

CIVIL SOCIETY CUSTOMER SURVEY

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FINAL REPORT

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CIVIL SOCIETY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Chomay ki bay vyolans
Grangou ki fe vyolans

It's unemployment that creates violence
It's hunger that makes violence

– An OP leader in Cayes

Ayiti se peyi patizannri.
Sa se yon peyi vokasyon rate.

Haiti is a nation of partisanship
It is a nation that's missed its calling.

– President of a women's federation in the
Cayes Plain

Chak fwa nou eseye fe kowalisyon,
lapolitik kraze li.

Every time we try to put together a
coalition, politics destroys it.

– A peasant leader from Aquin

Kandida se pa bondye
kap bay lamanjay,
Nou menm se pa tiye tet
pou yon moun.

A candidate is not God
who provides food.
We're not going to knock ourselves out
just for one person.

– Member of Moron civil society group

Nou pa janm adrese nou
a prezidan
ni lidè politik
Se plito enstans leta poun adrese
poun rezoud pwoblem

We never address ourselves to
the president
nor political leaders.
Instead we contact government offices
to solve problems.

– an urban leader from Jacmel

Si sete pou sel leta
nou patap janm gen anyen
nan zonn bo isit

If it were just the government alone,
we wouldn't ever have anything
around here

– a peri-urban leader from Jacmel

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ACRONYMS

ADF	America's Development Foundation
ASEC	Assemblée de section communale
BAC	Bureau agricole communal
CAMEP	Compagnie d'aménagement et de l'eau potable
CASEC	Conseil d'administration de section communale
CSO	civil society organization
<i>Delegué</i>	appointed regional representative of the executive branch
EDH	Electricité d'haiti
GOH	Government of Haiti
IRI	International Republican Institute
MSI	Management Systems International
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	non-governmental organization
OP	<i>organisation populaire</i>
PTA	parent-teacher association
SMCRS	garbage collection service
SNEP	Service nationale d'eau potable
TPTC	Travaux Publics et Télécommunications
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this customer survey was to review the USAID Mission's program of assistance to civil society organizations (CSOs) and to elicit feedback from beneficiaries regarding the quality of Mission assistance. The basic issues guiding field inquiry for this assignment included the following:

- Are there any trends with regard to CSO ability to influence public decisions or to leverage public support for their initiatives?
- Are there any distinguishing characteristics that make some organization more likely to get a positive response than other organizations?
- What are the most common kinds of GOH assistance given to local organizations?
- Assess the overall quality of the organizations in terms of internal democratic practices and CSO ability to influence public decisions and leverage assistance from the GOH.
- What do the beneficiaries of the USAID funded civil society program like and dislike about USAID civil society programs?

BACKGROUND

USAID assistance to civil society organizations is a critical element of support for Haiti's transition to more democratic institutions in keeping with the Mission's Strategic Objective Number 5, More Genuinely Inclusive Democratic Governance. Haiti's longstanding transition to democracy now dates back at least 17 years to the fall of the Duvalier regime (1986). Fatton subtitles his recent book on Haiti as the "unending transition to democracy."¹

In the 1970s and 1980s, the USAID Mission provided support to grassroots organizations via programs in agroforestry, agricultural extension, public health, literacy and education. It first developed a democracy portfolio in the 1980s including election assistance and modest levels of support for civic education. In the 1990s the USAID Democracy Enhancement Project also provided intermittent support for reform in the public sector, including parliament, public administration, and justice. USAID withdrew support for the public sector during three years of military rule (1991-1994). It restored public sector support with the return of constitutional government in 1995, but subsequently withdrew such support for a variety of reasons, including the disputed elections of 2000.

¹ Fatton, Robert, Jr. 2002. *Haiti's Predatory Republic – the Unending Transition to Democracy*. Lynn Rienner Publications, Inc.

Nevertheless, the Mission maintained various types of program support for civil society throughout most of the stormy decade of the 1990s, a period marked overall by protracted political crisis (see text box below).

The present customer survey focuses primarily on civil society beneficiaries of recent USAID programs operated by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Management Systems International (MSI), and America's Development Program (ADF). For MSI Patadem and the ADF Citizen's Network, this review is in effect a post-project assessment since both projects had already closed. For the NDI program of civic fora, field interviews were undertaken during the final weeks of its program. Since March 2002, the NDI program of civic fora has operated at a much-reduced level of intensity as it completed final stages of close out.

For all three programs, the timing of this customer survey offers the special advantage of hindsight, reviewing programs that have completed their program cycle. This presents a rare and useful opportunity to observe whether or not CSO beneficiaries have continued civic education activities and activism as promoted by the three projects – independent of continued project input, and what practical applications of civil society training they have undertaken, if any. This survey is not a post project program evaluation; however, the post project timing does offer opportunity for insight into the appropriateness of recent civil society efforts, particularly in the present highly polarized political context, near daily occurrence of street demonstrations, and seemingly ubiquitous and powerful “popular organizations” or OP's as reported by the press. What can the customer survey tell us about OPs? Are they USAID client-beneficiaries? Are any of them doing civic actions or advocacy?

The Mission's current democracy portfolio includes civic education and civil society programs that are not listed in the adjoining text box, e.g., political party development (NDI and IRI), developing constituencies of law (IFES), strengthening media independence (Creative Associates International), and an anti-corruption project (Transparency International). These programs do not fall within the purview of the present customer

USAID Civil Society Programs

Civic Education
1991 – 2002

ADF PIRED

Projet intégrée pr le renforcement de la démocratie en haïti

September 1991 – June 1995

Legal assistance
Human rights monitoring
Public information campaigns

ADF Asosye I

December 1995 - May 1999

CSO/local government dialogues
Civic education
Advocacy training
Small grants program
Capacity building
Civic action centers

MSI Asosye II

May 1999 – September 2000

CSO/local government dialogues
Affinity groups
Advocacy & conflict mediation training
Capacity building
Civic action centers

NDI Civic Fora

1998 – 2002

Democracy education
Advocacy & civic action
Coalition building

MSI Patadem

November 2000 – November 2001

Capacity building
Advocacy & conflict mediation training
Civic action

ADF Citizen's Network

October 2000 – May 2002

Civic education
Democratic group processes
Issue-based coalitions

customer survey although field interviews brought the consulting anthropologist into contact with CSO beneficiaries linked to community radio stations, including stations with some civic education programming.

METHODOLOGY

The scope of work for this survey required interviews with a broad-based sample drawn from over 800 civil society organizations that have been supported by USAID through civic education programming. This was originally to include a minimum of 12 locations and 8 organizations per site – primarily in areas outside of Port-au-Prince. During November and December of 2002, the consulting anthropologist carried out interviews with 246 representatives of 194 grassroots organizations in 19 *communes* and five out of Haiti's nine *départements* (see Table 1 below).

In addition to CSO members, interviewees included 14 local government representatives – most of whom participated in group interviews scheduled with local CSOs. These local government officials were primarily CASEC and ASEC, elected leaders in communal sections, and in some cases mayors – especially in the more rural communes. Most local government interviewees were themselves CSO members and came to elective office from local grassroots organizations. The round of interviews also included lively discussion with current and former civic education trainers – six current NDI trainers, four former ADF trainers, five former MSI trainers, plus current program managers at NDI and former MSI program managers.

