

# **Developing Good Governance in the Niger Delta**

**Nigeria**

**GTF No 309**

**Mid Term Review conducted for Living Earth Foundation**

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*This is an independent project review report of Developing Good Governance in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The team leader was Ally Bedford, a NSCE International consultant supplied to Living Earth Foundation. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of NSCE International.*

## Programme Identification Details

<b>GTF Number</b>	GTF 309
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<b>Name of Lead Institution</b>	Living Earth Foundation
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<b>List all implementing partners in each country</b>	Living Earth Nigeria Foundation Academic Associates PeaceWorks Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
<b>Target groups- wider beneficiaries</b>	<b>Target Groups:</b> Key LGA project implementers – 370, LGA politicians – 150, State Government officials – 45, Accountability Corp members – 60 youths, CSOs and community leaders – 500, Drama group members - 60 <b>Wider beneficiaries:</b> 80,000 inhabitants benefit from grants disbursed to 40 communities, 11 million citizens of the 3 States benefit from increased awareness on good governance 1.5 million citizens of the 6 LGAs benefit from improved governance,
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<sup>1</sup> Date LEF grant agreement was signed.

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## *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

AAPW	Academic Associates PeaceWorks
ARS	Achievement Rating Scale
CAR	Capability, Accountability, Responsiveness
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Community Development Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDGND	Developing Good Governance in the Niger Delta
DFID	Department for International Development (UK Government)
DGG	Developing Good Governance
EU	European Union
GTF	Governance and Transparency Fund
HoD	Head of Department
Hon.	Honourable
HPM	Head of Personnel Management
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IHRHL	Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
IR	Inception Report
JAAC	Joint Account Allocation Committee
LEEDS	Local Government Economic Empowerment & Development Strategy
LENF	Living Earth Nigeria Foundation
LG	Local Government
LGA	Local Government Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MNSE	Member, Nigerian Society of Engineers
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOV	Means of verification
MPP3	European Union funded Micro Programme and Projects
MTR	Mid-term Review
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NULGE	National Union of Local Government Employees
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers
OYDP	Ogoni Youth Development Project
PCR	Project Completion Report
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal/
RSSDA	Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency
RVSG	Rivers State Government
SDN	Stakeholder Democracy Network
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound
STAND	Support to Transparency and Accountability in the Niger Delta
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TOR	Terms of Reference

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT DEVELOPING GOOD GOVERNANCE PROJECT IN THE NIGER DELTA

#### Objectives and background of the project

This report provides a mid-term assessment of the progress made by the developing good governance (DGG) project in delivering the purpose, outputs, and activities contained in the project's logical framework. The five year (2008 – 2013) project funded by DFID under the Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) is seeking to build the capacity of six Local Government Areas (LGAs) to deliver needs-driven services, and to support Civil Society to hold LGAs to account. The project aims to encourage collaboration between government and civil society in the Niger Delta in order to improve governance and transparency and by so doing, improve the delivery of basic services critical to the reduction of poverty and fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

The lead Implementing Partner – Living Earth Nigeria Foundation (LENF) has been collaborating with two other experienced NGOs [Academic Associate PeaceWorks (AAPW), and Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL)] to bring about change through five major output areas:

- Implementation of Local Government Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (LEEDS)
- Civil Society Capacity Building
- Local Government Information Dissemination
- Decentralisation of Resource Control
- Promotion of Core Values.

These outputs have various activities which are in varying levels of implementation. The first half of the project's life has mainly focused on capacity building. Practical action focusing on planning and implementation of pilot sustainable development projects in the 6 LGAs is commencing during the second half.

#### Objectives of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) mission:

The specific purposes of the mid-term review are to:--

- Provide an independent assessment of the progress and performance of the DGG Project to date against targets
- Measure and report on achievements and early signs of change and impact
- Indicate adjustments and changes that need to be made to ensure success
- Analyse the cost effectiveness of the different approaches taken
- Review the project's risk analysis

#### Work plan and Methodology of the MTR mission:

The mid-term evaluation was carried out by a team of two consultants (an International team leader and a national team member), assisted by seven Interns. Altogether the mission took 32 consultancy days and 55 Intern days for planning, desk research, design of survey instruments, training days, data collection, focus group discussions/meetings, data analysis and report writing.

The desk research involved a review of the project plan, annual reports, baseline studies, logframe, and internal monitoring data. Field trips for data collection were preceded by the development of

various survey instruments (both quantitative and qualitative survey instruments), and the training of the MTR field team in data collection techniques.

The field data from over 1000 interviews in the 6 LGAs covered by the project and additional 3 LGAs (1 per state) not covered by the project as a control measure, was entered into a database and sorted according to theme and location, and analysed to form the key findings of this report.

### **Key Findings:**

The MTR team came to the overall conclusion that the DGG project had satisfied all DFID's assessment criteria; and the MTR team recommend that the project continues. The Implementing Partners have begun to achieve positive results, make an impact at all ends of the spectrum and provide value for money in very difficult circumstances.

The MTR team confirmed that the project is relevant, with wide ranging and far reaching impacts. Following initial teething problems of staffing with the implementing partners, the job of efficiently coordinating the project activities is now underway.

The methodologies employed for project implementation are impressive and tailored for specific and wide ranging needs of the stakeholders except that budgetary limitations have at times constrained post initiative support and expansion to a wider audience. The various initiatives have the potential of being sustained and financed by the LGAs. The gender balance and integration of women into the various project activities have been very successful. The youths have also been embraced while efforts are being made to involve the old and other vulnerable groups. The MTR team observed that the will and passion of the citizens for change, demonstrates that the programme could be replicated in other LGAs with ease.

A major output of the DGG project was predicated on the availability and accessibility of the LEEDS document which unfortunately was not available. The Implementing Partners therefore worked with the LGAs to formulate Development Strategy documents with Action plans in lieu of the LEEDS document.

Externally accredited training modules were prepared and delivered to support the implementation of the development strategy. Substantial progress has been made in building the capacity of the key and relevant LGA officials. The engagement with both the civil servants and political leaders was considered to be a very positive achievement.

Training the CBOs and the community people is an innovation in the project environment. Particularly, empowering the local citizens to participate in project planning and implementation will reduce the incidences of "abandoned" projects. The establishment and training of Accountability Corps members will enhance the citizen's ability to challenge the status quo, bad practices and poor performance of LGA Officials and Contractors.

Some notable and visible impacts of the project activities and interventions such as the various training programmes; Good Governance Forums; design and development of communication strategies, including the Websites and Directory of Services; promotion of core values; and establishment of the Challenge Fund include:

- Adoption of bottom-up and participatory approach to development
- Improved interrelationships between the Government and the Governed
- Positive change of mind-set among the citizenry
- Improved capacities of LGAs and CSOs
- Awareness of Grassroots through the challenge fund, radio programme and literary competitions.

