the following:

- Fernando Maldonado (MEDI) completed his 10-month assignment successfully on September 7, 2006. He is working on his case study and will be invited to the debriefing. He also is serving as a pre-departure orientation speaker for the upcoming group of Advisers.
- Melissa Sia completed her assignment with MEDI on August 31, 2006. Her original completion date was December 13, 2006. MEDI wrapped up its project in Armenia and in consultation with the Mission it was decided that there were no other projects that could use Melissa's services for the remainder of the time and she could depart the country. She is working on her case study and will be invited to the debriefing.
- Michael Grifka terminated his assignment early, at the end of approximately five months, effective July 31, 2006. His assignment was scheduled to end December 13, 2006. Details below.
- Saurin Nanavati completed his on-site assignment, November 10, 2006. With the concurrence of the host organization and the Mission, Saurin will complete the rest of his work plan and contract obligations electronically. He has submitted a first draft of a case study. He will be invited to the debriefing.
- All four volunteers completed Microfinance or Business Development Services training during their assignment.
- Received timely reports from the In-Country Supervisor on all the volunteers.
- Reports submitted to IIE by all four volunteers.
- Funds disbursed to volunteers as scheduled.
- IIE selected candidates and matched them to four new SOWs for the 2006-2007 cycle. Each host organization was provided at least two candidates to interview and make a final selection.
- We have confirmed and organized Pre-departure orientation for the 2006-2007 group in Washington, DC, scheduled for November 13-17, 2006.

### **Site Visit:**

On June 5-9, 2006 IIE Division Director William Dant traveled to Armenia for a site visit. During his visit, he met with each Adviser's host organization supervisor and colleagues, USAID-Armenia Economic Growth Office Director Rolf Anderson, as well as the two CTOs overseeing these activities, John Caracciolo and Diana Avetyan. While in Yerevan, Dant accepted the mission's invitation to speak at the monthly Chief of Party meeting and make a presentation on VEGA and Long-term Business Advisers.

### **Volunteers and Assignments:**

**1. Mr. Fernando Maldonado** worked as Business Development Advisor in the Micro Enterprise Development Initiative (MEDI).

Contact e-mail: [fernando79@msn.com](mailto:fernando79@msn.com)

Assignment Period: 10 months, November 7, 2005 – September 7, 2006

Training: SME Cluster and Network Development: Principles and Practice, April 24-May 5, 2006 at the International Training Center of the ILO, Turin, Italy

Fernando's work plan goals included:

- Increase the number of jobs in Armenia through market driven initiatives;
- Raise over \$1 million in new sales in the Northern regions (Marz) of Armenia;
- Create an efficient network, linking business service providers (BSPs), and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME).

Fernando writes in his final report:

“Goals for the most part were met. I am very pleased with the monitoring and evaluation aspect of our project that allowed me to take the lead in compiling and justifying all facts and figures. MEDI North was in its infancy before my arrival and with the support of advisors and our Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist; we were able to shape the project into an efficient mechanism for generating new sales and jobs for businesses. All inputs were falling into place, and it was a matter of timing that prevented us from achieving more than we had accomplished. With regard to the MEDI North office (MNO) goal of reaching \$1 million USD in new sales in investments for small and micro businesses, we were only able to reach a figure slightly over half a million USD. Circumstances such as seasonality of products and services during the winter months, and overall timing and organization of activity played a factor in the result of this initiative. In spite of these factors, our sales results were exceptional considering the amount of time we were given and the challenges we were presented with.



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“With regard to my work with the MEDI North office (MNO) the database we created speaks for itself. The sales and investment figures tallied in the database are a product of my field work I did while accompanied by our Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Our monitoring and evaluation specialist was also able to capture the results from our Building and Construction materials Business to Business Event in December 2005. Most of the indicators exist in the form of sales and investment figures.

“A lot of the work I did in Armenia was with small and micro business development through various development models and projects with MEDI. My involvement with Making Cents International came about after working closely with their Director of International Programs while working with the MEDI project in Armenia. Part of MEDI's objectives was to support the capabilities of Business Service Providers (BSPs) in Armenia. MEDI subcontracted with Making Cents International to train a network of trainers in entrepreneurship. I developed a MicroPlan trainer catalogue and was involved with organizing marketing efforts to promote the MicroPlan trainers in Armenia.