The customer survey used qualitative techniques to elicit information from individuals and groups representing local grassroots organizations that had received civic education training from NDI, ADF, and MSI. Most interviews were group interviews with members of grassroots organizations, using a conversational style based on questions and discussion guided by a tick list of key topics and questions. The group method allowed opportunity for the researcher to ask follow-up questions and to elicit discussion. The open ended interview format also allowed for observation of local conflicts underway at the time of field interviews, including CSO applications of democracy training, e.g., water conflict at Camp Mary (St. Marc), electric pole damage at Ça Ira (Léogane), student demonstrations in Petit Goave, and police-community relations in Les Cayes.

NDI, ADF, and MSI trainers provided assistance in making contact with representatives of local groups. Local government officials were invited to participate insofar as they had themselves benefited from training or were members of CSOs or CSO coalitions or had worked in partnership with local CSOs in support of civic actions. Such local officials were generally mayors or communal section authorities. In addition to fielding questions, the interviewees were invited to direct questions at the field researcher. Interviews generally lasted a minimum of two hours for questions and discussion, and were recorded by simultaneous word processing of the key elements of discussion and responses to questions.

Table 1. Summary of Field Sites and Interviews

COMMUNE	ADF	NDI	MSI	CSOS	CSO MEMBERS	GOV'T REP'S
SOUTH-EAST DEPARTMENT						
Jacmel: urban center & Section Bassin Caiman	X	X	X	18	22	
Marigot: urban center, Section Macary, & Section Koraysou	X	X	X	17	15	2
SOUTH						
Aquin: urban center, Section La Colline, & Section Mon Sejour	X	X		15	22	1
Cavaillon	X			16	17	
Cayes: urban center, Section Merci, Section Viljwen	X	X	X	11	9	1
GRAND'ANSE						
Moron	X			7	13	1
Bonbon	X			6	11	1
Chambellan	X			10	8	1
Jérémie: urban center, Section Latibolière	X			11	13	1
WEST						
Port-au-Prince: urban center	X			20	25	
Leogane: urban center, Section Ça Ira	X	X	X	10	17	1
Grand Goave		X		18	21	1
Miragoane: Section Paillant		X		5	11	
Petit Goave		X	X	7	4	1
Carrefour: Truitier		X		2	2	
Gressier: Mariani		X		2	2	
ARTIBONITE						
Gonaives	X	X	X		8	
Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite	X			10	9	2
St. Marc, town, Camp Mary, Pierre Payen	X	X	X	9	17	1
ALL REGIONS						
Current & former project field staff interviewed	4	6	5			
Total				194	246	14

DEFINITIONS

Commune – municipality, noting interview sites in urban as well as rural areas (*sections communales*).

Department – one of nine regional jurisdictions of government (*département*).

ADF – America's Development Foundation

NDI – National Democratic Institute

MSI – Management Systems International

CSO – Civil society organizations, i.e., the number of grassroots member-based associations encountered in field interviews.

CSO members – number of CBO representatives interviewed in the field.

Gov't rep's – generally local government representatives especially CASEC (members of a Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale), ASEC (members of an Assemblée de la Sectional Communale), and mayors, i.e., members of the 3-person mayoral council for a municipality (Conseil de la Commune).

Criteria for selecting interview sites assigned priority to communes where more than one USAID funded civic education project had worked, and sites where local organizations had reportedly carried out civic actions or had undertaken concrete applications of civic education training. As much as possible, interview groups were based on inter-group coalitions or joint inter-organizational committees promoted by USAID civil society programs. The consultant anthropologist traveled to all field sites and participated directly in all field interviews with the exception of Gonaives, due to civil disturbance at the time scheduled for travel. In view of this unrest, and the dominant role of self-styled *organisations populaires*, the consultant elicited useful information about Gonaives from key informants in Port-au-Prince, including trainers formerly assigned to Gonaives and Gonaives-based journalists in hiding.

The next chapter provides an overview and examples of recent trends in USAID civil society programs. The final chapter summarizes findings and recommendations based on questions and issues raised in the scope of work for this customer survey.

CHAPTER II

TRENDS IN CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY

OVERVIEW

Despite protracted political crisis and the acute polarization of Haitian society, times have changed since the early 1990s when military authorities hunted down peasant leaders and persecuted grassroots organizations as a matter of public policy. Grassroots organizations originating in the early to mid 1990s were sometimes organized as rights defense groups or victims groups.² During the era of de facto military government, PIREP (see Table 1) provided legal and human rights assistance to grassroots organizations, along with training in civic education.

An important lesson from the 1990s is that training alone is not enough. Since the return of Aristide in late 1994, there has been a growing gap between donor objectives for civic education and CSO expectations. Civic education programs since the mid 1990s focused initially on *general* democracy training and the rights of citizens whereas grassroots civil society organizations in Haiti have grown increasingly preoccupied with very *specific* economic concerns and the imperative to meet basic needs. This gap in expectations is still present but has narrowed to some extent since the late 1990s, given a heightened program focus on specific forms of civic action or advocacy.

THE DILEMMA OF ADVOCACY

Despite some differences in style and method, USAID democracy programs have all emphasized *civic action* as a natural outgrowth of *civic education*. Nevertheless, there has been some degree of controversy over advocacy training for civil society since advocacy in a North American sense does not have a Haitian equivalent in terms of language or practice. The word advocacy might well be translated into French as *plaidoyerie*; however, *plaidoyerie* carries a specialized legal connotation rather than the notion of an activist civil society organization promoting its interests in the public sector.

In the overheated ferment of Haitian politics, aggressive and sometimes violent tactics practiced by “popular organizations” further complicate the whole issue of advocacy training and non-violent tactics. Some so-called “popular organizations” are simply instruments of party politics. Others are not. For example, many of the aggressive demonstrations by students and popular organizations are dramatic forms of advocacy by civil society organizations –

² The name of an organization recently encountered in Grand Goave is an artifact of this period, the Komite defans entere peyizan, or Committee for the Defense of Peasant Interests.

however uncivil they may seem – though such organizations have not generally been trained by USAID. Furthermore, such aggressive tactics have oftentimes proved effective. For example, months of student demonstrations in 2002 favoring university autonomy had an undeniable impact on the government and its position regarding the structure of control over the university. This was remarkable too as a case of advocacy over a public policy issue rather than a demand for service, which is more common.

Another complication in the promotion of advocacy is the overt politicization of civil society. Interviewees in Bassin Caiman (Jacmel) identified local organizations that had been destroyed by party politics, noting that candidates for public office may simply create their own “civil society organizations” as a campaign strategy. This has had a divisive impact and undermines CSO credibility as grassroots organizations.

In this highly polarized context, virtually any issue-based advocacy is readily perceived as a stalking horse for party politics or a litmus test of opposition to the ruling party. The controversial role of the Civil Society Initiative is a case in point in its efforts to negotiate a breakthrough in the protracted political crisis between the governing party and the major opposition bloc.

Closely related is a tendency for specific grievances unrelated to party politics to escalate rapidly from a local or sharply defined issue to calls for the fall of the government. The November student demonstrations in Petit Goave are a notable example of this tendency.

Field interviews in Petit Goave, including student eyewitnesses and CSO leaders, suggest that the sizeable student demonstrations that erupted on November 19 were essentially spontaneous, precipitated by rumors of sharp fee increases imposed by the Ministry of Education, and that young people and parents of differing political tendencies all participated. At a later point in this unplanned march, the public discourse shifted from what was initially an economic issue cutting across party lines, to calls for the fall of the government. Subsequently, press reports monitored by this observer simply attributed the demonstration to the opposition, particularly as it came on the heels of the opposition demonstration in Cap-Haitien the day before.