## **Future of the Good Governance Developing**

The various project activities have the potential for: increasing relevance in the Niger Delta; replication; sustainability; and promoting equitable development.

The project has started to make an impact and begun to increase the awareness of good governance issues that hitherto had not been questioned. There is mostly a feeling of optimism about the future of good governance at the Grassroots.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

The MTR team observed that the Implementing Partners have fulfilled the elements of the DGG project and satisfied all DFID's assessment criteria up to date. Some internal and external constraints to implementation were recognised, and potential improvement identified and noted for necessary actions. The following recommendations have been made in order to improve and optimise the second half of project implementation.

- The Implementation team should further encourage the LGAs to make the LEEDS document available and accessible in order to synchronise development with the 2 upper tiers (State and Federal) of government of Nigeria.
- Implementation Partners should follow-up the training beneficiaries more rigorously so as to reinforce the learned skills, and the transfer of the skills to the workplace.
- LGAs and CSOs should be sensitised to visit the website. The web address should be well publicised. The website Maintenance Manager should continuously upload new information into the website.
- LGAs should be continuously encouraged to upgrade the LGA Directory of services. Public Relation officials could raise funds through advertising from local businesses to support the website maintenance as well as Directory update.
- It is suggested that there is continued support for all the stakeholders throughout the full development cycle of the Challenge Fund projects including its initial stage, maintenance and also help communities implement a monitoring and evaluation process.
- Transparency and accountability are central to good governance. LGAs should be accountable enough to declare their scorecards periodically, and upload information on income, expenditure, annual reports and accounts for public consumption in the website.
- The GGF should be more inclusive to take care of equity and diversity. Youths and disabled people should be more equitably represented at the GGF. Minutes and communiqué of the GGF meetings should be well documented while ideas and information generated at the GGF should be used to better governance. For sustainability, efforts should be made to ensure that the GGF is not high-jacked by individuals for political or other agendas not compatible with good governance.
- "Accountability Corps" should be institutionalised. Efforts should be made to continuously engage youth groups
- The innovative approach of linking core values to good governance is desirable and should be encouraged. There is however a need for better publicity so as to extend the number of beneficiaries as well as the impact of the interventions.

- To improve communication and engender synergy among the Partners, it is suggested that the Partners set up an intranet system to compile reports, keep a diary of upcoming events and meetings, and blog each meeting or event with updates.
- Implementation Partners should have a debate, undertake a risk analysis and come to an informed decision about the fate of the unresponsive LGAs.
- Fund mobilisation should be embarked upon to support full implementation, follow through and ensure sustainability of the projects.
- The dialogue between the States and LGAs should be fostered so as to urgently address the State/LGA relationship with regards to devolution of powers, decentralisation of resource control and fiscal policies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Developing Good Governance (DGG)

The Developing Good Governance in the Niger Delta Project (GTF 309) is a five year programme seeking to build the capacity of six Local Government Authorities to deliver needs-driven services and to support civil society to hold local governments to account. Both are critical to poverty eradication and will assist towards fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

### 1.2 Project Goal

The Project goal is to contribute to the accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and meet the needs of the people in the Niger Delta more effectively.

### 1.3 Implementing Partners

The lead organisation Living Earth Foundation (LEF) and its Nigerian counterpart Living Earth Nigeria Foundation (LENF) have been collaborating with two other experienced NGOs to bring about change, namely Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW) and Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL). The DGG project is funded by DFID under the Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) initiative.

### 1.4 Programme Initiatives

Programme initiatives within the six LGAs have been focussed on participatory planning, training programmes, the development of websites and other publications on LGA information and implementation of some pilot projects in six local government authorities across three Niger Delta States using the Challenge Fund.

Working with civil society groups activities have included engagement with the LGAs through stakeholder forums, training and monitoring of projects and budgets.

A programme of cross cutting cultural activities, underlining the relationship between traditional values and good governance aimed to reinforce and embed the outcomes has also been implemented. To date this has included a literary competition on Good Governance, the writing of a 12-part radio play and the production of two music CDs on the theme of good governance.

### 1.5 Mid-Term Review

The specific purposes of the mid-term review<sup>2</sup> are to:

- Provide an independent assessment of the progress and performance of the DGG Project to date against targets.
- Measure and report on achievements and early signs of change and impact.
- Indicate adjustments and changes that need to be made to ensure success.
- Analyse the cost effectiveness of the different approaches taken.
- Review the project's risk analysis

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<sup>2</sup> See Annex 1 – MTR Terms of Reference

## 2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Desk Research

The desk research involved a review of Project plans, annual reports, baseline studies of the six pilot LGAs<sup>3</sup>, the Logframe, internal evaluation methodologies and monitoring data.

Prior to the inception of the field trips, various survey instruments were developed and the MTR field team were trained in data collection techniques<sup>4</sup>.

Using the quantitative and qualitative survey instruments, interviews were carried out with key external stakeholders including the LGA officers, politicians, CSOs and local communities of the pilot LGAs in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers States. Additionally focus group discussions were held between the LGA officers and CSO groups in each LGA. Specifically this included:

- Bayelsa State: Kolokuma / Opokuma Local Government Authority;
- Bayelsa State: Sagbama Local Government Authority;
- Delta State: Ethiope West Local Government Authority;
- Delta State: Isoko North Local Government Authority;
- Rivers State: Abua / Odua Local Government Authority;
- Rivers State: Gokana Local Government Authority.

As a control measure, local community perceptions were gathered in one LGA of each State that was not involved in the pilot programmes. These included:

- Delta State: Udu Local Government Authority;
- Bayelsa State: Yenegoa Local Government Authority;
- Rivers State: Tai Local Government Authority;

### 2.2 Collation and Analysis

The field data from over 1000 interviews was entered into a database and sorted according to theme and location and analysed to form the key findings of this report. For easy reference, much of the quantitative data has been collated as various charts found in the body of this report<sup>5</sup>.

### 2.3 Recommendations

Following the analysis of the quantitative data, interviews and comments, some recommendations were made to enhance the project.

### 2.4 Constraints

The MTR planning presented serious budgetary, timing and security challenges which the consultants have attempted to overcome. Activities of the MTR team included:

- Desk Research
- Development of Survey Instruments and Focus Group Discussion Formats
- Training of Field Staff
- Data Collection and Collation in thematic charts
- Analysis of the data
- Preliminary presentation to the Implementing Partners
- The Report Writing

<sup>3</sup> See Annex 4: States, LGAs and Wards Listing

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 3: Training Materials

<sup>5</sup> See Annex 5-16 for the surveys, results, participants and findings.

