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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAG	ActionAid Ghana
ADD	Action on Disability and Development
AMOPGA	Adansiman Oil Palm Growers Association
APPLE	Association of People for Practical Life Education
BEWDA	Belim Wussa Development Association
CAD	Centre for Active Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CEDEP	Centre for the Development of People
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPIL	Centre for Public Interest Law
CGE	Citizen-Government Engagement
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CIVFO	Civic Foundation
CODAC	Community Development and Advocacy Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWSA	Community Water and Sanitation Agency
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCE	District Chief Executive
DfID	Department for International Development
DVC	Domestic Violence Coalition
EoI	Expressions of Interest
ERAP	Education Resources Advocacy Project
FFP	Foundation for Female Photojournalists
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FWG	Forest Watch Ghana
GAB	Ghana Association of the Blind
GCRN	Ghana Community Radio Network
GDCA	Ghana Developing Communities Association
GFD	Ghana Federation of the Disabled
GHANEP	Ghana Network for Peace Building
GoG	Government of Ghana
GsC	Grants sub-committee
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IPA	Institute for Policy Alternatives
LNGO	Local Non Governmental Organisation
MA	Management Agency
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NNED	Northern Network for Education Development
PAMOJA Ghana	Ghana REFLECT Practitioners Network

PCA	people-centred advocacy
PDA	Participatory Development Associates
PM	project memorandum
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
RAVI	Rights and Voice Initiative
RBA	Rights Based Advocacy
REAP	Rights, Empowerment, Access and Participation project
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
RGP	RAVI Grant Partner
SC	Steering Committee
SMA	Single Mothers Association
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SSF	Social Support Foundation
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WACAM	Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WOM	Women and Orphans Movement
ZOVFA	Zuuri Organic Vegetable Farmers Association

FOREWORD

RAVI successfully completed a third year of project implementation (October 2006 to September 2007). During this period RAVI reached the peak of its activities in fund disbursement and management as well as supporting its partners to promote demand for responsiveness, transparency, and accountability in Government's relations with its citizenry.

During the period RAVI's grant partners increased from 23 to 34. Out of these 6 completed their projects successfully and 2 had their MoUs terminated prematurely. The partners engaged with various levels of government and on a variety of issues ranging from advocacy for policy reform, the passage legislations as well as engagement for the provision of basic services.

RAVI supported its partners by building their capacity through constant training, monitoring, and provision of technical support. As reflected in this report, the outcomes of these inputs have been the empowerment of groups and organisations for engagement resulting in changes in policies and the passage of laws as well as the provision of some basic services.

The report assessed the successes, challenges and lessons learnt in the implementation of the project. Many of the success stories have been recounted from the experiences of the groups themselves indicating that there is a high level of their ownership of the processes of engagement as well as an increased level of responsiveness on the part of duty bearers.

RAVI continues to work towards its goal of *“Improved accountability and responsiveness of Government of Ghana towards its citizens, particularly the poor”* and although a lot remains to be done by way of achieving an active and a vibrant civil society that is able to demand its rights, we are hopeful that in the medium to long term we would be achieving the purpose and goal of the Initiative.

The achievements that have been recorded in this report are attributable to the efforts of all the various members of the RAVI family; including DfID (our funding agency), the Management Agency, the Steering Committee, our grant partners and our hardworking staff whose efforts and toil saw us through a successful year and for which reason I would like to extend my deepest appreciation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ghana civil society Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI) is a five year project funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID). A key objective of RAVI is to ensure that there are strong grassroots organizations that are capable of engaging with the decentralized local government structures (in this case the District Assemblies) for the promotion, protection, respect for and fulfilment of the rights of citizens within the respective districts. This RAVI does by providing funding to a number of "Intermediary RAVI Grant Partners" who in turn provide grants to CBOs and LNGOs in addition to supporting their capacity development mostly through training, to be able to engage with the assemblies on issues of concern to their constituencies.

RAVI ended its third year of implementation in September 2007 during which the Initiative chalked significant successes, but also faced challenges, both of which are worth sharing with all our stakeholders and all other individuals and institutions interested in enhancing a vibrant civil society in Ghana.

This 2007 annual report aims to document the work that RAVI undertook in the Initiative's six objective areas:

1. Vulnerable groups exercising voice and demanding rights;
2. Grassroots organizations engaging with local government;
3. CSOs engaging with government at the regional and national levels;
4. Strengthening of coalitions/networks for engagement with government;
5. Enhancing the capacity of CSOs to engage with government; and
6. Documenting and sharing the lessons learnt

In addition to documenting and sharing RAVI's work in the first five areas enumerated above, the report seeks to capture some of the interesting experiences in the 2007 grant making process - the last during this current phase of the Rights and Voice Initiative.

The report also critically examines RAVI's finances. This includes not only the projected and actual income and expenditure for the period but also the bigger picture of how the Initiative has fared in terms of the total income and expenditure since the commencement of the project.

2.0 TOWARDS ACHIEVING RAVI's OBJECTIVES

2.1 *Vulnerable and Excluded Groups Exercising Voice and Demanding Rights*

“BEWDA’s work with us has exposed us to interact with the District Assembly. This interaction led us to know that 5% of the District Assembly Common Fund has been allocated to Persons with Disabilities. We are happy that we will have access to this facility and also now have a sense of belonging within this community.” Robert Assa (male, 56 years) – physically disabled

The above quotation provides evidence of the extent to which the work of some RAVI Grant Partners has led to an increase in the self-confidence and assertiveness of several vulnerable groups to continuously demand their rights from duty bearers. During the year under review, there was a significant increase in the number of vulnerable groups making representations to public institutions, private companies or traditional authorities on issues related to their rights. A case in point is that of farmers in the Adansiman area (Obuasi and its environs) where the Adansiman Oil Palm Growers Association (AMOPGA), was successful in exerting pressure on the mining companies to pay compensation to the farmers for the use of their farmlands, resulting in the mining company ‘Anglo Gold Ashanti’ increasing the compensation paid to the farmers. Similarly, through the advocacy work of the Bunso Voice of the Youth (an Ark Foundation CBO), the Electricity Company of Ghana was compelled to upgrade and extend electricity to the entire Bunso township in the Eastern Region.

There is also to support the fact that employers of domestic assistants are entering into formal contractual arrangements with their employees (through the offer of letters of appointments) as a result of the intense campaigns by LAWA Alumnae Ghana Incorporated (a RAVI grant partner) on the rights of domestic workers in general and that of domestic assistants in particular.