In sum, USAID objectives of promoting civil society activism and non-violent advocacy have posed a perplexing dilemma due to the highly politicized social context within which civil society operates in Haiti.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Civil society programs have reacted to the dilemma of civil society advocacy in several different ways:

Civic action: USAID programs defined “advocacy” as *action civique*. Civic actions might then include “civil actions” for issues related to the provision of public services via the public sector, or, alternately, “community actions” based on CSO activities and resources unrelated to government. Civic action (advocacy) could mean pressuring the government for services, but it also includes collaboration or partnership with government entities, and creation of inter-CSO coalitions linked by shared interests and goals.

Field evidence indicates that NDI and ADF advanced further on CSO coalition building than MSI, though MSI trainers were also laying the groundwork for coalitions. All three projects actively promoted collaborative CBO contact with government officials, especially (a) local government and (b) local or regional offices of national government entities such as Electricité d’Haiti and the ministries of agriculture, public works, and social affaires.

Neutral debate and negotiation: USAID strategy for confronting the dilemma of civil society advocacy has been to insist on (i) apolitical rules of debate (e.g., no partisan politics, no campaigning for office, “no name calling”), and (ii) issue-based collaboration and partnership unrelated to party affiliation or candidacy for public office. There is a certain contradiction here, at least in theory, since civil society advocacy need not exclude pressure tactics, the political process, or demonstrations. Furthermore, advocating around specific issues is not inherently apolitical; however, the basic issue is one of devising a tactic that works. In the current Haitian political context, the rules of neutral debate seem to make all the difference in the world. The policy of neutral debate has been a resounding success among CSO clients and partners.

**CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
STRATEGY OF APOLITICAL ADVOCACY**

EXAMPLE

An MSI client organization (KOTARPEL) followed MSI advice to negotiate a partnership with the mayor to facilitate rural electrification on the road three kilometers from Jacmel. KOTARPEL devised a successful strategy to raise money by soliciting contributions for electrification from passing motorists who slowed down for a speed bump – especially during festive periods (carnival, patron saint, new year’s day). The mayor requested a financial report. KOTARPEL provided a report in the interest of transparency and partnership – in keeping with MSI advice. The municipal administration saw a lost opportunity, blocked KOTARPEL, and set up its own scheme to raise money from motorists.

KOTARPEL felt betrayed by the mayor and disappointed with MSI. KOTARPEL initially cut off further discussion with the mayor. KOTARPEL supporters sought violent recriminations – throwing stones at the mayor’s people on the road. The organization’s MSI-trained leaders also saw grounds for continued negotiation with the mayor over related issues including a local marketplace, a bus stop (a mayoral goal), and a police post - a shared goal for which KOTARPEL was willing to donate land. KOTARPEL saw that the mayor had heightened interest in extending the electrical grid due to the new location of the bus stop and prospective police station. Instead of mounting an angry demonstration, they sat down with the mayor, offered land for the police station, and addressed once again the issue of electrification. KOTARPEL pointed out that the mayor didn’t have sufficient funds to extend the grid unilaterally and that he had stifled KOTARPEL’s efforts to raise the necessary funds. KOTARPEL was able to negotiate renewed support from the mayor, including mayoral acceptance of their fundraising strategy and mayoral commitment to lobbying the electric company. KOTARPEL explicitly attributed this course of action – an innovation – to MSI training, advice, and follow-up in promoting non-antagonistic civil society partnerships with government.

Field interviews clearly reflected this training. When queried about party affiliation within groups, especially coalitions representing several different groups, respondents were generally reluctant to talk about party affiliation since it violated their rules of encounter. Individuals or small informal groups were more willing to talk about this outside of the group interview format. It was clear that individual CSO members encountered in this survey represented a variety of political tendencies including many openly disdainful of all party politics.

Field interviews point again and again to the critical elements that have enabled civil society groups to function despite political differences:

- (a) politically neutral debate,
- (b) limited, concrete goals,
- (c) shared vested interests.

There's ample field evidence of recent success in using this strategy to achieve practical goals that cut across social distinctions or political party affiliations and bring people together out of concrete shared interests, e.g., electrical grid, potable water, roads, etc.

This strategy has proved successful both for inter-organizational cooperation as well as CSO relations with local government officials. Overall, there is a well-established pattern of antagonism and perceived lack of access to elected officials when individuals or local organizations lack special personal or political ties. This pattern of distrust and exclusion sets the stage for aggressive relationships and near automatic recourse to pressure tactics. In many cases, civil society trainees have been able to use neutral debate and issue-based advocacy to cut through these differences.

The strategy of neutral debate and negotiation instead of confrontation has broader implications in the Haitian context. Applications of this strategy serve as a training ground for non-polarizing alternatives in public debate and issue-based advocacy. This holds considerable promise as local leaders gain practical skills and demonstrate new models for civic engagement. If replicated over an extended period of time within a municipality or region, it could conceivably attain a critical mass of local leaders both public and private, and have a tangible impact at communal or regional levels and beyond.

Of course it would work best if elected officials would also have the benefit of this type of training – and not just members of civil society organizations. If sustained over time there would also be an impact at the level of rotation of leaders into elective office since many such leaders have prior experience with grassroots organizations or civic education.

This effect is already observable, for example, among mayors or mayoral council members in Aquin, Grand Goave, Bonbon, Moron, and Petite Rivière de

l'Artibonite, and even more commonly among rural elected officials in areas touched by the customer survey. Many current CASECs (e.g., Section Palmiste à Vin – Léogane) have their roots in grassroots organizations and have had civic education training. Interviewees in Petite Rivière noted that CASECs from two neighboring communal sections – one Lavalas and the other Convergence (opposition) – were able to collaborate closely on a road project despite political differences. Two opposing candidates for the same public office in Cavaillon have continued to work together amicably on an ADF promoted CSO coalition although one lost and one won the election.

This contrasts dramatically with a case cited by interviewees in Léogane. A newly repaired spring was inaugurated in November 2002. A member of Convergence put the spring back in working order. On the day of the spring's inauguration, violent struggle broke out between competing groups, one Lavalas and the other Convergence, and the spring cap was destroyed – a loss to all regardless of party affiliation.

Conflict management: All USAID programs have dealt with the advocacy dilemma by explicitly promoting non-violent forms of expression. MSI Asosye made a special effort to provide training in conflict mediation as the key element of its civic education package, a focus that had the effect of de-emphasizing other training themes more directly focused on advocacy. CSO members interviewed in the field reported numerous applications of training in conflict management although most such applications were personal in nature, e.g., mediating marital quarrels or disputes over land, animals, and indebtedness. An important client objective in mediating personal conflicts was to avoid taking such cases to court – an expensive course of action that tended to delay resolution of conflicts or leave them permanently unresolved.

Field interviews also identified organizational or local political conflicts that were managed in new ways attributable to training in conflict mediation. For example, an inter-organizational committee near Jacmel (AJAD) was concerned about an environmentally destructive car wash structure built on public land. The massive cement structure threatened flood control walls AJAD had built to protect member homes and the road passing close to the river's edge. AJAD discussed the problem with the car wash owner, a well-connected businessman with close ties to City Hall. This failed to give results so the CSO lobbied with the mayor, who supported their cause since the offending structure threatened a major road. The mayor took action by contacting the departmental *délégué* (representing the national executive branch), who in turn asked the police to order the businessman to remove the offending structure. This message was delivered quite literally *en masse*: AJAD, the mayor, the *délégué*, the police, and a crowd of local people were all present when the police asked the offending businessman to cease operations. The car wash stopped, and the mayor asked the public works department (TPTC) to remove the structure.