### **3 FINDINGS: Partners Implementation of the DGG Project**

#### **3.1 Overview**

The DGG Project is aimed at encouraging collaboration between government and the CSOs in the Niger Delta to engender better governance and by so doing improve the delivery of basic services critical to poverty reduction.

The MTR team came to the overall conclusion that the DGG Project had satisfied all DFID's assessment criteria. The Implementing partners have begun to achieve positive results, make an impact at all ends of the spectrum and provide value for money in very difficult circumstances.

#### **3.1.2 Relevance**

The DGG Project is particularly time-relevant, especially after two years of political uncertainty. Since the election of Umaru Yar'adua and his long term sickness, which left Nigeria without leadership, the country had become economically stagnant. With Yar'adua's death, and despite objections from the Northern elite, an important change occurred with the succession of his Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan. Significantly he was the former Governor of the Bayelsa State in the Niger Delta. Although by default, it is the first time a South-South politician has ever taken the helm in fifty years of independence, despite the economy being dominated by oil from the region. It is with a new sense of pride that there is a President from the Niger Delta and it has re-awakened hope with the electorate that finally they will get equitable development which will start to eradicate poverty in the region.

With the primaries re-confirming Jonathan's position as leader of the PDP in the up-coming elections, potentially he will have the mandate to rectify the development constraints of the region. This in turn will, or at least should, demand better governance from the State Governors, which in turn should also filter through to the Local Government Authorities.

The various training and awareness initiatives provided on transparency, accountability and better governance within the DGG Project therefore have a significant relevance for the here and now and will help to achieve the DGG project goals.

#### **3.1.3 Impact**

Astutely, the programme partners have aimed for some high profile quick wins to get the stakeholders on board with the DGG Project. Their varying skill-sets have enabled them to make significant headway in their pilot states. The initiatives which have had visibility within the LGAs include: assisting to revitalise the shelved Local Government Economic Empowerment & Development Strategy (LEEDS) and get it back on the agenda in the LGAs; the publishing of the Local Government Authority Directory, the development of LGA websites and various training programmes empowering LGA officers to manage various local development projects.

The DGG Project partners have progressed from the planning stage of local projects and are about to start utilising the Challenge Fund enabling LGA development officers to use their newly acquired skills.

The creative initiatives from the literary competition, recorded CDs using popular genres of music and the radio programmes have all made an impact with the wider stakeholders as well. At the mid-term stage, the impacts have been wide ranging and far reaching.

#### **3.1.4 Efficiency**

The programmes are co-ordinated from a central office run by the Living Earth Nigeria Foundation in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, with outreach centres now planned for their own staff and implementing partners in the LGA offices. Following teething problems of staffing with all partners, these have now been settled and the job of efficiently co-ordinating the project is now underway.

In a workshop run by LEF for the partners in October 2010, they listed the outstanding issues and developed various action plans to address them. The main challenge was in inter-communications between the delivery teams and mitigation plans include an intranet site where project information and the current status can be tracked and news updates can be efficiently delivered amongst the teams. This has demonstrated a proactive approach to constraints in delivery and improving efficiency where required.

#### **3.1.5 Effectiveness**

The methodologies employed by the various teams are impressive and tailored for the specific and wide-ranging needs of their stakeholders. However, budgetary limitations have at times constrained post initiative support and expansion to a wider audience. The budget has been further constrained with the necessity to re-introduce the Programme when local politicians have been removed or trained officers have been re-located to other LGAs.

#### **3.1.6 Sustainability**

The various initiatives have the potential of being sustained and financed by the LGAs. Certainly there is an expectation from all participants of the Stakeholders Forums that these will continue beyond the life cycle of the DGG project. In Ethiopie West, Gokana, Abua/Odual and Isoko North LGAs plans for follow up forums have already been made. Isoko North LGA is also funding a second edition of the LGA Directory, and regardless of the motivation behind this, it is deemed as a tangible illustration of the buy-in to a new order of governance.

#### **3.1.7 Value for Money**

The budget is undoubtedly very small to achieve the aims of the DGG project and efforts will need to be focussed on raising funds to continue or expand the endeavours to date. The diminishing exchange rate has also made a significant difference in what one can 'buy' for one's money. Despite these constraints, the progress made to date has undoubtedly been good value. With further efforts on the back office budget tracking, which again is already underway, it is believed that the Project, its funding and its impact are good value for money.

#### **3.1.8 Equity**

The Project partners have made a concerted effort to embrace the various stakeholders in the programme either directly in terms of the Challenge Fund, LGA training and indirectly through the radio programmes that reach out to the more remote communities. The gender balance and integration of women into the various training programmes has been very successful, and following the issuance of certificates for completion of training, more women have shown interest in participating.

The youth have also been embraced, directly through training and indirectly through the production of music CDs using popular genres to promote awareness of better governance. More opportunities are planned to reach out further into the communities as a whole, through various dramas and the cultural festivals. The initiatives undertaken to date and those planned

in the future are all part of a planned outreach to the wider stakeholders including the young, the old and the very vulnerable.

### **3.1.9 Replicability**

As discovered in the LGA 'control groups' of Tai, Udu and Yenagoa, the surveys undertaken there have also begun to raise awareness of good governance issues and respondents would welcome similar programmes rolled out in their own areas as well. The will to change, to understand more about '*how it should be*', rather than *accepting* the status quo over the last couple of decades of '*how it is*' demonstrates that the programme could be replicated in other LGAs. At that stage there will be the advantage of using the lessons learned in the pilot states.

## **3.2 Partner Capabilities**

### **3.2.2 Programme Delivery**

This is broken down in Section 4, but to date they have completed most of the programmes within the log frame – see Achievement Rating Scale in 4.8.

### **3.2.2 Adaptation to the Socio-political Environment**

At the commencement of the DGG Project, the various interventions were 'sold' on the basis of assisting in the development of better communications, which was more palatable to the LGA officers than a direct 'interference in governance issues'. This has allowed acceptance of the programme and gradual change of practice.

The poor time keeping of LGA officers has required allocating additional time for each meeting and the general apathy in the LGA work place has been addressed by persistent patience and continual interface. In most cases this has proven to be fruitful and gradually improvements have been seen.

### **3.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses**

The MTR team were impressed with the partners' ability to identify their collective strengths and weaknesses and to address them proactively. The Partner Workshop is a good example of this. It was well planned and followed through the issues with action plans, nominating specific duties for implementation. More such meetings, problem-sharing and '*blue-skying*' ideas are on the agenda. During the MTR debrief at the end of the research, the partners demonstrated their ability to share ideas and develop solutions for the current agenda.

### **3.2.4 Innovative Practice**

The manner in which the three implementation partners have developed a synergistic relationship to facilitate the good governance projects is commendable. The partnership is a unique occurrence uncommon in the Niger Delta where normally they would have been competitors.