Additionally, the Single Mothers Association (SMA) and Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM), two local NGO partners of BEWDA have been campaigning for the rights of single mothers and their children, widows and orphans. The project has enabled them to bring together these vulnerable groups, chiefs (traditional power holders) and local government officials in order to discuss the plight of single mothers, widows and orphans. As a result of these campaigns by BEWDA and its partners, traditional rulers in the Bolgatanga Municipality and the Bongo District have agreed to pass a resolution prohibiting cultural and traditional practices that negatively affect the rights of these groups. These practices include widows rites, the denial of the right to inheritance of children born out of the ‘sister-in-bed’¹ relationships, the practice of sister-in-bed, etc.

¹ The ‘sister in bed’ is cultural practice where young girls are forced to go to bed with distant relatives to ensure the continuation of the family line where there are no male children born to a family

2.2 Grassroots Organizations Engaging with Local Government

As indicated in the introduction to this report, a key objective of RAVI is to ensure that there are strong grassroots organizations that are capable of engaging with the decentralized local government structures (in this case the district assemblies) for the promotion, protection, respect for and fulfillment of the rights of citizens within the respective districts. RAVI does this by providing funding to a number of “Intermediary RAVI Grant Partners” who in turn provide grants to CBOs and LNGOs in addition to supporting their capacity development mostly through training, to be able to engage with the assemblies on issues of concern to their constituencies.

One of the many intermediary partners that did some work in supporting grassroots organizations to engage with local government authorities during the period was BElim Wussa Development Association (BEWDA) in the Garu/Tempane and Bawku West Districts, and Bawku and Bolagatanga Municipalities, all in the Upper East Region.

Prior to the commencement of BEWDA’s support to the Zuuri Organic Vegetable Farmers Association (ZOVFA), a CBO that engages with the Bawku Municipal Assembly, communities in the area generally thought it was the duty of government to provide all their needs such as roads, schools, boreholes, clinics, etc. without them demanding these facilities. It therefore came as a surprise to them when ZOVFA started the consultation meetings with them and it came to light that they had the right to demand these facilities. For many communities, it seemed unimaginable for them to engage with the Municipal Chief Executive and other duty bearers to demand facilities that had been denied them for decades.

After the initial consultations, all the communities elected 7 representatives each from the four villages (Zaago, Azumsapeliga, Tansia and Tetauko) who were then supported by ZOVFA to undergo training on such areas as rights-based approaches to development, and lobbying and advocacy, intended to enhance the capacity of grassroots groups to take up issues of concern to their areas with the local government.

“I am so proud of myself to have stood before dignitaries to present issues bothering my community and this has given me more courage to advance these till our voices are heard.”

Member Mr. Abugri Joseph

Having gone through these capacity building training the communities, led by their representatives, began the engagement process through the convening of dialogue sessions/forums with the municipal authorities. At one of such forums attended by the community representatives, staff of ZOVFA and officials of the Bawku Municipal Assembly and other duty bearers, the community representatives presented their development challenges to the Assembly following which the staff of the Assembly pledged to include their issues in their Annual and Medium Term Development Plans for implementation.

As a follow up to the earlier forum, another session was convened a few weeks later with officials of the municipal assembly to re-echo their previous demands at which it was confirmed that their concerns had been included in the Assembly’s Annual and Medium

Term Development Plans as they had previously promised during the first durbar and this was subsequently confirmed by ZOVFA staff when they received a copy of the Assembly's Medium Term Development Plan.

Another intermediary RAVI grant partner (RGP) that worked tirelessly to support a number of CBOs (including Akooko Traders Association) in the East Akim District of the Eastern Region to engage the District Assembly was the Ark Foundation. For many years the Akooko community relied on a single stream that flowed through the town as their only source of water. The stream always dried up during the harmattan season, leaving the community without water. As a result, the Akooko Traders Association, acting as representatives of the community and with support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) engaged with the East Akim District Assembly asking for support to sink boreholes - 90% of the cost of which was borne by DANIDA, whilst the Assembly paid for the remaining 10%.

Initially, the community wanted four boreholes strategically placed around the town to facilitate easy access for all residents in the community. However, a feasibility survey/study indicated that all four would have to be located at one particular part of the town - with the right water table - thus compelling them to site all four boreholes at the one location.

Just when the sinking of the boreholes began, construction work also commenced on the Accra-Kumasi highway, unfortunately as a community close to this highway, the settlement was tragically separated from the boreholes by the new road thus compelling the inhabitants to cross the road in order to fetch water with the attendant risks of people getting knocked down by cars plying this principal road.

To forestall this danger, the Association got the Eastern Regional Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) engineers to review what could be done to salvage the situation. Following their visit to the community and conducting an assessment, they recommended the mechanisation of the boreholes to ensure that people got water in their homes without having to cross the traffic-jammed road. In spite of this recommendation, nothing was done about the mechanization process, compelling the community representatives to shuttle for two years between the East Akim District Assembly and the Eastern Regional office of Community Water and Sanitation Agency to get them fulfill their obligations – but to no avail, thus compelling the Association to give up the hope of ever having their water system mechanised.

Following the commencement of the Ark Foundation's "Rights, Empowerment, Access and Participation (REAP)" project, the Akooko Traders Association, decided to re-ignite the water mechanisation process. Their first point of call was again the Community Water and Sanitation Agency, where they discussed the issue in detail. In addition to discussing the issue with the CWSA, the association met with three sub-committees (the Social Services, Finance and Administration, and Works) of the East Akim District Assembly to impress upon them the need to facilitate the mechanisation process. As a consequence of this intensive engagement process, the District Assembly incorporated the mechanisation

process into the Assembly's 2007 annual plan and budget which resulted in the project been put out to tender in the early part of 2007 with the active participation of some community members in the tender process.

To ensure the speedy execution of the project, the Association made several follow up visits to the CWSA offices in the regional capital during which they were informed that the CWSA had asked one consulting firm (PHIBITA Consult) to conduct the feasibility study and to draw up the designs for the project. As a follow up to completion of the designs by the consultants, a community durbar was convened involving the CWSA, the District Assembly, the consultants and the community at which they were informed that the total cost of the mechanisation process stood at ₵1.5 billion with the break down of the costs. Five percent was to be shouldered by the community, five per cent to be borne by the District Assembly, whilst the bulk of the cost (ninety per cent) would be the responsibility of the CWSA. In the view of the Association the fact that they had got that far with their water mechanisation project shows that persistence in engaging duty bearers has an impact

"Persistence and perseverance are vital to the success of citizen-government engagement. They come in handy in situations such as making continuous efforts to get feedback, getting appointments for meetings and checking regularly to ensure that decisions reached at meetings are accomplished".
Seth Twum-Ampofoh, Secretary to the Akoko Traders Association

To buttress the point that persistence in engagement pays, Mr. Melvin Tagoe, the Eastern Regional Engineer of the CWSA made the point that: *"The persistent harassment by this gentleman (Seth Twum-Ampofoh) made us resolve that the project should be given to Akoko ahead of other equally qualified communities in the East Akim District."*

The Association also noted that it was as a result of their engagement with the District Assembly that their community school was chosen to pilot the Government of Ghana's (GoG's) school feeding programme and that their engagement activities had enhanced their confidence to engage with other duty bearers.