Other examples include conflicts observed at the very moment of field inquiry for this survey. At Ça Ira near Leogane, an inter-organizational committee

negotiated successfully with a truck driver, truck owner, and EDH to repair an electric pole broken down by the truck. The committee negotiated a course of action with the truck driver – while preventing him from leaving the area by confiscating his keys and erecting a barricade. Survey respondents in Ça Ira cited this sequence of events as an application of their civil society training in conflict management. Their course of action was in fact risky but non-violent.

The consultant encountered another interesting conflict at Pierre Payen, a communal section of St. Marc. In a conflict over water, a farmer was jailed for deliberately breaking a water pipe belonging to a new potable water system constructed by civil society organizations. The pipe breaker was the father of a committee member who helped organize the water project. NDI had recently trained the committee in conflict management. Despite this training, one committee member brought charges against the other committee member's father, the pipe breaker, and he was arrested and jailed.

Rather than being resolved locally, this conflict escalated to the level of media, courts, police, and jail. The son responded by going on the local radio and denouncing the injustice of his father's jailing. A committee member trained in conflict mediation negotiated a solution with the accused person's son (and fellow committee member). They contacted the CASEC and with his assistance lobbied the mayor for financial support to repair the pipe. The charges were dropped, the man was released from jail, and external funds were located to cover repair costs. In this case, conflict mediation played a useful role but was not brought into play early enough to avoid escalation and jail. Nevertheless, the committee was able to apply conflict mediation training. Furthermore, the incident created an opportunity for the NDI trainer to review the conflict (and training) together with committee members, and to foster reconciliation of all parties to the conflict.

Clearly, resolving conflicts at organizational levels has proved harder to manage than the mediation of inter-personal quarrels. In cases noted above, the organizations applied their training while skirting the edge of disaster. This was clearly a learning process. Management of conflict at organizational levels readily morphs into advocacy with government authorities. When such conflicts implicate the authorities, managing the conflict requires a thoughtful political strategy.

In sum, stand-alone training is not enough. Training is far more effective if there is ongoing advice or accompaniment by trainer-animators, i.e., not just training but an extensive period of follow-up as organizations respond to specific problems and specific applications of training.

Targeting of organizations for civil society training. In this survey, a far larger number of CSO beneficiaries were rural than urban. Most program sites were accessible by roads or jeep trails, but some civic education trainees lived several hours of walking distance from jurisdictional centers, e.g., Grand Goave. Some

beneficiaries lived in rural jurisdictions (communal sections) that were in fact peri-urban areas, or along major roadways with urbanizing influences.

In general, the Mission's civic education projects have worked more intensively in rural than urban areas. They have found the rural social context more welcoming, less turbulent, and less political compared to urban centers. When working in town centers, especially larger provincial towns such as Jérémie and Cayes, project trainers have sometimes been hampered by suspicion of their motives as civic educators, usually on the part of urban political pressure groups or politicians.³

A few CSOs were politically active, but all inter-organizational groups claimed political neutrality when working together with other CSOs – usually on basic public services. Young people and teachers played a preponderant role on CSO leadership committees. Many CSOs had a high proportion of young people including secondary school and university students. Some groups had a traditional cultural character, e.g., labor exchange groups, *rara* processional societies, and associations of *houngan* ritual specialists and temples.

USAID has tended to exclude politically active *organisations populaires* as targets for training due to their reputation for violent tactics or their presumed role as political tools of particular politicians or political parties. On the other hand, ADF has defined its CSO clientele somewhat broader than NDI and MSI. ADF explicitly defined its client base as *organisations populaires*, including for example the politically active Bale Wouze in St. Marc – though always on condition that such organizations espouse non-violent actions and local development objectives without regard to politics. In ADF parlance, virtually all grassroots *member-based* organizations are *organisations populaires* by definition, and such organizations are not necessarily defined by political activism or pressure tactics.

An important operating assumption of the USAID democracy program is that an activist civil society can help diffuse the polarization of society and diminish the frequency of violent political protest. The majority of CSOs encountered in the field had a predominantly *rural* constituency and had not engaged in political pressure tactics. Such groups have been the primary beneficiaries of conflict mediation training.

In contrast, the most prominent popular organizations and public demonstrations reported in the news during the research period were decidedly *urban* – with a marked tendency for aggressive forms of expression. This raises questions about USAID targeting of its civil society training.

³ Some interviewees in the present survey said they were initially suspicious of USAID democracy trainers, fearing they might be representatives of IRI – perceived in some areas visited as having an overt political agenda.

Urban *organisations populaires* that operate as pressure groups have successfully pressured the government to increase or restore public services. The central government has shown itself responsive to aggressive tactics, undoubtedly for political reasons. This stance tends to encourage aggressive tactics – including barricades and burning tires – because such tactics clearly work.

For example, Lavalas-oriented pressure groups in Jérémie literally shut down EDH offices and operations for close to two months (March-April 2002) until the central government supplied a new generator and restored electrical service. This aggressive but non-violent struggle was directed at the government and its representatives – regional senators, the *délégué*, and the EDH director. The rhetoric of this struggle cut across party politics. Lavalas supporters – with a broad base of citizen support – organized this effort to restore electricity to Jérémie, and targeted highly visible representatives of the government.

Elsewhere, EDH restored electricity to St. Marc after Bale Wouze, an FL-leaning group, barricaded the national road. A similar scenario took place in Les Cayes, and there are numerous other examples of aggressive tactics that have brought results in a political climate marked by constant pressure and polarization. For example, there is a definite perception in Petit Goave that the central government changed the mayoral council and invested heavily in reconstruction of the central square as a response to aggressive demonstrations by opposition groups, i.e., “appeasement.”

In Les Cayes, KTKNS originated as a pressure group (*groupe de pression*). It takes credit for recent restoration of 24-hour electricity by order of the central government, also new bridge construction and a new market – objectives pursued by the mayor without success until backstopped by KTKNS demonstrations and pressures in the street.

KTKNS (Cayes) and Bale Wouze (St. Marc) have evolved from their origins as political pressure groups. Despite their roots in street demonstrations, including violent methods, they now make defensible claims as development organizations. KTKNS operates a savings and loan association and moto-taxi service, and Bale Wouze sponsors adult literacy and scholarship programs for the indigent. They both sponsor training in civic education, and both evolved into regional federations.

The KTKNS leader says that politicians and party politics have used KTKNS and its pressure tactics as a political tool or pawn, and that KTKNS now desires to establish greater independence, including running its own candidates in future elections rather than being used to support candidates hand picked by others.

Bale Wouze states that it is an association of the unemployed. Both KTKNS and Bale Wouze claim primary allegiance to the poor and disenfranchised. Spokesmen are careful to note that they do not necessarily agree with all Lavalas policies and decisions, that they are “close” to Lavalas but not “affiliated,” and that their support is conditional – so long as the government is responsive to the needs of the poor. Both have demonstrated repeatedly against Lavalas government agencies and policies.