LENF has played its coordinating role well and the project beneficiaries rated LENF very highly. AAPW has also gained considerable respect with their programme activities. They have passionately followed up the beneficiaries, particularly CSOs whilst fostering strong relationships between LGAs and CSOs.

The MTR team met them in many of the LGAs following up the "Accountability Corps" whose establishment in itself was an innovation. The "accountability corps" was established in communities and has assisted in empowering youth to monitor/track budgets and projects, challenge non-performance and other poor practices and to demand better governance.

## 4 FINDINGS: LGA and CSO Good Governance Impacts

### 4.1 Introduction

This section of this report provides a mid-term assessment of the progress made by the DGG Project in delivering output and activities contained in the project work plan.

The key findings are therefore presented and discussed under its five major outputs

- Implementation of LEEDS
- Local Government Information & Dissemination
- Decentralisation of Resource Control
- Civil Society Capacity Building
- Promoting core values.

The DGG Project is designed to work on both the supply and demand sides of governance:

- On the **supply side**, it builds the capacity of local Government to deliver effective services and inform citizens;
- On the **demand side**, it builds the capacity of CSOs to make their voice heard, make government accountable for its activities and demand change if necessary.

The first half of the project has focused mainly on capacity building initiatives. It is in the second half that tangible projects will be put in place. This will enable beneficiaries of the capacity building initiatives to put their learned skills into practical usage.

### 4.2 Promoting Better Governance and the LGAs

#### 4.2.1 Implementation of Local Government Economic Empowerment Development Strategy [LEEDS]:

Output 1 of the programme was predicated on the availability and accessibility of the LEEDS document. The LEEDS document however was not available at all in four of the six LGAs. Two LGAs although they confirmed they had copies they were unavailable to LG officials. The implementation partners therefore worked with the LGAs to formulate Development Strategy documents with action plans, in lieu of the LEEDS document. These development strategy documents now guide their development programmes and programming to the extent that each LGA now has a prioritized sector of intervention.

It is recommended that the implementation team:

- further encourage the LGAs to make the LEEDS documents available and accessible to synchronize development with the 2 upper tiers [state and federal] of Government in Nigeria;

#### 4.2.2 Externally Accredited Training Modules

A salient activity to support the implementation of LEEDS is the preparation and delivery of externally accredited training models on

- “*Managing Community Projects*” and
- “*Communication and Community Consultations*”.

The first attracted 87 participants (49 Males, 38 females), while the ‘Communication and consultations module attracted 63 participants (46 males, 17 females).

It is the MTR team’s assessment that there has been substantial progress in building capacity of the key and relevant LGA officials. The engagement with both the civil servants and political leaders was also considered to be a very positive achievement.

The participants described the training programmes as very effective and useful to the performance of their works in the LGA. They submitted that they were exposed to effective ways of approaching and handling community projects. In particular they gained awareness of the following:

- Positive change of mind-set;
- better interrelationships between the LGAs and CSOs;
- and the adoption of a participatory development approach.

These positive impacts were more apparent in Delta and Rivers States.

Unfortunately the LGA beneficiaries of the training modules affirmed that they were yet to adequately apply their newly learned skills in the workplace. This may change when the implementation of the 'Challenge Fund' gets underway and they get their first opportunity to practice their learned skills and ideas.

The training module on "*working in partnership*" as well as the development and dissemination of case studies are programmed to start in the coming months.

#### **4.3 Local Government Information Dissemination:**

The DGG project helped develop communication strategies with the officials in all the 6 LGAs. This included the development of websites with some technical support and training as well as Service Directories.

##### **4.3.1 The Website**

The LGAs were provided with the required computer equipment and support to develop their own websites and technical training was delivered to 2 Website Maintenance Managers from each LGA.

Whilst the website was found to be fairly functional and accessible in Ethiopie West and fair in Isoko North, Gokana and Abua/ Odua, it was unpopular and inaccessible in Kolokuma / Opokuma and Sagbama LGAs.

The general apathy, negligence and lack of commitment among the LGA staff are a great constraint to the DGG project in general and visits to the website in particular. It was particularly concerning that one very senior official in Kolokuma / Opokuma LGA claimed not to be aware of the existence of the website. Whilst being interviewed however, a call came in from Netherlands to congratulate the Chairman of the local government for the establishment of their website.

Up to the time of MTR team visit, only Gokana and Ethiopie West LGAs have uploaded updated information on the website.

The website was aimed to open up the LGAs to the community but few communities are aware of its existence and the LGA officials were not actively using it as a tool for their work.

It is suggested that:

- The LG officials should also be encouraged to access and update the websites;
- The web address should be well publicised
- Other LGAs should emulate Gokana and Ethiopie West LGAs by establishing ICT support services in their LGAs.

### **4.3.2 Printed Materials:**

The Directory of Services was printed and disseminated to LGAs except in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Gokana LGAs where corrections were to be effected before final printing. The quarterly newsletters, annual reports and accounts have yet to be developed.

It is noteworthy that no directory or newsletter existed in these LGAs before the DGG project. All the LGA Chairmen wrote the forewords at the beginning of the directory, supporting the initiative and better communications. In some cases the private numbers of the officials in charge of the various departments were also included. As the website was not developed at the time of printing the website addresses are not included in the first editions.

Both the LG council officials and CSOs contacted were very pleased with the Directory of Services as they claimed that it had increased general knowledge about the LGAs' activities and services and have enhanced their relationships.

In one case, a second issue is already being organised, and although the motivation may have been primarily that the Chairman's picture was not as flattering as it might have been, the fact that updated information is being included and paid for by the LGA is very positive.

The MTR team suggests that:

- Public relations officials could raise funds through advertising from local businesses to support the website maintenance and directory updates.
- Some capacity building may be required on fund-raising techniques

### **4.4 Decentralisation of Resource Control:**

This output of the DGG project was aimed at enabling the process of devolution of powers on financial allocation from state Government to LGAs and citizens were to be educated on fiscal policies and allocation laws.

The DGG Projects included:

- Accredited learning workshops
- Review of Fiscal laws in the Niger Delta.
- Quarterly LGA/State Forum
- Advocacy and Influencing

While the training has been delivered and adjudged successful, and the review of the fiscal laws undertaken, the other activities are planned for later in the DGG Project.

#### **4.4.1 Review of Fiscal laws in the Niger Delta.**

The DGG partners have undertaken a review of the fiscal laws in Nigeria to summarize and present them in a user-friendly format. This has now been completed and the first stakeholders' workshop has been held in Port Harcourt.

- The implementing partner (IHRHL) is charged with the responsibility of this work and further workshops should now be held in the other focal LGA..