2.3 CSOs Engaging with Government at the Regional and National Levels

As a civil society support fund, an important aspect of the work of RAVI during the reporting period was the support for CSOs in engaging with the GoG and other duty bearers at the national level for the passage, amendment or repeal of laws, policies or practices of concern to society at large, or sections of it.

2.3.1 National Broadcasting Law

In line with their overall objective of streamlining the laws governing the broadcast environment in Ghana, the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) was able to engage with a number of stakeholders including the Ministry of Information and National Orientation, the National Media Commission and the National Communications

Authority for the passage of a National Broadcasting Bill into law to ensure that the airwaves are equitably allocated so as to serve the needs of all sections of society. The outcome of all these engagements has been the drafting of a broadcasting bill by the Advocacy Steering Committee during the period.

It is important to note that in spite of a number of challenges that the GCRN has contended with, including: the long period of deregulation of the broadcast environment without adequate legislation to exercise control, lack of clarity about which ministry was responsible for broadcasting, changes in ministries and functionaries, differences in perspectives and priorities of broadcasting operators, constraints on government from development partners and the bureaucratic processes involved, they were able to present proposals in the form of a draft bill to the Minister for Information and National Orientation. The Minister was to lay it before Cabinet and the Ministry of Justice for attention before being submitted to Parliament for debate prior to the passage of the bill into an Act.

2.3.2 Fiscal decentralisation

As part of their campaign effort to promote comprehensive fiscal decentralisation in Ghana, Public Agenda Communications embarked on a series of activities (mostly through workshops and forums) to engage with a number of stakeholders (the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, the Public Procurement Board, the Administrator of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), members of parliament, the Institute of Local Government Studies, etc.) to discuss the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) Act 455 and the Public Procurement Law, Act 663. In addition to these workshops/forums, they organised radio discussions on the two Acts to seek the views of the public on how they could be used to deepen fiscal decentralisation rather than hindering the decentralisation process, as they seemed to be doing in their current form.

All the workshops/forums and radio talk shows revealed that many stakeholders see the laws in their present form, as obstacles to fiscal decentralisation and would like amendments to both Acts to help facilitate the devolution of power and authority to the districts and lower level decentralised structures. In addition, their engagement on the issue of fiscal decentralisation has helped to kick-start a debate on whether or not Members of Parliament should be restricted to their traditional functions as law makers or should widen their scope and see themselves as development agents who deserve to have a 'Member of Parliament's share of the DACF'. The overwhelming evidence from consultations points to the general understanding that MPs need to stop over relying on the DACF for undertaking development projects in their constituencies by 2010.

2.3.3 Rights of persons in consensual unions

A third grant partner that undertook national level engagement during the reporting period was Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF). It identified the challenges that partners in consensual unions, particularly women, face on the death of

“Our advocacy on consensual unions, in particular law reform, has advanced quite well with the introduction of the Property Rights of Spouses Bill. The Bill has a provision on consensual unions. Our advocacy focus therefore has been to strengthen the language, provide research information to inform the memorandum to the bill and also for consideration of a legislative instrument to the law in future”. WiLDAF’s October-December 2007 quarterly report

their male partners, in addition to the increasing incidence of males in such unions abandoning their female counterparts. Such relationships are not covered by the law as a legal form of marriage. The organisation worked with a host of stakeholders including the Law Reform Commission, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), judges, the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General’s

Department to look at possible ways of securing the interests of persons in consensual unions in cases of litigation in the short term, whilst in the long run looking at how to strengthen the laws to take into account persons in consensual unions.

2.4 Strengthening Coalitions and Networks for Engagement with Government

In RAVI’s effort to promote the voice of poor and vulnerable people and support them to demand their rights, the Initiative acknowledges the fact that people’s voices are louder and better heard when they unite and speak in unison. This explains the reason why the Initiative places emphasis on strengthening coalitions and networks to enhance engagement with government and other duty bearers. RAVI has supported the strengthening of CSO coalitions like the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) which was established to campaign for the proper drafting and passage of the Domestic Violence Bill into law and to support continued advocacy to ensure its full implementation.

Another example of support to coalitions which worked to ensure the respect of the rights of the excluded during the period under review was the passing of the Disability Bill into law as a result of the joint campaigning (in a coalition) by a number of CSOs including the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD), the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Action on Disability and Development (ADD) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

In addition to the work of coalitions on the passage of the domestic violence and disability bills, RAVI also supported Forest Watch Ghana (FWG), a network of CSOs campaigning for the input of forest fringe communities into forestry policy formulation and implementation. The network also worked for the establishment of district, regional and national Forest Forums to serve as conduits for influencing policy formulation and implementation in the sector.

The intermediary RGPs are also promoting and supporting coalitions and networks at the grassroots level in diverse ways. For instance, partners of the Ark Foundation, Social Support Foundation (SSF) and Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) have facilitated the formation of networks among their CBO/LNGO partners and this has helped tremendously in the promotion of local level advocacy through the increased voice of the respective networks in engaging with the District Assemblies and other duty bearers in their respective areas of operation.

2.5 Enhancing the Capacity of CSOs to Engage with Government

Capacity building is a core element of the work RAVI does in line with the project's second broad objective of "enhancing the capacity of CSOs to engage with public institutions and articulate/represent the interests of the poor through internal transformation and lesson learning/sharing". In trying to achieve this objective, the Initiative regards capacity building as a creative and experiential process and thus maintains the focus on encouraging "learning by doing". RAVI's capacity building work has been responsive and specifically tailored to the needs of the grant partners. In the year under review, capacity building for the RGPs has happened in several interconnected ways: through the grant-making process, during regular monitoring visits to partners; through telephone and e-mail support and communication with partners, and in specific training forums/workshops (including induction events for new grantees). In addition, RAVI has provided opportunities for grantees to review and reflect through the quarterly 'Learn and Share' events.

The grant making process is also a means of building the capacity of CSOs who apply to RAVI, including those who were not successful. As in previous years, this year the organizational assessment was preceded by a self-assessment exercise undertaken by the short listed applicants, thus providing the individual organizations with the opportunity to reflect and assess themselves. This was followed up with visits by three teams composed of staff of the RAVI Secretariat and members of the Management Agency (MA) who visited the applicant organizations. The visits also provide a reflective moment for the organisations and many lessons are learnt. A good number of the applicant organisations testified to the fact that the process had been a helpful learning opportunity for them.