Advocacy redefined as local development. Observations in the field suggest that most grassroots organizations served by the three projects had a fairly similar range and variation, i.e., local member-based groups interested in economic and social development. Virtually all showed a great deal of interest in basic public services, and many were actively playing quasi-governmental roles in providing such services (see adjoining text box for examples).

The burning priorities expressed by virtually all CBOs or OPs encountered were livelihood, the worsening economy, and access to basic public services – especially potable water, electricity, and schools. A striking finding from this survey was the visibly growing public service role of grassroots organizations, including heavy local investments to expand the electrical grid.⁴ This consultant encountered many CSO electricity projects in small towns and semi-rural areas on the outskirts of towns and cities (see description of CSO-EDH partnership in textbox below). This type of

QUASI GOVERNMENTAL ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY Civil Registration and Security

***CIVIL REGISTRATION:** At Mon Sejour (Aquin), the civil registrar (Officier d'état civil) responsible for official registration of birth had ceased to deliver birth certificates without extracting a sizeable payment despite a recent governmental decree providing for free registration. The dominant local CSO censused local people without birth certificates, collected identifying information, and negotiated financial support from the CASEC and political clout from the Mayor to enforce the registrar's compliance. As a result, the offending civil registrar in Aquin back-registered births for around 100 people, many in their twenties or thirties. The CSO continues to monitor birth registration and directs its members to register new births in a neighboring commune (Cavaillon), effectively bypassing the Aquin registrar.*

***SECURITY:** La Colline (Aquin) is a rural communal section with a large number of out-migrants to French Guiana and France. At La Colline local people created a new CSO in 2001, the Komite brigad Siveyans Lakolin Bosyea (KBSLB) trained by NDI. The primary objective of this committee for surveillance was to assure public security following a series of thefts, house burnings, and murders between 1997 and 2001. Many crime targets were out-migrants returning to the area with cash savings. The area's CASEC had a network of unpaid CASEC assistants but no police post. The newly formed civil society committee for surveillance carried out a census and organized a citizen's surveillance network integrating 55 localities within the section. Each locality carries out nighttime patrols armed with conch shell trumpets to sound the alarm. When they catch thieves, they turn them over to the CASEC. This citizen's network was a civil society initiative and remains separate from the CASEC network. It was organized with the support of the CASEC and commune police post. It has significantly reduced the crime rate during the past two years, including reduced mob killings of suspected thieves.*

⁴ As used here, the term “local public works” doesn't necessarily mean services provided by government. It refers to collective services that may be organized and funded primarily through local CSOs rather than government, or, together with government, e.g., a potable water system based on capping a spring and piping it to public fountains as at Camp Mary (St. Marc), or a CSO partnership with EDH for electrification in Mariani.

civil society partnership with EDH could well serve as a model for system-wide reform of Haiti's public utilities – all in severe crisis. Similar civil society arrangements have worked well with CAMEP, the urban water system, in slum neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, e.g., Cité l'Eternel.

CSO beneficiaries surveyed were also actively engaged in public security, updating of birth registration,⁵ lobbying for new police posts, renovation of public squares, and other public sector concerns including potable water, roads, literacy, reforestation, and latrines. Many CSOs have invested in community schools and then lobbied with the Ministry of Education to take them over as government schools. Mayors and CASECs have commonly provided some financial support to community schools operated by CSOs. Some of the most avid exponents of reforestation encountered in this survey were urban and peri-urban residents subject to dangerous flooding, concerns that could lend themselves to rural-urban coalitions based on shared vested interests in reforestation. In many cases, civil society organizations have taken on quasi-governmental roles including burying the indigent, facilitating birth registration, carrying out local censuses, and recruiting subscribers for public water and electrical systems.

All CSO beneficiaries interviewed had been trained in civic education programs stressing rights of citizens and the functioning of democratic institutions; however, all groups assigned high priority to issues of livelihood and improved public services. The recent trends in support for civic action have clearly shifted to local development objectives including creation or improvement of local public services – either through pressuring or partnering government entities, or alternately through “community” based activities and civil society coalitions.⁶

**QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY
Electrification in Mariani**

This hyper-urban neighborhood is a communal section of Gressier located in expanding urban slums that adjoin the commune of Carrefour. The Organisation pour le développement de Mariani (ODM), an NDI trainee, has taken considerable initiative to create public services in the area including potable water, roads, bridges, and electricity.

In 1997 ODM contacted the mayor and EDH. It raised funds to cover the costs of transformers, wiring, and technicians to extend the EDH grid into the neighborhood. The ODM electricity committee censused the area and recruited prospective EDH clients who were required to join ODM as a condition of electrification.

The ODM electricity committee collects a fee to enroll prospective clients. The fee covers installation costs. New clients able to show a receipt from ODM then register with EDH as subscribers to metered electricity. ODM monitors and maintains all electric lines in its system, including illegal splices into main lines (known as “konbelann”). ODM reports having removed 15 illegal splices within the past year. Due to its vested interest and organizational skill, ODM plays the pivotal role in extending the EDH grid at little or no cost to EDH, and continues to service the grid by surveillance, sanctions, and continued investment to further expand the electrical grid.

⁵ CSOs engaged in surveillance and civil registration advocacy were members of NDI promoted *comités initiatives* and were beneficiaries of training in civic action (see textbox on page 12).

⁶ NDI trainers promoted the establishment of *comités initiatives*, bringing together several CSOs within individual communal sections or in town centers. ADF trainers promoted inter-organizational coalitions, usually at the level of entire communes, including all communal sections.

Chapter III

SUMMARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes main findings from this customer survey including responses to questions raised by the scope of work.⁷

CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Are there any trends with regard to CSO ability to influence public decisions or leverage public support for their initiatives? What are the most common kinds of GOH assistance given to organizations? Are organizations more successful in directing their request to line ministry agents or to quasi-governmental service providers (TPTC, EDH, etc) rather than elected leaders?

- The customer survey identified the following sectors of CSO advocacy or involvement in local public spaces and services:
 - roads and bridges, town squares, schools, meeting houses,
 - potable water, springs, wells; electricity, telecommunications,
 - public security, police posts, police-community relations
 - civil registry, access to justice, land tenure conflict,
 - adult literacy, afternoon schools for *rèstavèk* servant children and the poor,
 - dispensaries and diffusion of health information,
 - drainage and irrigation works, tree planting, soil and water conservation.
- In areas where USAID democracy projects have operated, there's evidence of a growing public service role by grassroots civil society organizations including,
 - (1) direct provision of local public services, and
 - (2) increased levels of advocacy with public agencies and elected officials.
- In project areas, CSOs commonly work together in new ways on specific activities. Many of these efforts, though not all, have continued in the months since the projects have ended.
- CSO initiatives include active negotiation with public officials, especially for roadwork and electricity.
- Electricity is perhaps the most dramatic area of recent CSO-government collaboration. CSOs have raised impressive sums of money to purchase electric poles, lines, and transformers, and established active partnerships directly with EDH to extend the electrical grid, especially in urban and peri-urban areas. CSOs also have a special interest in public lighting.⁸

⁷ Findings are based primarily on information about activities and practices of civil society organizations contacted in this customer survey and may not apply to all such organizations in Haiti.

⁸ Students characteristically study near a street light or on the public square if it is lighted.