A notable constraint to the decentralisation of resource control is that the LGAs are presumed to have autonomy, but in practice, resource allocations due are not always remitted. Managing a budget and maintaining transparency in these circumstances is difficult. It undermines the relationship between the LGAs and the State and aspirations for good governance and budgetary management are at risk. It is clear from the 1999 Constitution of

the Federal Republic of Nigeria that the State should provide the funds to run and manage the LGAs.

**Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999** General Provisions 162 states that:  
(6) Each State shall maintain a special account to be called "State Joint Local Government Account" into which shall be paid all allocations to the Local Government Councils of the State from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State.

(7) Each State shall pay to Local Government Councils in its area of jurisdiction such proportion of its total revenue on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

(8) The amount standing to the credit of Local Government Councils of a State shall be distributed among the Local Government Councils of that State on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of the State.

- It is advised that the remaining items in Output 4 should commence at the earliest possible time following the elections, as consistency of fund allocations are integral to transparency.

#### **4.4.2 Training on Transparency and Accountability:**

The training on transparency and accountability was delivered to 57 participants, (53 males, 4 females) drawn from the 6 LGAs. The participants included both civil servants and politicians in the LGAs. The satisfaction level of the participants was high on the content and delivery of this module.

It is the MTR team's assessment that there has been substantial progress in building capacity of the key and relevant LGA civil servants and legislators in transparency and accountability although it is acknowledged that future initiatives need more gender balance and the youth participation to ensure inclusivity.

For those who attended the training sessions, it was apparent that knowledge had been gained as almost all the contacted officials equated good governance with transparency and accountability.

From the strength of our observation and information elicited from local LGA officials and other respondents, there was still a wide gap between the knowledge of transparency and accountability and the practice of same. For instance, no official interviewed was able to give in specific terms how much money came into, and what was expended by, the LGA for a given period.

The MTR team suggests that:

- There is a need for implementing partners to follow up the training to reinforce learning and encourage/ensure practical application of learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- A concerted effort to embrace and reinforce the potential positive outcomes of openness, transparency and accountability is still required in the LGAs. Comparatively, it is only in Ethiopie West and Gokana LGAs that the MTR team observed the closest practice to actual transparency and accountability.
- LGAs should be accountable enough to declare their scorecards periodically, and upload information on income, expenditure, annual report and accounts for public consumption in the website.

#### **4.5 Establishment and Disbursement of Challenge Fund:**

Presently, 6 micro-projects (one per LGA) which reflect the various prioritized sectors were identified and selected. These projects will benefit from the grant mechanism of the “Challenge Fund”.

MOUs have now been signed in four out of the six Local Governments. A “top down” approach to development in the LGAs has virtually given way to a “bottom-up” approach. As a result of this participatory development approach, citizens are beginning to have ownership of the Projects and this has engendered more commitment and engagement which is important to ensure sustainability.

It will be an opportunity for LGA officials as well as the CSOs who have been trained by the programme, to demonstrate their enhanced competence through the practical implementation of the pilot projects. The progress to date has been good:

- The Challenge Fund has been established;
- Some MOUs have been signed
- Some project accounts have been opened;
- Disbursement of funds are planned to follow shortly in the 4 Local Governments in Delta and Bayelsa States,
- The MOUs for the 2 Local Governments in Rivers State are yet to be signed.

The LG council officials and the Civil Society have welcomed the idea of physical projects but have expressed concern about the long period between project conceptualization and implementation.

Future projects should take less time as a process would have already been put in place. The concern however is the availability of funding for these future projects. There is a new opportunity to help develop the capacity of the LGAs to acquire the necessary funds through better budgeting of their own available resources.

This DGG Project is very pertinent to the goal of the eradication of poverty (with people participating in decision making that affects their lives);

- Job creation and sustainable livelihoods;
  - Effective participation and empowerment of women; and
  - Environmental protection.
- It is suggested that there is continued support for all the stakeholders throughout the full development cycle of the Challenge Fund project. This includes its initial usage and maintenance as well as helping communities implement a monitoring and evaluation process.

#### **4.6 Civil Society and Good Governance**

The aim of the DGG project is to encourage collaboration between government and the governed and is critical to poverty reduction. As part of this there is a requirement to empower CSOs to challenge non-performance of the LGA officials.

Three activities were planned to build the capacity of the CSOs;

- Good Governance Forum.
- Training and development of “Accountability Corps” operational strategy, and
- Budget Tracking/ Monitoring.

Substantial progress has been made in the first two activities, whilst the third one is proposed for a period before the end of the last quarter of GTF Year 3. The reason for this is to allow Good governance projects to be in place for the CSOs to monitor.

#### **4.6.1 Good Governance Forum (GGF)**

The GGF is a “town hall” meeting between the LGA officials and CSOs to deliberate on roles, rights, and obligations of the parties. The GGF provides the platform for a structured and inclusive engagement between local government officials and citizens. The forum objective is to foster better relationships between the LG officials and the CSOs.

Issues discussed included transparency and accountability, trust and commitment and giving voice to local communities to demand accountability from their government. In addition, CSOs were encouraged to translate development policies into action on the ground through helping develop viable poverty reduction micro-projects

The GGF recorded a relatively successful programme in Ethiopie West, Gokana, Abua/Odua and Isoko North LGAs and this is evident in the very cordial relationship between the CSOs and the 4 LGAs. The desired trust, openness, transparency and accountability between LGAs and CSOs in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Sagbama LGAs remain elusive.

It should be noted that previously no CSO has ever seriously monitored community projects, nor ensured that the LGAs were held to account before the DGG Project. Neither have they ever questioned bad practice or demanded better governance.

It was a great credit to the programme that as a follow-up of the GGF, Gokana, Isoko North and Ethiopie West LGAs have instituted their own “stakeholders’ forum” that enables them to consult more frequently with broader citizens’ participation. Additionally, the 4 LGAs in Rivers and Delta states have decided that their councillors should hold quarterly stakeholders’ forums at the ward level.

Some other visible impacts of the GGF included:

- Improved openness and trust between the LGA and CSOs engendering peace and harmony.
- CSOs have assumed the watchdog role thereby encouraging transparency and accountability.

There is however doubt regarding the impact of the DGG Project in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government. There appears to be little genuine buy-in to the programme and it is thought in retrospect that motivation to agree to the DGG Project in this LGA was based on the misapprehension of potential access to donor funding rather than building better Governance.

The CSOs in this area however are quite vibrant and for the time being are still ready and willing to demand better governance even if at the moment, it is failing to have a measurable impact. This is discussed in more detail in Section 6.