Another stage was added to the grant making process this year. RAVI invited applicant organisations whose expressions of interest (EoI) were short listed to a half-day pre-proposal writing meeting to explain some of the background and concepts underlying RAVI as well as what was expected in the technical and financial proposals. This improved the quality and relevance of the proposals submitted as well as providing the organisations with transferable skills they could use away from RAVI.

The quarterly visits to grant partners, besides providing the opportunity to monitor the progress of work on the respective projects, also offered the Secretariat an opportunity to discuss the work of the RGPs in--depth and to explain some concepts and approaches that the partners had difficulties with. These provided the opportunity for one-to-one mentoring support. In addition, Secretariat staff gave feedback on the state of their

financial as well as their narrative reports which helps to identify specific areas of success and improvement.

During the period under review, five capacity building events were organised in the form of training workshops for the partners. These were combined with the quarterly learn and share events, and centred on the following topics:

- Financial management
- Refresher training on RBA/PCA
- Facilitation skills
- Conflict management and resolution
- Refresher training in RBA PM&E

The intermediary RGPs also supported their CBO partners with various training activities. Through their monitoring visits to CBOs they provided them with support in the implementation of their projects, with particular focus on their engagement with duty bearers. At the individual organizational levels, RAVI offered ongoing support to RGPs and their CBOs to help them undertake appropriate documentation of their work and build on their systems, policies, procedures and practices, all with the aim of enhancing more accountable civil society organizations in Ghana that can effectively demand accountability from government and other duty bearers. One consequence of this has been that our grant partners have made substantial strides in their financial record keeping and documentation of their programme activities.



RAVI CSOs at a conflict management training workshop

2.6 Documenting and Sharing Our Lessons

The Initiative has sought to establish a strong culture of learning at all levels, and conscious efforts were made during the reporting period to document and share the lessons learnt. The RAVI Management Agency (MA) and staff of the Secretariat periodically took time out to review and reflect on the work in the year, thus offering the team the opportunity to discuss the major lessons learnt and to plan for the year ahead. The outcomes of many of these meetings were documented and shared with all stakeholders and other civil society actors in Ghana.

A number of documents including as the RAVI second² annual report, a revised M&E Guide and the Capacity Building Manual for Intermediary RGPs were produced during the year under review. In addition, the Secretariat ensured that detailed reports were written on all trainings and learning and sharing events organized by RAVI grant partners and by the Secretariat and disseminated to relevant stakeholders.

To ensure adequate coverage and appropriate documentation of the project's activities (RGPs and RAVI itself) the electronic and print media were used extensively, not only to rally public support for the issues the RGPs were advocating on but also to share and disseminate lessons learnt and the major outcomes of their engagement processes. The RAVI Annual Learn and Share Festival organized to showcase the work of the RAVI partners under the theme: "Sharing Lessons on Citizen-Government Engagement in Ghana: The RAVI Experience" took place over a three-day period from July 10 to 12 2007. It was attended by about 200 participants from over 50 organisations and created a platform for the organisations to learn from each other. It received adequate media coverage nationwide.

Additionally, the work of such organisations as Public Agenda Communications, the Institute for Policy Alternatives, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining, the Christian Council of Ghana, General Agricultural Workers' Union of the Trades Union Congress and a host of others who organized numerous activities as part of the implementation of their respective projects received good national coverage by both the electronic and print media. RAVI was invariably mentioned as the source of funding and support.

It is worth mentioning that RAVI participated in three (and hosted one) out of the four Sister Funds³ meetings, thus offering the Initiative the opportunity to share its experiences with similar fund-based organisations and also to learn from their experiences in supporting CSOs in Ghana.

² October 2005 to September 2006

³(the sister funds is a number of civil society funds such as the Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme, the Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund, Government Accountability Improves Trust, etc



Some RAVI partners sharing CGE lessons and experiences

3.0 MAIN AREAS OF LEARNING

During the period under review, many of the grant partners reported some interesting lessons that could and should inform the future direction of our efforts at promoting the culture of citizens participating in issues of public interest.

In measuring the ‘results’ of advocacy engagement, it is important to be mindful of the results chain in the project cycle; outputs, outcomes and impacts. Whereas the results of the outputs are achieved in the short term of the project cycle, the outcomes and impacts are not always immediately obvious or achievable. In light of this, it has been important for both RAVI itself and its RGPs to set realistic targets and timelines within which project goals and objectives can be achieved. The significant change or the impact on the lives of a target group can take time to register and even when it does happen, attributing change(s) to a specific intervention can be problematic.

To be able to change the uncooperative behavior and attitudes of some officials towards embracing the idea of promoting citizen-government engagement (CGE), there is the need for RAVI grant partners, particularly the Intermediaries to initiate and continue to integrate educational/awareness creation programmes on the roles and responsibilities of citizens into their work so that duty bearers can gradually come to see CSOs as allies and not adversaries. In so doing, they can easily be lobbied to respond to the demands of their constituents. At the same time, CSOs should as much as possible endeavor to respond to the immediate needs of the citizenry so as to use that as evidence of their own

responsiveness and to use that in getting duty bearers respond to similar issues demanded by the citizens.

A major lesson, particularly in the case of the Domestic Violence Coalition is that it is important to cultivate and nurture allies within agencies relevant to the organisation's area of advocacy. It was precisely because the Coalition was made up of several organisations interested in the issue of the passage of the bill into law that sufficient pressure was brought to bear on the Executive and the legislature (two powerful state institutions). This compelled them to act and culminated in the passage of the law.

Following the passage of the Disability Bill into law, the Ghana Federation of the Disabled embarked on regional round-table discussions with Ministries, Departments and Agencies. One observation they made was that more people needed to be educated about government policies, laws, regulations, etc. because it was obvious from the Ashanti regional programme that many of the Directors of the MDAs in that region were unaware of disability issues.

The experience of the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation in Ghana shows that persistent and consistent advocacy yields results. It took the Coalition and other key civil society actors a lot of effort and time to provide input into the drafting of the bill and as well as constantly engaging with the Executive and the Legislature before the passage of the law in the first quarter of 2007.

Dealing with issues likely to involve party political divisions (as in the case of Public Agenda Communications and its advocacy on the Procurement Act 2003, Act 663) can be very difficult, but with tact and a neutral, all-inclusive approach the goal can be achieved without the normal tension that is generated during the interaction of participants from opposing parties. First and foremost when facilitating such an interaction, one needs to be mindful of the presence of the opposing parties and whilst acknowledging their existence, ensure that ground rules establish the fact that discussions have to be non-political and that in all that happens, those involved need to put Ghana's interests above all partisan interests.