- CSOs have had growing success in leveraging diaspora funding for projects such as electrification or repair of public squares.
- In both rural and urban areas, CSOs are actively engaged in road construction and maintenance. Many CSOs have negotiated access to TPTC trucks or graders, sometimes raising funds to cover gasoline costs.
- CSOs have made contact with the whole gamut of local and regional elected officials; however, mayors and CASECs are generally more responsive than other elected officials.
- Parliamentarians have not been very helpful, except for politically allies.⁹
- CSOs generally prefer to use an influential intermediary, at least initially, when requesting services from a government office or ministry such as EDH, TPTC, or the *délégué*. CASECs and members of the mayoral council often serve this role.
- CSOs usually prefer to make government contacts as a group rather than as lone individuals, e.g., the mayor, CASEC, and two or three CSO representatives may go together as a group to visit the *délégué*.
- In response to CSO contact, the mayors, CASECs, and *délégués* sometimes contribute funds for CSO sponsored activities such as schools, roads, or electricity.
- CASECs often provide meeting space for local CSO meetings. Mayors provide space for inter-CSO meetings, especially if different *sections* are represented.
- Mayors provide assistance for (1) legal recognition of CSOs and (2) access to state land for CSO sponsored activities such as schools.
- CSOs also contact public agencies directly including EDH, TPTC, SNEP, CAMEP, and the Ministries of Social Affaires, Education, Agriculture, and Plan – but generally at departmental rather than national levels.
- CSOs in rural areas and small towns generally find EDH and the TPTC far more responsive than other central government agencies or ministries.
- Some rural organizations in this survey contacted regional offices of the Ministry of Agriculture for assistance in agriculture, irrigation, and reforestation. They received little support from the ministry except where there was an active and interested communal agronomist in residence (Bureau Agricole Communal).
- The majority of organizations surveyed state that reforestation is a high priority but there's little evidence of high impact tree planting. CSOs report planting trees on Arbor Day, behind springs used for potable water, and in communal forests.
- In urban areas, CSOs report a special interest in police services, police-community relations, and problems of police brutality. In rural areas, CSOs

⁹ Many politically active *organisations populaires* have a special relationship to a particular senator or deputy as political “parrain” (godfather). In such cases the organization serves as a political base for the parliamentarian; however, some so-called *organisations populaires* are not bona fide organizations with an internal structure and formalized membership. Such so-called OP’s may consist of a politically powerful leader who has henchmen and the capacity to mobilize people, but no real organization, e.g., Amiot Métayer.

lobby for new police posts. Some rural CSOs run citizen security patrols (*brigades de vigilance*) by agreement with CASECs and the police.

- Urban CSOs report that SMCRS (garbage), TPTC (road repair), and CAMEP (urban water supply) are somewhat more responsive than other agencies.
- Many CSOs presently offer adult literacy classes with some minimal support from the central government.
- In many areas, grassroots organizations whose leadership includes teachers and school directors are presently offering classes for servant children and other unschooled children from poor families, an activity promoted by UNICEF.

Are Fami Lavalas (FL) leaning groups more likely to receive a positive response from GOH officials? Are non-FL organizations less likely to receive a positive response from the GOH?

- Grassroots organizations distinguish among several primary channels of access to government and its benefits:
 - (a) local elected officials
 - (b) officials of government agencies, line ministries, public utilities
 - (c) political channels, presidency, parliamentarians, political leaders
 - (d) personal relationships, personal ties and obligations
- CSO representatives with a politically neutral stance are less inclined to address their concerns to the president or political leaders. They generally prefer to contact public utilities and ministries that provide public services.
- Most CSOs in this survey have taken an apolitical stance when dealing with government and have had access to GOH offices and services without regard to party affiliation. CSO access to TPTC road equipment or EDH does not appear to be governed by party affiliation. What is far more important is good relations with CASECs and mayoral councils to facilitate such contacts.
- Nevertheless, in areas such as Moron where opposition candidates have won local elections, there is at least a perception that education and agriculture ministries, for example, have not been responsive due to political reasons.
- There is evidence that personal ties with personnel in government offices can overcome political differences.
- Job patronage with government agencies is strongly influenced by politics.
- Urban *organisations populaires* – generally FL supporters – have been quite successful in pressuring the government to increase or restore public services.
- Some *organisations populaires* have direct access to the president to represent their interests.
- It is clear that the central government has shown itself responsive to aggressive tactics, a stance that has the effect of encouraging such tactics.¹⁰

¹⁰ This certainly applies to FL-leaning areas such as Jérémie or St. Marc. It also applies in some measure to centers of opposition such as Petit Goave.

INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY

What distinguishing characteristics make civil society organizations more likely to get a positive response?

For grassroots organizations trained in advocacy, the following characteristics offer heightened opportunity for response from government:

- Clearly defined objectives that are tangible and limited in scope
- Credibility based on a politically non-partisan stance
- Targeting issues that have a broad based constituency
- Personal ties within the government agency to be contacted
- Good CSO relations with local elected officials, especially mayors and CASECs
- An existing resource base (money, labor, property, active members)
- Perceived clout (membership base, powerful relationships, reputation, resources)
- A collaborative rather than antagonistic strategy as the first line of recourse
- Credible CSO leadership, articulate spokespersons, ability to negotiate
- Organizational skills (strategic planning, division of roles, member participation)
- Ability to identify realistic targets of opportunity for public support or public-private partnership, e.g., public utilities such as EDH, CAMEP, SNEP, TPTC
- Pursuit of an “enabling” role from government, limited partnership, or limited support rather than a complete line of services from the state agency

Some organizations (mostly urban, mostly not USAID clients) take a confrontational stance (i.e., *groupes de pression*). Such organizations have pressured successfully for government response by using aggressive tactics.

The following characteristics apply:

- ability to mobilize sizeable numbers of people (*pouvoir de mobilisation*), e.g., university and secondary school students and parents, unemployed young people, neighborhood committees (*comités de quartier*)
- the power to disrupt, e.g., the organizational capacity to block major roadways or to shut down government institutions ¹¹
- a focus on tangible issues with a broad base of support, e.g., restoration of electricity as a public service that cuts across social groups and political loyalties
- tacit support by powerful elements of government and/or tolerance or passive law enforcement in the face of aggressive tactics and disruptions

¹¹ For example, Bale Wouze in St. Marc can reportedly close down the city within 20 minutes. Essentially non-violent demonstrators have shut down EDH in Jérémie, also the state university in Port-au-Prince, etc.

- perception of political clout (e.g., numbers, social profile, presumption of ties to politicians, perceived threat of violence)¹²

Do CSO meetings that include an elected official and a line ministry result in greater responsiveness to local organizations than those that include just one or the other?

- Line ministries tend to be more responsive if an elected official – the higher level the better – accompanies CSO representatives. Higher level elected officials have more clout, but senators and deputies tend to be more political and less accessible than mayors or CASECs. Mayors have more clout than CASECs.

Are male-led organizations more successful than female-led organizations in leveraging GOH assistance or influencing public decisions?

- In rural Haiti, women’s groups have a reputation for being well organized and more effective than male-led groups in money management. Dynamic and effective women leaders were encountered in this study; however, the majority of CSO leaders were men in a social and political system dominated primarily by men.
- Most cases of successful advocacy in this study were led primarily by men. Women’s groups have privileged access to services offered by the Ministry of the Feminine Condition; however, this ministry is poorly financed and offers few services.
- Field interviews generated no evidence that men were more or less effective than women in negotiating with government officials, although gender bias definitely favors men in CSO leadership positions (except for women’s groups) and in government offices.¹³

¹² The implicit threat of violence is based on the history of violent political demonstrations by slum-based partisans of politicians and political parties (e.g., burning tires, throwing stones, breaking car windows, trashing offices, attacking opposition demonstrations). In view of this phenomenon, it is important to distinguish analytically among (1) violent demonstrations by Party affiliates (e.g., “OP Lavalas”), (2) paid political henchmen, (3) politically opportunistic street gangs and hustlers – versus (4) politically active grassroots organizations with a local development agenda. The latter organizations may use aggressive but not necessarily violent tactics to target specific issues or services. Such organizations cannot be ignored in any serious effort to analyze dynamics of civic action in Haiti’s volatile social and political climate.