The GGF was considered innovative as it instituted a structured, inclusive and democratic process of dialogue between the government and the governed. The GGF benefits both the citizens and the LGAs, and builds strong interrelationship between them

- The GGF should be more inclusive to take care of equity and diversity.
- The local media should also be invited to the GGF;
- Minutes and communiqué from meetings should be well documented
- Follow up of issues and actions required should be tracked.

- Efforts should be taken to ensure that the GGF is not high-jacked by individuals for political or other agendas not compatible with good governance.

#### **4.6.2 Civil Society Capacity Building**

A training programme was developed for the CSOs to facilitate community participation and engender the involvement of the people at the local level in making choices for the development of their communities. It was aimed to engender self-confidence and build capacity to plan and take actions for self-help.

Training the CBOs and the community people is an innovation. Empowering the local community members to participate in project planning and implementation will reduce the incidences of “abandoned’ projects.

#### **4.6.3 Training and development on Accountability Corps Operational strategy:**

The “*Accountability Corps*” were established in all the 6 LGAs. The Corps members who were mainly youths from among the CSOs and local communities were established as a local watchdog to monitor the projects in their communities; demand accountability from project executors and government; challenge the status-quo particularly poor performance, while scrutinizing the LGAs fiscal policies.

Accountability Corps members undertook a training module on “Accountability Corps operational strategy”. This, according to them has prepared them well to monitor projects and demand for accountability.

The MTR team’s visit coincided with that of the implementation partner for this output in Isoko North and Abua /Oduel LGAs. AAPW was there to follow up earlier training and to encourage the corps members to be the watchdog they were meant to be.

The MTR team observed that the corps members who were mainly youths of both sexes were very receptive, enthusiastic and committed. Even though they have not challenged any bad practices up-to-date, they were fully ready and prepared to start with the micro projects from the Grant Mechanism. It is at this stage we can assess the success of the Corps.

- Efforts should be made to continuously focus the Accountability Corps so that they do not degenerate into militant groups. It is desirable to sustain the Corps members beyond the GTF funding and projects.
- For sustainability, it would be worthwhile empowering the key members of Accountability Corps to raise funds for its continuation post the GGDND.

#### **4.7 Promotion of Core Traditional Values:**

The essence of promoting core values in the DGG Project is aimed at the wider public to gain awareness of the principles of governance and transparency with their own traditional core values. A series of events to engage people’s imagination whilst focusing on the key issues of transparency and governance was designed. The initiatives were also expected to reinforce the outcomes of other outputs and activities of the DGG Project. They included:

- Cultural Festivals
- Literary competition
- A 13-part radio programme
- Dramas performed in the communities
- The production of popular music on CDs

Whilst the cultural festival and drama presentations are still in the planning stages, the literary competition and the 13-part radio programme have been concluded and two CDs have been produced.

- There is a need for better publicity so as to extend the number of beneficiaries as well as the impact of the intervention.

#### **4.7.1 Literary competition**

The literary competition was in 4 different categories and a total of 187 entries including:

- poetry 85
- essay 43
- short play 18
- short story 41

Winning entries were compiled and prizes were awarded. Even though this activity was adjudged to be successful and interesting, less than 10% of LGA officials and CSOs contacted were aware of the literary competition and only about 5 of the 860 interviewed in the communities participated in the literary competition.

#### **4.7.2 The 13-part Radio programmes**

A 13-part radio spotlight on the theme of good governance and traditional core values was recorded and broadcasts took place in the last quarter of 2010 with the following schedule:

- Bayelsa 3pm Wednesday – Bayelsa Broadcasting Corporation
- Delta: 4.30 pm Mondays by Delta Broadcasting Service
- Rivers: 2.03pm Tuesdays by Treasure FM

Despite the above schedule, over 80% of the MTR grassroots interviewees were unaware of the radio broadcasts. The lack of awareness was more prominent in Bayelsa than Rivers or Delta States. It is suggested that:

- Repeat broadcasts should be aired after better advertising on the programme schedule;
- Sponsors should be sought for the broadcasts;
- A consideration to broadcast in the drama series in pidgin for wider impact.

Achievement Rating Scale					
1 = fully achieved, very few or no shortcomings; 2 = largely achieved, despite a few short-comings; 3 = only partially achieved, benefits and shortcomings finely balanced 4 = very limited achievement, extensive shortcomings; 5 = not achieved					
Objective Statement	Achievement Rating for MTR	Logframe Indicators	Baseline for Indicators	Progress against the Indicators	Comments on changes over the last year, including unintended impacts
<b>Purpose</b>					
Strengthened capability of 6 LGAs to deliver basic services arising from a more effective demand by civil society coupled with enhanced performance by civil servants and elected leaders	3	1. 6 LGAs develop LEEDS/Development strategy that are needs driven to guide development management	LGAs do not consult the citizens in policy or programme formulation	The 6 LGAs came up with their "Development Strategies" in lieu of LEEDS documents to guide their development programmes.	The development strategies were formulated with the LGA civil servants and the documents have been approved by the political leadership.
		2. 6 LGAs provide information to the public through annual audited accounts as evidence of improved accountability	The LGAs provide no information to the public	Little progress is being made in this regard.	The LGAs have committed to posting their accounts on their websites as soon as these are fully functional
		3. Information systems that provide relevant and timely information in appropriate formats designed and implemented in 6 LGAs	Some basic information exist within LGAs, but are neither known nor accessible to the public	Each LGA has developed its own Communication strategy and some materials are already being produced	Gokana LGA has uploaded their statement of income and expenditure in the website to start with. Publication and distribution of Directory of Services effected in 4 LGAs (the remaining 2 are awaiting corrections).
		4. 20% increase in the number of LGA policies and programmes as a result of CSOs demand for good governance and accountability	LGAs do not consult the citizens in policy or programme formulation though the elites had made efforts to engage with the LGAs	The GGF is now established in each LGA and are being held periodically. Better interrelationships have emerged between the LGAs and CSOs.	The GGF is being replicated in LGAs. The LGAs in Delta and Rivers states mandated their Councillors to hold quarterly Stakeholders forum at the ward levels to articulate the gains of the GGF.

