



Quarterly Report

April-June 2008

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The overall goal of the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative is to support the Government of Uganda's Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) by increasing confidence and participation among northern residents in the national government's recovery and development plans. In order to support this goal, the transition program will focus on the following three objectives:

- Enhance the capacity of the Ugandan media, particularly in northern Uganda, to research, inform and report on issues relevant to peace, recovery and development in northern Uganda;
- Strengthen local governments' capacity to respond to the needs of communities in northern Uganda; and
- Build confidence among the residents of northern Uganda in the government's ability to deliver targeted, strategic services.

COUNTRY SITUATION

Security

The major security issue relates to the persistent rumors about Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) activity in and near northern Uganda. The government is threatening to respond militarily. According to the UN and Government of Uganda (GoU), despite the rumors, no LRA elements have crossed into Uganda. Ugandan Peoples' Defense Forces (UPDF) have been repositioned and are on alert. All development organizations are advised to maintain their operations as usual, however staff are to stay vigilant and assist to gather as much information as possible and to share with the UN Department of Safety and Security for further check and analysis so as to allow a clear feedback to all organizations operating in the area.

Lord's Resistance Army Movement

There are reports of movements of about 40 LRA elements in Southern Sudan who crossed the Nile River to Eastern Equatoria in the areas proximity to Nimule. In another development, a group of about 30 elements were reported to be in the proximity areas of Kajokeji while a third group of about 40 elements were reported in the western areas of Yei of which one element was shot dead during contact with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and immediately they scattered in four small groups. During these movements two persons were abducted in Kajokeji.

The much heralded Juba Peace talks were derailed during this quarter by the fact that LRA leader Joseph Kony refused to appear at various scheduled and rescheduled peace agreement signings. At the close of the quarter Mr. Kony was still at large.

PRDP Rollout

The GoU plans to rollout the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda during the first week of July by training local government and interested NGOs and

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contractor representatives on what the plan represents and how the GoU wants to implement it.

OTI HIGHLIGHTS

A. Narrative Summary

The USAID Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP) Under the SWIFT II Mechanism for Uganda was issued to all SWIFT II partners on April 11, 2008 and was submitted by Casals and Associates, Inc. (C&A) on April 25. C&A received formal notice on May 7 that the firm had “been selected for award of the proposed task order for the SWIFT II Uganda Program.” The first Pre-Authorization letter was issued by the Contracting Officer on May 16. C&A was officially awarded the OTI/Uganda program when the Task Order was signed on June 18, 2008 with an initial obligation of \$3,000,000.

The OTI/Uganda program pre-deployment was initiated in Washington with a two-day Startup Conference on May 21 and 22. C&A hosted the conference at its offices in Alexandria, VA and participants included the C&A startup team members (Team Leader Curt Schaeffer, Chief of Party Amanda Willett, Operations Manager Patrick Odele, IT Specialist Don Abalos and other C&A staff along with broad representation from OTI including Acting OTI Director Rob Jenkins, Africa Team Leader Konrad Huber and others who will be directly or indirectly involved with the OTI/Uganda program. The two-day conference laid a foundation for an effective working relationship between OTI and C&A by explaining the OTI philosophy, approach and experience and clarifying roles, responsibilities and the program commitment to northern Uganda.

On May 31, the C&A Startup Team of Schaeffer, Willett, Odele and Abalos deployed to Uganda. They joined the OTI Startup Team of Donna Kerner, Startup Manager, and Grace K. Lang, Program Manager, in Kampala for the first week starting June 1 and then traveled to Gulu to work with OTI Deputy Startup Manager, John Gattorn. C&A Finance and Operations Advisor, Lourdes Sanchez, joined the startup team on June 23 for a three week stint. The Startup Work Plan was reviewed and approved during the Startup Conference and has been followed by C&A in close coordination with OTI. The following activities indicate that the plan is being carried out according to the prescribed time table:

Operations

Staffing

- In addition to the COP C&A anticipates recruiting a total of 14 local staff in Phase 1, which ends after the third month of the project
- C&A has hired seven staff including the Chief of Party (COP), Operations Manager, Procurement Assistant, Finance Manager, and three Program Development Officers (PDOs). C&A has commenced interviews for all the remaining positions.
- The positions which remain to be filled are the: Procurement Manager, Drivers, Administrative Assistant, Assistant PDO, Information Officer, and Database Coordinator.