In the process of engaging for the passage of laws in particular but generally in advocacy, it is essential to work towards including all shades of opinion. The criticisms and opposition that the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) received in their effort to advocate for an inclusive national broadcasting law helped in fine-tuning their programme and strategies for achieving set goals and targets. It is worth noting that due to the inclusion of commercial broadcasters in the work of the Network, commercial broadcasters ceased to be opposed to the idea of a regulatory framework for broadcasting in the country.

While documenting activities and making them available in the form of newspaper supplements as some RAVI partners do is useful, an emerging lesson is that duty bearers are more responsive to pressure from the general public than to one single newspaper article raising the issue/s. On the basis of this, organising radio discussions and training

media practitioners to keep the issue/s in the public domain can be a vital move that helps to ensure that the issue/s receive the needed attention from the institutions and individuals who have a duty to attend to them.

A major lesson has been that some multinational companies, particularly mining companies have intensified their public relations machinery to ward off what they see as “negative” reportage by civil society organisations and the media on their operations. Some do this by peddling falsehoods in the communities, claiming that WACAM and other NGOs in mining advocacy are only interested in projecting their problems in order to earn more funding from sponsoring organisations in Europe and America. Although these claims are not true, they have had the effect of creating mistrust between these organisations and the communities thus distracting attention from the key issues.

Almost all of the CSOs supported by RAVI have learned that in dealing with officialdom and the ever present bureaucratic bottle-necks, they should never assume that there is a perfect communication set-up which automatically relays information up-stream and down-stream. For example, Civic Foundation (one of the third cycle of RGPs) organized a forum at which a District Chief Executive was to give the opening address but the DCE did not know of this until a few hours before the commencement of the programme. This situation arose because the District Coordinating Director had failed to communicate it to the DCE. There is therefore always the need for CSOs to follow up to be sure that those expected to execute assignments are fully aware and prepared.

Another key lesson learnt by RGPs has been that one often assumes that when people have been sensitized about particular issues or pieces of legislation, they will then be fully aware and able claim their rights under those laws but this may not always be the case. The Ghana Association of the Blind (GAB) realized that though there has been more than adequate sensitization on the Disability Act, the reality on the ground is that many blind and partially-sighted people are still unaware of or feel unable to go about claiming their rights under the law. In many cases at the district level, they do not demand their rights but rather plead for assistance or support and consider responsive officials as ‘God-sent’.

For many of the third batch of grant partners, the concepts of advocacy and citizen-government engagement are still new, and are often confused with education and sensitization. There is therefore the need to intensify their learning on advocacy strategies as a major part of the training RAVI offers.

A major lesson with advocacy at the district level is that for issues on which CSOs engage duty bearers, (particularly the district assemblies) to receive the needed attention, the lower level structures such as the area/zonal councils also need to be engaged with so that they see these issues as part of their own development agenda. In so doing, they can incorporate them into their annual plans and lobby the district assemblies to include them in their annual and medium term development plans.

In the promotion of citizen-government engagement, it is also necessary to recognize and appreciate the fact that duty bearers and duty bearing institutions have limited resources to meet the increasing demands from citizens. This implies that sometimes CSOs and civil society initiatives such as RAVI and the implementing partners have to think of how they can respond to issues emerging from citizens/CBOs/LNGOs rather than seeing their mandate as exclusively that of only building the capacity of citizens/CBOs/LNGOs to put pressure on government/public institutions to meet their obligations. This can help to neutralize the negative perceptions of some duty bearers who see CSOs as only interested in putting pressure on them rather than partners in bringing constructive change.

4.0 A BRIEF ON 2007 GRANT MAKING

4.1 Grant Making Process

The key milestones in the 2006/2007 grant making processes included the following:

4.1.1 Review of the RAVI guidelines on grant making

The review was undertaken to update the guideline documents themselves and at the same time also update the information that was posted on the RAVI website regarding how to access RAVI funding. This was done in order to incorporate lessons learnt from the previous two grant making processes and to also indicate the changes in the funding brackets as these were markedly different from the earlier two rounds of grant making, based on RAVI's experience of the realistic spending rate of the first two cycles of grant partners.

4.1.2 Publication of requests for EoIs in the Daily Graphic

RAVI advertises in the *Daily Graphic* as the newspaper with the widest circulation countrywide and therefore anything appearing in this paper stands a better chance of being accessible to RAVI's target audience – the CSOs. In addition, copies of the guidelines were deposited in all ten regional capitals - in ActionAid Ghana's 7 regional offices and at the offices of SNV, Care International and PDA in the regions where AAIG has no regional programme as well as the Centre for Development Studies, University Cape Coast.

4.1.3 Sifting and review of expressions of interest

Considering the large number of organizations submitting EoIs, it was thought prudent to do an initial sifting out of those organizations that had EoIs that were not in line with the Initiative's purpose of promoting CGE or did not meet the criteria for applicants. This way effort could be focused on reviewing the remaining EoIs that were in consonance

with the RAVI objectives, purpose and goal. In all, the Secretariat received one hundred and nine (109) EoIs, out of which twenty six (26) were short listed for the proposal stage.

4.1.4 Half-day pre-proposal meeting

Having reviewed the EoIs and identified the 26 CSOs who had met the criteria for selection, a half-day pre-proposal meeting was organized at Royal Ravico Hotel, Nungua, Accra for participants to be taken through what was expected of them regarding their narrative and financial proposals. In addition, participants were informed about the next steps in the grant making process from the pre-proposal training to the signing of MoUs with those CSOs selected to receive funding.

4.1.5 Organizational assessments

As a first step in getting acquainted with the prospective RGPs, three teams – Accra, Middle and Northern teams – visited the organizations in these zones to have a first hand presentation, in context, of their plans for CGE work, as well as a feel of how they operate as institutions so as to avoid situations where funding will be channeled to individuals rather than organizations.

4.1.6 Drafting and submission of technical and financial proposals

As a key part of the process, the respective organizations wrote and presented comprehensive narrative and financial proposals to the secretariat by the deadline of May 11, 2007. This helped the Secretariat and the Steering Committee (SC) in reviewing their respective documents and assessing whether the CSOs had appropriate and realistic strategies and budgets for carrying the projects they had proposed.

4.1.7 Review of proposals by Grants Sub Committee

The three members of the Steering Committee who form the Grants Sub-Committee individually reviewed the proposals that were submitted. This process was followed by a conference discussion on the quality of the proposals based on the criteria established for the review purpose. The Steering Committee recommended eleven organisations for consideration as grant partners for the third and final call of the first five-year phase of RAVI.

4.1.8 Negotiations with prospective grant partners

Following the selection of these organizations, a team from the Secretariat visited the 11 organisations to discuss with each individually the strategies they intended to employ in the implementation of their respective projects and if necessary, to negotiate a revision of these, together with their accompanying budgets. Many of these were based on the comments and recommendations of the Grant Sub and Steering Committees.