¹³ Women generally have greater latitude for asserting leadership in women’s groups (e.g., women’s federations in Latibolière-Jérémie and Merci-aux Cayes) compared to organizations composed of both men and women.

Are organizations more successful if they submit a written plan or proposal to the GOH?

- Some agencies such as FAES require written plans or proposals; however, most government agencies don't have a standard written format for requesting services.
- Informants clearly identify good writing skills, especially the ability to write letters, as a useful tool; however, CSOs sometimes do not adequately follow up letters and proposals they have submitted.
- Few organizations have good skills in preparing requests for funding. CSO leaders frequently identified this as a special need for which they would like training and guidance.
- In contacts with mayors and regional offices of public utilities, face to face contact and influential intermediaries are more effective than written proposals alone, especially for negotiating a time limited service such as a day's use of a truck or grader for road construction.

Are those who donate time and resources to be coupled with the GOH resources more likely to get assistance?

- Yes, there's abundant evidence that CSOs that are able to raise funds and invest their own resources are far more effective in leveraging GOH resources, especially for improved services from public utilities.

Assess the overall quality of the organizations in terms of internal democratic practices and understanding how to influence public decisions and leverage assistance from GOH?

- CSO expectations have shifted away from the notion that government refuses to provide services unless pressured or politically allied, to recognition that government services are scarce but can be leveraged to some extent by collaboration, limited partnership, and sometimes pressure.
- Many CSOs have genuinely integrated the concept of neutral debate – and negotiation around specific issues and shared interests without regard to political affiliation or candidacy, and have utilized this pragmatic approach to good effect in contacts with government and other CSOs. This has been a very significant innovation and training ground with potentially much broader applications in government and politics.
- Trainees have learned and applied tools for conflict management. They have readily applied this training to inter-personal conflicts. CSOs have also begun to apply this training to intra- and inter-organizational conflicts and to relations with government offices and representatives; however, conflict management is much harder at such levels. Nevertheless, a significant number of CSOs have gained skills and experience in managing conflict at organizational levels.

- Many CSO leaders have had a tendency to define *civic actions* as local development. This is appropriate up to a point since basic needs and services are high priorities; however, it also risks turning civic action into a synonym for community development, rather than retaining a sense of the interface between citizen and government at all levels. It also neglects the role civil society as a non-partisan watchdog over public policies and officials.
- There's been a great deal of emphasis on coalition building and joint inter-CSO actions. This is a new development and has brought large numbers of civil society organizations together around shared concerns.
- Such coalitions have been useful networks for diffusing information about civic education. They have the potential to unite civil society at local levels for heightened impact on government.
- Coalitions and inter-organizational committees, however, still have limited experience. In some cases, they run the risk of turning into separate CSOs rather than playing a clearly defined role that expands the capacity of their member-organizations. Their objectives are not always clearly defined in terms of feasible concrete actions.
- In almost all interviews, respondents raised questions about the availability of grants or other forms of external support. CSO motivations for creating coalitions included sharing of resources and generating clout, but a stated motivation was also to make CSOs more attractive to NGO service providers and funding sources.
- In many cases, individual CSOs still struggle with setting clearly defined objectives and actions, and a tendency for too many objectives that are too general or too strongly defined by expectations of outside assistance. Such organizations are vulnerable to politicization, and also weaken the CSO coalitions they join.
- Basic organizational development and animation are still required by many individual CSOs in order for coalitions of such organizations to be effective.
- Despite these problems, a significant number of grassroots civil society organizations have forged pragmatic new relationships with local elected officials and regional offices of the central government, especially public utilities and public works. This is a notable achievement in a political environment otherwise dominated by crisis and unmitigated polarization.

What do the beneficiaries of the USAID funded civil society program like about our program?

- Beneficiaries value very highly the policy of political neutrality as a strategy for gaining credibility with government officials and fellow citizens.
- CSOs appreciate the policy of trainers coming to them rather than sending a more limited number of CSO members elsewhere for training.
- They prefer programs that allow frequent contact with trainers
- Beneficiaries value highly the distribution of written texts, training manuals, and reference materials such as the constitution.

- The training deemed most useful includes strategic planning, leadership skills and team building, conflict mediation, internal democratic practices, organizational development, roles and duties of elected officials, and strategies for contacting government.

What do the beneficiaries of the USAID funded civil society program dislike about our program?

- Most CSO representatives identify economic problems as the highest priority in their hierarchy of needs, and find that democracy programs don't adequately address these needs.
- There's a commonly held CSO view that training support alone is not enough.
- Organizations operating within town centers feel they've been neglected in that USAID programs have tended to privilege rural CSOs.
- CSOs are critical of what they perceive to be the fragmented and intermittent character of USAID program support.
- There were repeated complaints about ADF closeout. Informants attributed these problems to late changes in program management, abrupt efforts to change well liked field staff, and an upper management style deemed patronizing. Trainees were promised written resource materials and certificates that never arrived.

Do they prefer weekly or bi-weekly one-hour training sessions? Do they prefer 3-day training sessions?

- Both methods are effective but work best in combination. Maximum impact is achieved by combining intensive sessions (e.g., one to three day sessions) with regular ongoing contact over a period of time.
- Beneficiaries manifest a clear preference for frequent continuity of contact.

Can they immediately apply the information they have learned?

- The most common immediate application is re-transmission of information to others not present during the initial training.
- Program emphasis on coalition building has created useful networks for re-transmitting information. These networks are now important channels for diffusing information, attaining non-standard settings such as cockfight arenas, rotating labor groups, and voodoo temples.¹⁴
- Some of the information is not action oriented in an immediate sense. Some is more directly applicable during electoral cycles.

¹⁴ E.g., this consultant observed a written agenda at a meeting of voodoo servitors in Petite Rivière in which civic education was a prominent point of the *ordre du jour*, and strongly promoted by a *houngan* ritual specialist.

- In some cases, organizational weaknesses are a significant constraint to useful application of information. Valid application of training generally requires animation follow-up over a period of time.
- Nevertheless, many CSOs have clearly made immediate application of training, e.g., conflict mediation, strategic planning, and civic actions organized around specific objectives.

Do they know where to go for assistance after training has concluded? Has that technical assistance been helpful?

- Aside from technical assistance *per se*, CSOs have had success in leveraging support from government offices – benefits that CSO informants attribute to their civic training in how and where to channel requests.
- Requests for government support have not always generated a response. In some cases the government response has either not been helpful or has been a hindrance.
- One interesting development is the leveraging of locally available technical assistance in small towns including agronomists, engineers, and skilled trades-people (masonry, carpentry, construction, electricians, etc.). CSO coalitions promoted by ADF were able to recruit local people with special skills to serve on coalition committees – even if they did not represent member organizations.
- CSOs are inclined to seek assistance from NGOs rather than government; however, there has been a significant increase in CSO contact with government officials, a phenomenon attributable to USAID training.