Objective Statement	Achievement Rating for MTR	Logframe Indicators	Baseline for Indicators	Progress against the Indicators	Comments on changes over the last year, including unintended impacts
<b>Outputs</b>					
1. LGAs take into account people's and Civil Society views in implementing key components of LEEDS/Development strategies	3	1.1. Development Programmes based on Action Plans developed participatively with the people in 6LGAs by the beginning of Year 2.	LGA project implementation is currently top-down and not guided by any overall strategy.	Development strategies have been formulated and projects based on Action Plans developed	Participatory methods and bottom-up approach to development is now employed in project identification.
		1.2. Enhanced competence of LGA officials demonstrated through effective implementation of a minimum of 40 projects addressing MDG priorities over Years 2-5	LGA officials do have some skills but are currently ineffective in Project Implementation and management	Guidelines for the grant mechanism to support micro-projects already designed	Each LGA has prioritized its own sectors of intervention through the participatory method. Project implementation to commence soon.
		1.3. Increase from 5% to 25% in male and female citizens in communities reporting enhanced access to, and satisfaction with, LGA services from Years 2-5	Only 5% of the Citizens interviewed reported good access to LGA services.	Appreciable progress have been made in all the LGAs. CSOs and local citizens now have access to the LGAs and their services.	The development strategies were formulated; Projects identified through participatory methods. Project implementation jointly by CSOs and LGAs to commence soon.
		1.4. At least 9 projects showing characteristics of good partnering practice functional in Years 3-5	These are yet to be initiated by the project	6 Micro-projects have been selected by the 6 LGAs.	The Challenge Fund has been established in the 6LGAs. MoUs have been signed and disbursement of funds will start soonest.

Objective Statement	Achievement Rating for MTR	Logframe Indicators	Baseline for Indicators	Progress against the Indicators	Comments on changes over the last year, including unintended impacts
2. Civil Society is enabled to influence change by engaging with key stakeholders monitoring and holding them to account.	2	2.1. Increase from 0% to 10% in the level of understanding by male and female citizens on the leverage they can have on LGA policies simulation and decision making by Year 5.	None of the LGA residents are being consulted by LGAs in policy formulation, and they do not know how to engage	Good progress towards achievement as the GGF is fully established in all 6 LGAs	The GGFs are focusing on broad issues of governance and development, conflict and security as well as how to stop illegal bunkering of oil in the LGAs. Membership cuts across different generations, social class and gender.
		2.2. Increased scrutiny of LGA fiscal policies through the establishment and training in each LGA of a local watchdog institution from Years 2-5	There is currently no watchdog institution in any of the LGAs	"Accountability Corps" has successfully taken over the watchdog roles in all the LGAs to challenge the status-quo.	"The Accountability Corps" were established in all the 6 LGAs. They have undergone some training and were constantly followed up to reinforce their learning. Budget tracking/monitoring training will commence soon.
		2.3. Replication of successes from STAND in 6 LGAs	The LGAs have not heard about the STAND project.	None	There has been no progress made on this. It is necessary to re-think the strategy.
3. Improved transparency and accountability on LGA activities through effective dissemination of information.	3	3.1. Key information documents budget, audited accounts, development strategies, newsletters etc.. -- made available in each LGA by Year 2-5	Some basic information exist within LGAs, but are neither known nor accessible to the public	Communication strategies developed in all the 6 LGAs	Community Communication and Consultation training was delivered to 63 participants. There is enhanced communication between the LGAs and CSOs. Annual reports and accounts, and newsletters are yet to be established
		3.2. Six websites designed, developed and functional by Year 3	One LGA already has a website but not functional	Six websites have been designed and developed	The types of information to be provided on the websites have been agreed and data collection has commenced. Websites to be more functional in 2011
		3.3. Code of good practice in governance adopted in 6 LGAs by Year 5	None existed in the area previously	This was planned for achievement in Year 5	Not yet implemented

Objective Statement	Achievement Rating for MTR	Logframe Indicators	Baseline for Indicators	Progress against the Indicators	Comments on changes over the last year, including unintended impacts
4. The process of devolution of powers on financial allocation from State Governments to LGAs enabled	4	4.1. Existing legislation and regulation on fiscal allocation in Nigeria appraised in Year 2	Citizens not aware of fiscal allocation laws, neither do they understand them	Though started ahead of time, review is yet to be completed	Progress was hampered by the frequent change of personnel in the implementing partners organisation.
		4.2. Participatory budget policy formulation strengthened through quarterly roundtables with legislators in Years 2-5	No formal engagement between state legislators and LGAs on policy formulation.	Yet to commence.	This activity is planned for Q1 of 2011
		4.3. Dialogue between State and LGAs on fiscal policies facilitated on a quarterly basis in Years 2-5	No dialogue existed between State and LGAs on fiscal policies	Yet to commence.	Preliminary contact with one of the State Governors to initiate action.
5. Awareness on Governance and Transparency raised through cultural activities and Literary Competetion.	2	5.1. Increased level of public understanding of the practical impact of better governance on their lives by Year 5	Insufficient appreciation of the positive correlation between better governance and improved quality of life.	Appreciable progress has been made in promoting core values as a way of enhancing good governance.	Citizens have not seriously embraced the planned festival of music and dance. The production of music as an awareness raising tool was adopted in lieu of the cultural festival.
		5.2. Increased level of debate in the media on good governance and how to bring about change in the Niger Delta by Year 3-5	Feeling of powerlessness among Nigerians to make change happen	Appreciably good progress has been made in this.	187 entries were received for the Literary Competition. (poem 85; essay 43; short play 18; and short story 42). Prizes were awarded. 13-part radio programme on themes of good governance were produced and broadcast.

<b>Activities</b>					
<b>Output 1: Implementation of LEEDS</b>					
1.1. Implementation of Action Plan				Majorly achieved	6 Micro-projects in place in the 6LGAs
<b>1.2. Micro projects Grant fund</b>				Appreciable progress made. MoU signed	Guidelines developed; MoU signed; and bank account opened.
<b>1.3. Accredited Learning Workshops</b>				Good progress	2 Training modules prepared and delivered (87+63 Participants)
<b>1.4. working in Partnership training</b>				Yet to be implemented	Yet to be implemented
<b>1.5. Publishing</b>				Yet to be implemented	Yet to be implemented
<b>Output 2: CSO Capacity Building</b>					
2.1. Good Governance Forums				Good progress	2 round of GGFs held in each of the 6 LGAs. Better interrelationships between LGAs and CSOs.
<b>2.2. Establishment of Accountability Corps</b>				Reasonable progress	Accountability Corps established in the 6 LGAs
<b>2.3. Budget tracking/monitoring initiatives</b>				Training to start in Year 3 with Good governance projects,	This activity will start once Corps members receive appropriate training.