- C&A has conducted interviews of candidates for all of these positions and expects to select the successful Database Coordinator by June 27; Administrative Assistant by July 4th; and Procurement Manager and Drivers by July 9th.
- OTI will assist C&A in making the final hiring decision for the Information Officer. There are six potential candidates for the position. C&A has shared all CVs with the OTI team in Uganda. Interviews are ongoing.
- The Assistant PDO will be recruited in July. C&A has identified suitable candidates for the Assistant PDO position. The PDOs will be involved in the final hiring decision on the Assistant PDO.
- C&A's COP began training the newly hired PDOs who began working with the OTI database. The Senior Gulu District Engineer, who accompanied the C&A team on one of their field trips to look at potential administrative office refurbishment grants, has agreed to work with C&A on putting together bills of quantities for rehabilitation projects. C&A is considering hiring a construction expert to manage upcoming rehabilitation projects and has begun interviewing potential candidates.

Vehicles/Motorbikes

- C&A has hired two vehicles in Gulu. The proprietor is providing the drivers until C&A recruits its own drivers once vehicles are purchased. C&A has identified a supplier of vehicles for hire when required in Kampala. These services were used during the first two weeks of operation and when C&A team members travel to Kampala.
- C&A submitted its formal buy America waiver request to the Contracting Officer for the vehicles after receiving input from USAID on the draft waiver request.
- C&A has gathered quotations for motorbikes and will submit a buy America waiver request for the motorbikes by July 4th.

Computer and Communications Equipment and Internet Connectivity

- The C&A start-up team deployed with six laptops, one portable printer, and one portable scanner. The Finance and Operations Advisor brought one additional laptop to Uganda.
- The start-up team procured three additional printers for the office.
- C&A established internet connectivity using the GSM network on PCMCIA/USB connections. These connections enable communication from anywhere in Uganda where a Celtel signal exists. The connection is unfortunately not fast enough for large data transfers.
- C&A procured one BGAN and has loaded it with pre-paid 182 MB of credit.
- Due to the inefficiency of procuring a VSAT for the temporary office space, C&A anticipates using UTL as its internet provider until the permanent office is established. UTL initiated the installation of the ADSL line on Saturday, June 21, but UTL's entire northern Uganda technical team was called to Kampala for a three-day training on the same day. Installation resumed on June 26 and was supposed to be completed by July 1st, however, the UTL internet connectivity throughout the country is now



down and it is unclear when the network will be restored. Once configured, all C&A computers will be able to connect on a wireless network in its temporary offices at the Acholi Inn.

- C&A has established 17 Celtel phone lines and procured three Thuraya satellite phones. To comply with the RSO guidance on movement around northern Uganda, C&A will always travel with a Thuraya phone when OTI personnel are present.

Permanent Office

- C&A set up a temporary office in Gulu within 3 days of arriving in northern Uganda. The temporary office is located at the Acholi Inn and is furnished and fully functional for a temporary period.
- C&A has identified a number of potential properties for the office. Negotiations for one of the properties fell apart when the purported landlord could not demonstrate ownership of the property, demanded one-year rent up-front, and shared his intentions to sell the property. C&A's legal counsel in Uganda recommended that C&A not enter into an agreement with the purported proprietor.
- Some of the other possible properties are unfinished and require a significant investment of resources and time to be completed.
- C&A is currently negotiating with the landlord of a property, which is currently occupied by an international non-governmental organization that is closing its Gulu office. The property is in move-in condition and has ample space for the C&A team.

House for COP

- C&A's COP has viewed a number of potential houses. During the first month of startup, no suitable properties have been identified. The COP is following up on a number of leads and has requested all the C&A staff to help to identify potential houses.

Deliverables

- Phase 1 deliverables advanced considerably during the first month of startup in Uganda. Most significantly, the OTI Activities Management Guide was prepared for final review and embodies a number of deliverables including the Procurement Manual and the Branding & Marking Plan.

B. Grants Activity Summary

Grant Activity Summary

- A grant making process was defined in Gulu in a joint C&A-OTI meeting on June 18. This was done by developing a generic grant cycle flow chart that will be used as a guide and reference for staff and grantee organizations. The grant making process will be reviewed with staff at the, Orientation Workshop on July 16-18.
- C&A's COP and PDOs had an informal chat with the head of the Uganda Radio Network on June 26 about some future program ideas that could evolve in relation to NUTI's information and media capacity program objectives. OTI's Media Advisor identified URN as a potential grantee. URN has



submitted a grant proposal which the C&A and OTI team are reviewing in light of the objectives of the program.

- The database has been uploaded in its final form for all C&A PDOs to utilize for their future grant activities. Program indicators have not been finalized yet as choosing these indicators will be done in a large consultative manner once all program staff have been hired.

Grant Approval Summary



- On June 29, 2008, C&A received approval from OTI for its first activity, the Farmers' Forum activity in Lalogi sub-county in Gulu district. An official signing ceremony will take place in Lalogi sub-county on July 2, 2008.
- The accompanying photo represents the first meeting between the OTI Startup Team, the C&A COP and Startup Team Leader with

representatives of the Lalogi Sub-County Government and the Farmers' Forum. This meeting laid the basis for the development of the first OTI/Uganda grant.