4.1.9 Final approval by the RAVI Steering Committee

On the conclusion of the negotiation process, the SC met on August 23, 2007, and gave formal approval to the 11 organisations they had identified at the proposal review stage to partner with RAVI for the 2007-2009 funding cycle. These were:

1. Ghana Association of the Blind (GAB)
2. Association of People for Practical Life Education (APPLE)
3. Centre for Active Development (CAD)
4. Civic Foundation (CIVFO)
5. Foundation for Female Photojournalists
6. Friends of the Nation (FON)
7. Northern Network for Education Development (NNED)
8. Ghana Network for Peace building (GHANEP)
9. Drama Network
10. Community Development and Advocacy Centre (CODAC)
11. PAMOJA Ghana

4.1.10 Orientation and Signing of MoUs

A one-week (August 27 to 31 2007) orientation workshop was organized at Chances Hotel in Ho in the Volta Region, to introduce the new grant partners to the RAVI systems/procedures/requirements and to the Initiative as a whole. Each of the 11 newly selected partner organizations were represented by three members of staff – the CEOs, the accountants and the coordinators of the respective projects. Immediately following the orientation, the 11 partner organizations signed MOUs with RAVI to establish formal contractual relationships for the implementation of the 2 year projects

4.2 THIRD CYCLE OF RAVI GRANT PARTNERS



Third batch of RAVI partners undergoing orientation at chances Hotel at Ho



	Grantee	Issue for Engagement	Geographical Location of Project	Approved Budget (Accountable Grant)
1	Association of People for Practical Life Education (APPLE)	Prevention of child trafficking	Volta, Brong Ahafo and Central Regions	£42,571.05
2	Centre for Active Development (CAD)	Citizens participation in effective local revenue mobilisation and utilization for development	Brong Ahafo Region: Asutifi and Tano South Upper East Region: Garu-Tempene and Bawku West	£41,780.97
3	Civic Foundation (CIVFO)	The Judicial Accountability Project. The core component of the project is to monitor Ghana's judiciary in order to make it effectively accountable to the people of the country	Central Region: Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abirem District (Elmina) & Agona dist (Swedru) Greater Accra Region: Ga West District (Amasaman) & Dangme West (Dodowa) Volta Region: North Tongu District (Adidome) & Sogakope District astern region: Suhum Craboia Koaltar (Suhum) & West Akim (Asamankese) WESTERN REGION: Ahanta West District (Agona Ahanta) & Nzema East (Axim)	£61,905.33
4	CODAC	Enhancing the capacity of LNGOs and CBOs to engage with the government and other duty bearers	Bongo, Talensi/Nabdram, Builsa and Bawku west Districts all in the Upper East Region,	£64,941.84
5	Drama Network	Enhancing the capacity of LNGOs and CBOs to engage with the government and other duty bearers	Asuogyaman, Yilo Krobo, Manya Krobo, Akwapim North and Akwapim South Districts all in the Eastern Region	£65,000.00
6	Foundation For Female Photojournalists (FFP)	Initiating an engagement process that will empower community members to participate in local governance as well as create a forum for Assembly Members to	Implementation in some selected Districts in Greater Accra, Ashanti, Eastern and Western Regions with national level engagement with the Parliamentary select Committee on local government	£78,658.27

		demand remuneration from government		
7	Friends of the Nation (FoN)	“Community Rights and Voice for Sustainable Fisheries Management”: to promote collaborative fisheries resources management thereby contributing to poverty reduction and livelihood improvement in coastal communities	In the coastal Regions of Ghana – Greater Accra, Volta, Central and Western Regions	£61,114.06
8	Ghana Association of the Blind (GAB)	Full inclusion of blind and partially sighted persons in family, community & district spheres	In Central, Volta, Eastern, Upper West, Upper East and Western Regions	£61,333.34
9	Ghana Network for Peace Building (GHANEP)	Advocacy to increase the allocation to and use of District and Regional level budgets for peace building	Upper West, Upper East, Northern, Brong Ahafo, Volta and Ashanti Regions	£69,952.53
10	Northern Network for Education Development (NNED)	Education Resources Advocacy Project (ERAP)facilitating directly accountable and participatory systems of efficient management of education budgets	West Mamprusi, Tolon Kumbungu and Nanumba North in Northern Region as well as Nadowli and Sissala East in the Upper West Region	£50,000.00
11	Reflect Practitioners’ Network (PAMOJA GHANA)	Empowering CBOs/LNGOs to engage government on issues that infringe on their basic rights through the use of the REFLECT approach to adult literacy.	The project is being implemented in the Okai-Koi North, Ashaiman Municipality and Ga East in the Greater Accra Region and in the Ewutu-Efutu and Gomoa Districts in the Central Region.	£79,443.33

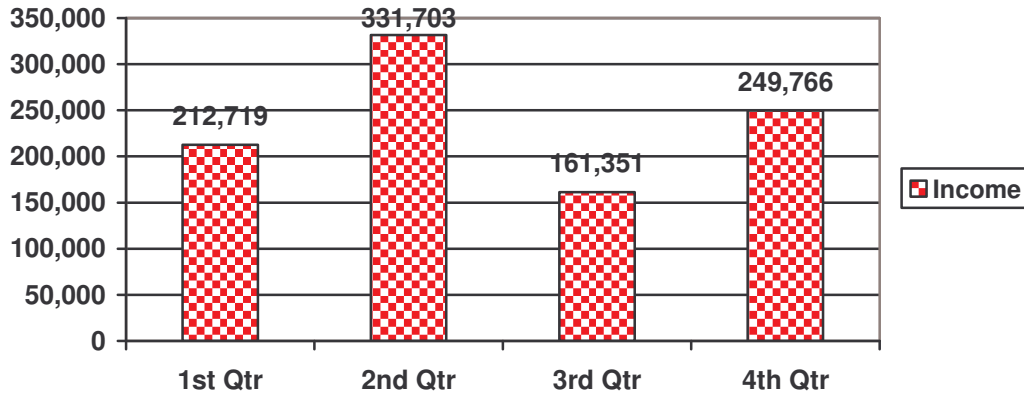
5.0 FINANCE

5.1 Introduction

Notwithstanding some challenges faced, the year under review went according to plan in terms of the finances of the Initiative largely as a result of the fact the Secretariat was able to successfully manage all issues regarding the project's finances. The year witnessed the abrogation of contracts with 2 of the first batch of RGPs because of concerns about the manner in which they handled their financial transactions. Apart from these two, four of the first batch of grant partners successfully completed the activities they had set out to undertake in the implementation of their projects as indicated in their project proposals. RAVI also ushered in 11 new RGPs for the third and final call under the current phase of the project. The planned financial management training for our grant partners in response to the 2005 audit query were also successfully carried out during the reporting period.