Were the trainers seen as apolitical? Do the trainers have good relations with both FL and the opposition?

- Trainers were generally perceived as apolitical; however, they often had to prove themselves during initial phases of contact with CSOs. As an exception, the last ADF program director was not perceived as apolitical.

Do they have any suggestions for improving the program?

- Beneficiaries request greater continuity of program support over longer time frames.
- Beneficiaries are interested in training that includes follow-up contact, including advice for practical applications of training.
- They are interested in other forms technical assistance besides civic education. They would also like information and referrals to external sources of funding.
- CSOs express strong interest in programs that support job training or job creation.
- CSO interviewees made the following suggestions for additional training:

- ⇒ Training of civil society organizations should be matched by civic education for government officials. This would sensitize government officers to the role of civil society and facilitate citizen advocacy and public/private partnership.
- ⇒ Young people in a number of areas request training in “savoir vivre” – i.e., how to behave, how to address others, how to make introductions, how to act in government offices, how to deal with people in a variety of social situations.
- ⇒ How to write project proposals, manage projects, manage money.
- ⇒ Training for improved police-community relations and the role of civil society in policing. This could well be an effective follow-up activity that builds on earlier training in conflict management and mediation of conflict.
- ⇒ Training related to elections, elections observation, and a CSO role in voter education: CSOs have developed increasing levels of sophistication and skill in being able to operate from a stance of political neutrality, and are well placed to apply this skill as neutral civil society observers in local elections.
- ⇒ Decentralization of government, a policy sector of considerable interest to small towns and rural communes.
- ⇒ Training in sustainable management of public space, and “how to protect it from destruction” (as stated by a CSO informant).
- ⇒ Incorporation of civic education curricula and related teacher training into the school system, also PTA training. This is already taking place to some extent as an unexpected consequence of programming (aside from new NDI initiatives in this area).
- ⇒ Exchange visits and dialogue between urban and rural civil society organizations.
- ⇒ For long term impact, they suggest targeting youth groups and organizations of secondary school students and recent graduates. This is particularly appropriate in that young people are presently the demographic majority of Haiti.
- ⇒ Link arts, community radio, and civic education in a more systematic way. Many young people raise funds from local resources and take considerable initiative to organize musical and theater productions in small towns and rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID has not tended to work much with grassroots organizations in urban areas. Yet, Haiti is fast becoming a demographically urban society. The sprawling urban slums of Cap-Haitien, Gonaives, St. Marc, Petit Goave, Les Cayes, and Jeremie are politically active – advocating for their interests, lightning rods for Haiti’s never ending political crisis, the cutting edge of advocacy. Avoiding them is a lost opportunity to make a difference – to promote civility in what is too often a very uncivil society.

- ⇒ A special effort should be made to work in urban areas with *organisations populaires* that have been excluded, by and large, from USAID training and impact. This means working in urban slums and potential flash points. In view of the highly politicized environment of many urban areas, this would require programs with longer time frames – enough time for personnel to build trust and credibility, and to promote the emergence of urban CSOs with a solid organizational base and active member participation.¹⁵
- ⇒ USAID should be working with a wider social spectrum of urban civil society, including neighborhood organizations in hyper urban areas. It is not enough to work with civil society organizations rooted in affluence and influence, e.g., CLED and the Initiative Société Civile. This strategy would help create a much broader base for civil society initiatives.
- ⇒ It would be useful to do conflict vulnerability assessment of towns, cities, and neighborhoods with a view to future targeting of civic education programs.
- ⇒ It would be immensely helpful to gather additional information in the field about social dynamics, organizational arrangements, and leadership patterns of *organisations populaires*, neighborhood committees, youth groups, and any other local organizations. What has happened, for example, to GRET’s late-1990s promotion of CSO partnerships with CAMEP, significantly expanding the delivery of potable water to slum neighborhoods such as Cité L’Éternel, not far from the USAID Mission?
- ⇒ Some of the most interesting results of USAID civil society outreach have taken place in urban and peri-urban neighborhoods, based on grassroots CSO partnership with public utilities. USAID should build on these successes. Perhaps the strategy should be to focus more heavily on basic public services as the key to practical skills training and a more prominent role for civil society – civic education via electrification.
- ⇒ Such a program could also serve as a channel for diaspora related investments, especially in small towns and provincial cities. Use animation support to promote diaspora investment.
- ⇒ It is also clear from this customer survey that USAID programs and trainers would have greater socio-political room for maneuver, including freedom of movement, if they were to establish open communications with urban OP leaders, e.g., as ADF trainers did with popular leaders in Jérémie. USAID programs are less likely to be targeted politically if their representatives build speaking relationship with such leaders, explaining who they are and what they are doing, while carefully maintaining their politically neutral stance.
- ⇒ Political strife and violent demonstrations rooted in urban slums are in large part a consequence of poverty and youthful unemployment. Street politics and political pressure tactics are to some extent a “job” – a source

¹⁵ Even ADF worked primarily with rural and small town organizations because they were easier and more responsive than urban *organisations populaires*, especially in view of the time limitations imposed by short funding cycles.

- of income for disaffected youth. USAID initiatives to promote job creation and economic development in such areas would help diminish the stress level and the economic underpinnings of strident political action. It would also facilitate the task of building a broader base for urban civil society.
- Organizational weaknesses are a constraint to effective advocacy. This argues for more emphasis on basic skills training and internal organizational development.
 - This argues for being more selective about which organizations to train, assigning priority to those organizations most likely to make practical use of the investment in training.
 - Furthermore, organizational training geared to *complex organizations* is essential if emergent CSO coalitions are to be effective and enduring institutions. Such training should utilize notions of subsidiarity, i.e., solving a problem at the level of the smallest or most local unit capable of handling the problem.¹⁶
 - The process of *selecting* individuals for training is critical and serves to groom new leadership. To promote a more effective role for civil society, training should target potential leaders – who may presently be ordinary members – as well as current CSO leaders. USAID should continue to make special efforts to recruit women for training, especially leaders and members of women’s groups.
 - Training is far more effective if trainers have *community organization skills* and play a *follow-up “animation”* role along with more formal training sessions.
 - Trainer-animators should play an accompanying role as CSO committees and leaders apply their training to concrete problems, identify goals, and devise strategies for action.
 - There were a number of cases of overlapping training among three simultaneous CSO training programs (NDI, ADF, MSI). In view of limited resources, it would be more efficient to avoid such overlap, and seek to cover a critical mass of communes within regions or departments.
 - Greater efforts could be made to link rural and urban elements of civil society around shared interests. This is already taking place in areas where USAID programs have promoted coalitions. In areas of urban flooding and runoff, urban and rural CSOs have already taken note of shared concerns about deforestation.
 - USAID programs to promote civil society should devote greater attention to traditional forms of solidarity such as rotating labor and credit groups, *rara* bands (societies), voodoo temples, associations of *houngan*, and other religious associations.
 - USAID should promote closer programmatic links between civil society organizations and community radio stations. This would require investing in animation support in addition to civic education programs. There is already a

¹⁶ See page 6, G. Smucker and J. Thomson, 1999, Social Capital and Development in Haiti, USAID.

pattern of current and former USAID trainers finding employment as radio journalists in a number of provincial towns.

- USAID democracy projects should more carefully plan their closeout and exit strategies, and actively share this planning with program beneficiaries at early stages of project implementation.