- The grant is designed to provide much-needed equipment, technical assistance, and storage facilities, while complementing national government support to farmers in the sub-county, including the provision of oxen and seeds. The grant will increase the capacity of the Farmers' Forum and the local government to respond to the needs of IDPs returning to Lalogi Sub-County. This activity will build confidence among returnees in local governance structures and GoU agriculture development programs. Ultimately, it will encourage permanent resettlement and build confidence among residents of northern Uganda in the government's ability to deliver targeted, strategic services. If successful, this grant has potential for replication in other sub-counties.

C. Indicators of Success

Speed – The C&A COP and her staff worked in collaboration with the Acting OTI Country Representative and Deputy Country Representative to closely follow the Startup Work Plan as presented at the OTI/Uganda Startup Conference on May 21-22 at the C&A offices in Alexandria, VA. This plan was reviewed the last week of June by C&A SWIFT II Manager, with OTI's Africa Team Leader and his staff at the OTI offices in Washington and a few minor adjustments were made, but it was confirmed that the plan is following the timetable for a rapid and flexible startup. Great progress has been made in hiring professional and capable C&A staff. Temporary offices were set up within 72 hours of being in Gulu and



program money has already been spent in support of OTI's three country objectives. The development partners in northern Uganda, as well as many government officials in Gulu and in Amuru districts, are already aware of our program and mandate. NUTI has begun with a strong foundation upon which to begin full implementation of small grants in support of the three program objectives next quarter.

Re-targeting/Flexibility – N/A

Resource Leveraging – In an effort to leverage the resources of a vast amount of other donor -funded programs throughout northern Uganda, C&A staff attended various coordination forums, including the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) meetings, security meetings, and important cluster (sector) meetings that occur on a monthly basis. Also, C&A and OTI staff held formal coordination meetings and informal discussions with the local government officials including the head of the DDMC, District Engineer, District Assembly Speaker, Regional District Coordinator, and UPDF Public Relations Officer so our programs are properly coordinated and resources are therefore properly leveraged whenever available.

Policy Leveraging – The NUTI program has already begun to leverage US foreign policy initiatives by supporting local government working in tandem with national government counter parts, and by assisting in the return of IDPs in northern Uganda. The first approved grant to the Farmers' Forum supports a structure created by the GoU's National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS), a government initiative which aims to boost production and improve farming techniques. This government structure goes from the village level up to a national level committee. By providing additional tools and equipment to the Farmers' Forum, the GoU/NAADS program will benefit more farmers in Lalogi sub-county with the enhanced inclusion of OTI's involvement in this value-added procurement activity.

This activity also responds to the local government-led Durable Solutions Assessment - the first government-led multi sectoral assessment looking at development needs of local communities, rather than UN-led assessments looking at humanitarian needs of local communities. Durable Solutions Assessments are being used to help the GoU and partners identify the priority areas for intervention to speed up the transition to peace, recovery and development. The GoU piloted its first Durable Solutions Assessment in northern Uganda in Lalogi sub-county because of the high number of IDP returns registered there. The assessment identified support aimed at improving food security and restoring livelihoods as critical. C&A and OTI developed this grant activity in close collaboration with local government authorities. This approach and the active local government involvement will help demonstrate to the people of Lalogi that the GoU is able to identify and respond to their critical needs.

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PROGRAM APPRAISAL

It is too early to judge the value of the program strategy. This will be a more relevant discussion at the end of Phase One in late August/early September. A great deal will depend on the political and economic commitment of the GoU to the PRDP and its willingness to follow through in the northern districts. Another factor will be the capacity of international NGOs and multilaterals to make medium to longer term commitments to the development of



northern Uganda and the capacity of local government to lead the process. There are numerous assessments that provide a good basis for defining the type of work that needs to be done and where to do it, but there is still a question of capacity and resource availability for follow through.

NEXT STEPS/IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

- **Further development of a working M&E system** for the NUTI program that will be approved by the USAID/OTI CTO. C&A awaits specific information from OTI on how to develop the M&E system. This M&E information will provide insight for quality control monitoring and result verification.
- **Finalize remaining staffing needs.** Hiring of staff has gone smoothly, but key positions need to be included such as the Procurement Manager, the Assistant Program Development Officer, and the Information Officer.
- **Secure long-term headquarters in Gulu.** A larger and more functional office will also add to the capacities of the NUTI program, and office negotiations should be finalized by the end of July, 2008 (moving finished in August).
- **Working in closer coordination with existing USAID and other donor programs.** As more details of the rollout and implementation of the PRDP are made available, NUTI wishes to work closely with development partners. NUTI plans to strengthen existing networks, enhance impact, and leverage resources in a way that creates a strong synergy among partners.

For further details, please see attached Schedule of Activities through July 25, 2008.