“The final event I organized brought together groups from the donor community, US Embassy, and the private sector. The event served the purpose of providing certified MicroPlan trainers exposure to potential markets. Shortly after my return I was offered a full-time position to work as a Business Development Associate at Making Cents International in Washington, DC. My role is to launch a full marketing strategy and campaign for the HP entrepreneurship program which is a similar curriculum to MicroPlan but involves bridging together traditional business skill development with technology skills enhancement.”

As an alumnus of the EMDAP program, Fernando will participate in IIE’s pre-departure orientation for the next group leaving for Armenia.

**2. Ms. Melissa Sia** worked as Micro Finance Development Advisor in the Micro Enterprise Development Initiative (MEDI).

Contact e-mail: [melissa.sia@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.sia@gmail.com)

Assignment Period: 10 months: February 13, 2006 – August 31, 2006

Training: The Boulder Microfinance Training Program at ILO, Turin, Italy, July 17- August 4, 2006

Melissa’s work plan goals included:

- Research the feasibility of an Angel Investors Association in Armenia focusing on diaspora business leaders. (*Document was written and submitted to COP*)

- Assist in the creation of the “MEDIator”, a newsletter created by and for the MEDI project. (*Publication of MEDIator cancelled, but success stories completed and used for MEDI final report.*)
- Assist COP in designing and implementing hand-off plan for the Entrepreneur’s roadmap. (*Roadmap transferred to SME DNC [Small and Medium Enterprise Development National Center]; Final Report being edited, and wrap-up of project is in progress.*)
- Work with clients to implement needed products or initiatives. (*Counterparts’ needs met; roadmap impact measured.*)
- Learn about Microfinance in the Armenian context. (*Attended at least three conferences.*)

Melissa writes in her final report:

“The goals that I set forth in my action plans were met, for the most part. All the work expected of me by [COP] Jamey was completed. As for my personal goals, I also feel that those were met, as I was able to prove to myself that I am able to successfully live and work abroad.

“I have contributed significantly to the creation and writing of MEDI’s final report. It consists of both a written magazine and a multi-media DVD included. The report is in the final stages of editing, and should be available for distribution by year’s end.

“The experience has made me rethink the geographical area in which I planned to specialize. I had originally planned to specialize in Asia, but now I am thinking of specializing in Eastern Europe and Eurasia.”

### 3. **Mr. Saurin Nanavati** worked as Business Development Advisor at MDF-Kamurj

Contact e-mail: [saurinnanavati@yahoo.com](mailto:saurinnanavati@yahoo.com)

Assignment Period: 10 months: February 20, 2006-December 20, 2006

Training: Boulder Microfinance Training Program at ILO, Turin, Italy, July 17- August 4, 2006

Saurin’s work plan goals identified initially:

- Develop a partnership proposal to establish a Micro Franchise Network
- Develop a partnership with farm supply providers in Armenia
- Receive funding for a pilot project leasing solar panels
- Establish a new product/service market for MDF-Kamurj
- First mover into new high growth industry

Saurin will wrap up his assignment shortly after this report is submitted. Briefly, he will have finished a partnership proposal that promotes a new model for rural



development (and has been the focus of his case study also.) A pilot project has been funded to test this model, so Saurin will monitor the development of this project for the remainder of his assignment. He will also be writing a proposal for MDF-Kamurj in response to an RFP.

Saurin has recently met with CTO John Caracciolo and gave him an update on his accomplishments and also a status report on the organization where he worked as a volunteer. The MDF- Kamurj Director informed the CTO that Saurin has contributed tremendously to his organization's goals and objectives. The only work remaining for Saurin is the development of a business plan for MDF-Kamurj, which he will complete. Saurin has been an outstanding Adviser and has more than fulfilled his assignment obligations.

#### **4. Mr. Michael Grifka, Competitive Armenian Private Sector Project (CAPS)**

Contact e-mail : [tbirdmg@yahoo.com](mailto:tbirdmg@yahoo.com)

Assignment Period: 10 months: February 13, 2006-December 13, 2006

Training: SME Cluster and Network Development: Principles and Practice, April 24-May 5, 2006 at the International Training Center of the ILO, Turin, Italy

In consultation with the Mission, Michael Grifka terminated early from his project. The CAPS project was going through major modifications and personnel changes. Michael felt he was not getting the support he needed to complete his assignment. During the site visit, EMDAP Director Dant consulted extensively with Michael, the acting Chief of Party and other CAPS staff, and concerned Mission staff, and sought to help find a workable role for Michael and coach him on improving his approach. However, some weeks later it was clear that the respective roles and expectations were not working out. After further direct consultation with the Mission, this volunteer assignment was cut short. Michael left CAPS on July 28, 2006.