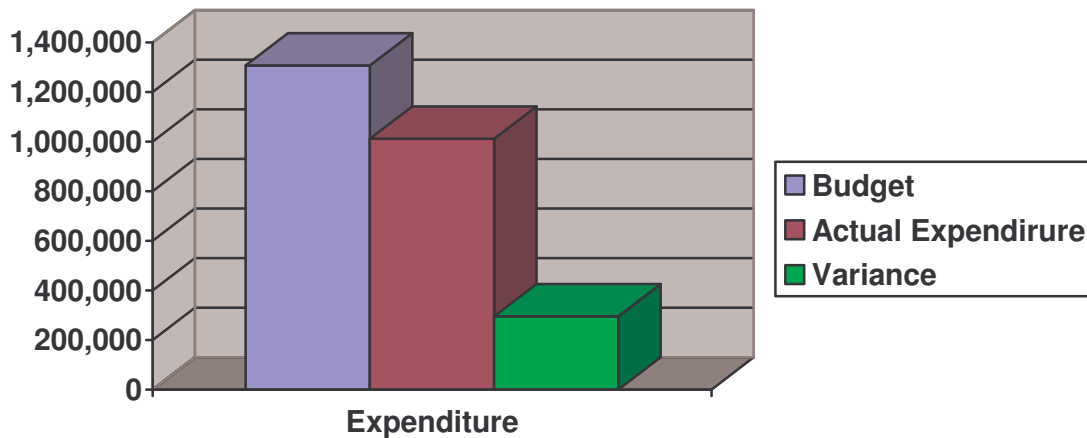
5.2 Income

Total funds received from DfID for the year (October 2006 to September 2007) amounted to £955,539 representing 73% of the annual plan. Below is a table showing the break-down of the receipt of funds per quarter.



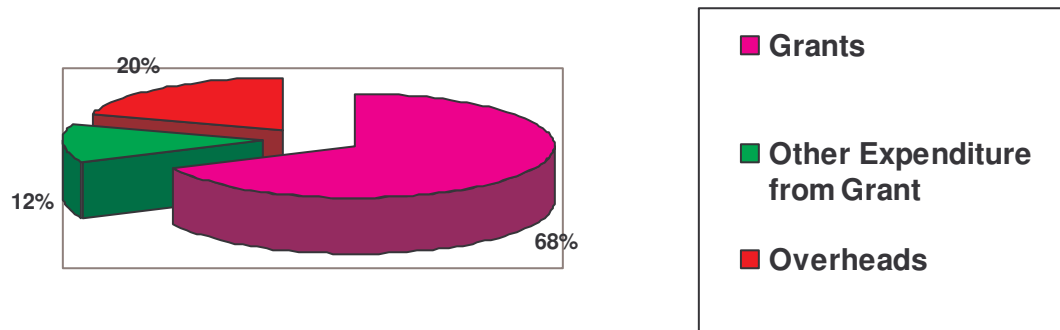
5.3 Planned expenditure as against actual expenditure

The total planned expenditure for the period was £1,307,120 as against actual expenditure of £1,012,032.21 representing 77% utilisation. The remaining 23% which is a balance of £295,087.79 has been rolled over to the subsequent financial year. The majority of the underutilization was as a result of RGPs being unable to carry out planned activities. Below is a graph showing the break-down of planned expenditure as against actual expenditure.



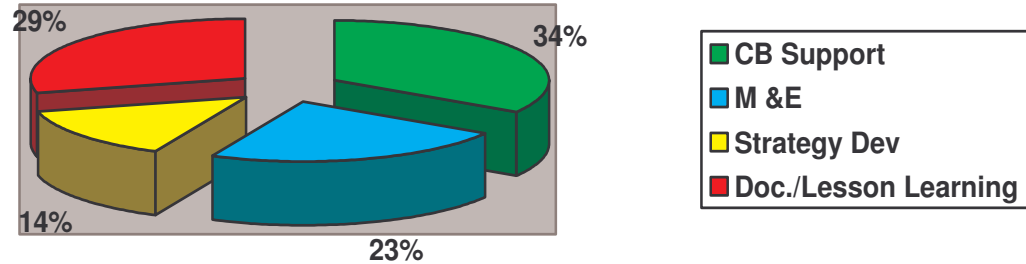
As stated earlier, total expenditure was £1,012,032.21 as against planned expenditure of £1,307,120 resulting in a variance of £295,087.79. Total utilization for the year was 77%. Out of the total variance of £295,087.79, Grants to CSOs accounted for the bulk amount of £185,440.76 representing 63% of the total variance. Other expenditure from grants and management cost contributed 16% and 21% respectively. However, it is worth noting that the total expenditure this year has shown an increase of 6% over last years expenditure and 16% increase over the Year 1 expenditure.

5.3.1 Actual expenditure classification by major budget lines



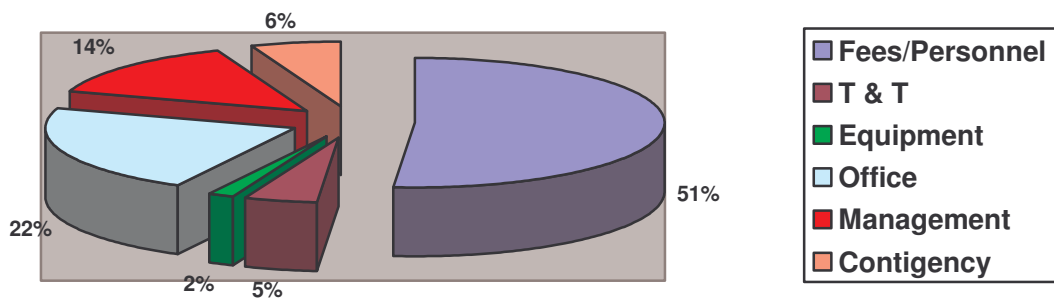
The majority of RAVI's expenditure is on grants to CSOs for citizen-government engagement. As depicted in the chart above, as much as 68% of the total expenditure went into grants to CSOs alone. Only 20% was incurred as overhead/management cost which is far below the agreed level allowed in the RAVI Project Memorandum of DfID. 12% of the expenditure went to support to the CSOs in the form of technical support, skills training in RBA, Advocacy, M&E etc to improve their internal organizational structures and to execute effective engagements. Below are charts showing the break down of some of the major budget lines.

5.3.2 Other expenditure from grants or support to grants



As shown on the chart above, these are the expenditures incurred as support to the grants to CSOs in the form of direct capacity support for the CSOs to claim rights (tailored training programmes), monitoring and evaluation, grant making, documentation and sharing /learning lessons on the grants implementation.

5.3.3 Management/Direct overheads



The chart above shows the break down of all expenditure incurred for the smooth running of the secretariat/management. It is made up of Fees/personnel Cost, Travel and Transport, Non-expendable equipment, other Direct/Office Cost, Contingency and other management cost.

5.4 Comparison of PM targets with actual expenditure to date (Oct 2004-Sept 2007)

Budget Line	PM Target %	% of Actual expenditure
Fees/Personnel	11	9
Travel and Transport	2	1
Non-Expendable equipment	2	3
Other Office Cost	4	4
TOTAL DIRECT COST	19	17
Contingency	1	1
Other Management Cost	4	4
TOTAL OVERHEAD COST	23	22
Grants to CSOs	62	63
Other expenditure from Grants	15	16
TOTAL PROGRAMME COST	77	79
TOTALS	100	100

The table above shows the percentage of total actual expenditure to date (Oct 2004-Sept 2007) as against the 2004 Project Memorandum (PM) target. As can be seen from the table RAVI is faring well as far as meeting the targeted expenditure is concerned. RAVI hopes to continue working hard to ensure that it is within the target until the end of the phase one of the project in September 2009.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Contact Details

The RAVI Web Site

www.ravighana.org

The RAVI website provides:

- A resource library with specific information and resources on civil society engagement, RBA, tool-kits and manuals, M&E, advocacy, capacity building, public accountability and more
- RAVI grant partner documentation such as quarterly reports and annual reviews
- RAVI events calendar, news clips and e-bulletins

RAVI Secretariat

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6.2 First and second cycles of RAVI grant partners

	Year One RAVI Grant Partners (funded from August 2005)		Year Two RAVI Grant Partners (funded from August 2006)
1	<u>CEPIL – Centre for Public Interest Law</u> (Accountable Grant £149,159) Public interest litigation for communities affected by mining	<u>1</u>	<u>Youth Alive</u> (Accountable Grant £60,000) Campaign against the economic, social and cultural causes of youth migration from the north and advocacy for the rights and protection of street children
2	<u>GCRN – Ghana Community Radio Network</u> (Accountable Grant £100,000) Campaign on community radio law amendment	<u>2</u>	<u>Public Agenda Communications</u> (Accountable Grant £80,000) Monitoring, reporting and provoking public debate on decentralisation and financial resource management issues at the district level
3	<u>CEDEP – Centre for the Development of People</u> (Accountable Grant £99,968) Independent monitoring of the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme	<u>3</u>	<u>GAWU – General Agricultural Workers’ Union</u> (Accountable Grant £80,000) Promoting citizen’s engagement on trade and related food security policies
4	<u>GFD – Ghana Federation of the Disabled</u> (Accountable Grant £80,000) Advocacy on a national disability law – ensuring inputs of disabled people into drafting of Disability Bill and mounting sustained campaign for its passage and implementation	<u>4</u>	<u>WILDAF – Women in Law and Development in Africa</u> (Accountable Grant £60,000) Promoting rights in partners in consensual unions
5	<u>FWG – Forest Watch Ghana</u> (Accountable Grant £87,489) Campaign for the rights of communities to forest resources.	<u>5</u>	<u>CCG – Christian Council of Ghana</u> (Accountable Grant £80,000) Rights and protection of children against trafficking and abuse
6	<u>IPA – Institute for Policy Alternatives</u> (Accountable Grant £149,990) Social accountability initiatives – production of ‘Community Voices’ as an alternative to the GPRS APR and evidence based advocacy.	<u>6</u>	<u>*SSF – Social Support Foundation</u> (Accountable Grant £69,988) Empowering disadvantaged people and CBOs in the mining area of Obuasi in Ashanti region on their rights to effectively participate; and demand their share towards community development
7	<u>WACAM – Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining</u> (Accountable Grant £80,400) Strengthening voices of communities affected by mining.	<u>7</u>	<u>*Pronet North</u> (Accountable Grant £80,000) Build the capacity of CBOs to promote citizens’ engagement with public and private service providers using rights-based approaches to ensure the delivery of responsive services and improved accountability
8	<u>NETCU – National Network of Civic Unions</u> (Accountable Grant £54,413) Research/campaign on	<u>8</u>	<u>*GDCA - Ghanaian Danish Communities Association</u> (Accountable Grant £69,952.53) Enhanced citizen-government engagement in the Rural Tamale Metropolis and the Saboba-Chereponi

	strengthening accountability of District Chief Executives to citizens		District in relation to the respect, protection and fulfilment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights
9	<u>NCDVLG – Ghana Domestic Violence Coalition</u> (Accountable Grant £40,090) Campaign for the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill		
10	<u>LAWA – Alumnae Ghana Incorporated</u> (Accountable Grant £79,268) Advocacy on the rights and protection of domestic servants		
11	<u>*CIKOD – Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development</u> (Accountable Grant £141,448.69) Contribute to creating an assertive and proactive rural sector through capacity building, grant disbursement and technical support to rural communities		
12	<u>*BEWDA - Belim Wusa Development Agency</u> (Accountable Grant £125,000) Capacity building of CBOs/NGOs in the area of reducing poverty in the Upper East Region through citizens' engagements with Government of Ghana		
13	<u>*SIMLI AID</u> (Accountable Grant £100,000) Facilitating processes for CBOs and local NGOs to demand social services from duty bearers and monitoring and documenting these citizen-government engagement initiatives across five districts in the northern region		
14	<u>*ARK Foundation</u> (Accountable Grant £108,000) Strengthening CBOs and Community associations to be efficient (organisational capacity building) and effective in implementing their stated issues for the benefit of the people (programme development, design and implementation).		

15	<u>*LRC – Legal Resources Centre</u> (Accountable Grant £136,219.52) Capacity building of CBOs in RBA and provides legal and mobilisation skills to each CBO for backstopping and technical assistance		
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*Intermediary RAVI grant partner

6.3 Grantees who concluded their projects during the period

Grantee	Issue for Engagement	Location	Date of project Completion
CEPIL – Centre for Public Interest Law	Public interest litigation for communities affected by mining	Accra	30 th June 2007
CEDEP – Centre for the Development of People	Independent monitoring of the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme	Kumasi	30 th June 2007
FWG – Forest Watch Ghana	Campaign for the rights of communities to forest resources	Accra	30 th June 2007
IPA – Institute for Policy Alternatives	Social accountability initiatives – production of ‘Community Voices’ as an alternative to the GPRS APR?? and evidence based advocacy	Tamale	30 th June 2007
WACAM – Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining	Strengthening voices of communities affected by mining	Tarkwa	30 th June 2007
NCDVLG – Ghana Domestic Violence Coalition	Campaign for the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill	Accra	30 th August 2007



Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI)

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