<b>Output 3: LG Information Dissemination</b>					
<b>3.1. Accredited learning workshops</b>				Achieved	Training Course was held.
<b>3.2. website design, developed and maintained</b>				6 websites were desined and developed.	Websites were designed and developed. 2 members were trained to maintain it in each LGA
<b>3.3. Supply of Computer equipments</b>				Good progress	6 LGAs were supplied with Computer equipments.
<b>3.4. Annual reports and accounts + newsletters</b>				On-going	Audit of LGA account is delaying report publishing.
<b>3.5. Publishing</b>				Appreciable progress	LGA Directory of services were produced and distributed in 4 LGAs. Awaiting corrections in the remaining 2 LGAs
<b>Output 4: Decentralisation of Resource control</b>					
<b>4.1. Accredited learning workshops</b>				Workshop on Transparency and Accountability took place.	Curriculum was designed and accredited by OCN
<b>4.2. Review of Fiscal laws in the Niger Delta</b>				Partly achieved	Summary Fiscal law is being produced
<b>4.3. Quarterly LGA/State Forum</b>				Implementation yet to start	Planned to start later in 2011

<b>4.4. Advocacy and Influencing</b>				Implementation yet to start	Planned to start later in 2011
<b>Output 5: Promoting Core Values.</b>					
<b>5.1. Support to Cultural festivals</b>				Existing festivals were profiled	Musics were produced in the interim in lieu of cultural festivals
<b>5.2. Radio programme produced and broadcast</b>				Appreciable achievement	13-part Radio programme were produced and broadcast
<b>5.3. Support to Drama group</b>				Implementation yet to start	Planned for later period in 2011
<b>5.4. Literary Competitions</b>				Reasonable progress	The Literary competition were successfully accomplished with 187 entries and prizes awarded
<b>5.5. Publishing</b>				Planned for a later period in 2011	Selections of worthy entries in the Literary competition to be published

## 5 CONSTRAINTS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The MTR team has observed that the implementing partners have fulfilled the elements of the programme to date, but they have also recognised that there are constraints to implementation and there is room for improvement. This section of the report highlights the key constraints in two parts; the Internal Constraints and External Constraints, which are generally more difficult to mitigate and manage.

### 5.1 Internal Constraints

Whereas the implementing partners are aware of the issues and can address most of them in the life cycle of the project, the two main challenges have been the implementing partner personnel issues and inter-partner communications.

#### 5.1.1 The Team

The DGG Project began with a series of personnel changes and one key partner from AAPW was absent due to being held in detention at the beginning of the project. As key to the development of the substance of the project and the innovations of the various initiatives, this did constrain the early start to the project. Now that Judith Asuni has been released, she is actively rolling out the programme with her staff and the programme has begun to catch up with its planned activities.

#### 5.1.2 Communications

The Niger Delta generally has various logistical constraints due to the terrain; with many remote communities being accessible only by water transport and it has generally poor telecommunication networks. The six pilot LGAs are spread over the three States and although in terms of mileage are not so distant, the travel time and costs make inter-partner collaboration and participation more difficult.

The logistical constraints however could be overcome to some degree with improved inter-partner communication. Following a 2-day Partner Workshop in October 2010, a series of actions were agreed to overcome communication problems. These included:

- Joint workshop implementation status reviews;
- Group e-mails;
- Acceptance of varied forms of invitations (text messages); acknowledge receipt of any invitations and indicate availability
- Regular Meetings of the Project Steering Committee;
- Authorisation of Partner representatives to make binding decisions on behalf of the group when the CEO is not available;
- Experience sharing sessions;
- GTF members should share reports promptly and have access to partner documents
- Partners should play active roles in meetings;
- Monthly meetings should be held between the GTF Manager (LENF) the central driver and partner drivers
- Partners to identify areas of collaboration

It is further suggested

- that the partners set up an intranet system to compile reports, keep a diary of upcoming events and meetings, blog each meeting or event with updates, 'breaking news' from the LGAs, CSOs or communities and

- Appoint a back office member in each partner organisation to track these daily and highlight key issues to the operational team.

## 5.2 External Constraints

### 5.2.1 Project Budgetary Constraints

The Project budget was very tight at inception and did not fully account for four key risks:

1. the exchange rate fluctuations which have devalued purchasing power;
2. local inflation, which is sometimes higher than national inflation for some items and especially transport costs;
3. change of LGA officers and political leaders, which has required re-visiting some of the LGAs to re-introduce the project;
4. The time it takes to raise funding, gain sponsorship or in-kind support.

Many of the GTF initiatives, although making a valuable 'contribution' to the goals, fall short of their full potential as discussed above. To give some examples of this:

#### a) The LGA Directories

A budget was provided to help develop the first issue and print a limited edition for distribution. In many cases, the LGA officers themselves have taken more than the allocated copies of the directory and thereby reduced the distribution to the constituents for whom it was aimed. There is no further budget allowance to do a re-print and therefore the impact has been reduced.

- New editions of the LGA directory could be partly financed through advertising.

#### b) The Radio Spotlight Programme

In some case the Radio Stations demanded money to air the radio dramas on good governance, and funds to advertise the timing of the broadcasts was limited.

- As the programme has been successfully aired albeit with limited listenership, it may be possible to gain sponsorship for a second broadcast which may cover the cost of advertising to ensure greater awareness of the programme;
- It is also suggested that thought be given to the second broadcast being delivered in pidgin English.

#### c) The Literary Competition

The success of the literary competition demands that this becomes an annual event, but again there are no available funds to achieve this.

- Sponsorship from local businesses, oil operators and contractors could assist to ensure sustainability, whilst fulfilling the corporations' own social responsibility programmes.

#### d) Post Training Support

Following the LGA and CSO training, it is important to have follow-up activity to use the training to best effect. Potentially this is more a timing issue rather than a budgetary one. However the funds need to be available to assist in this.

#### e) Visibility

Implementing teams in the field need to be more visible. One suggestion is to provide 'Good Governance' T-shirts for all field teams sponsored by local businesses.

## 5.2.2 LGA Autonomy and Funding

It should be noted that State funding is not the only source of income for LGAs and the Constitution sets out areas in which taxes, licences and certificates warrant various fees. Efficient collection of these taxes and fees could boost LGA coffers and afford expenditure on proper provision of services. This could include according to the constitution:

- (b) *collection of rates, radio and television licences;*
- (d) *registration of all births, deaths and marriages;*
- (j) *assessment of privately owned houses or tenements for the purpose of levying*

- It is suggested that as an integral part of the transparency initiatives, a training session on 'collection of taxes and fees' could be beneficial to all stakeholders. This should be complemented with processing receipts and better book keeping.
- As all donor funding is limited, the Implementing Partners need to have or at least acquire skills sets that include raising money to roll out the programmes even further.
- For sustainability, CSO and CBOs also would benefit from fund raising skills.

## 5.2.3 LGA Roles and Responsibilities

The MTR research in the communities revealed that there is still confusion about who is responsible for what. It has been so long since the LGAs have taken up their full responsibility that for the most part, the constituents are not aware of what they should expect from their LGAs. When asked about basic local infrastructure, the majority believed that the State was responsible and the rest had an overwhelming belief that 'only God can provide'.

Without the awareness of actual LGA responsibilities, accountability cannot be met. Section 4 of The Constitution of Nigeria 1999 clearly sets out LGA responsibilities which include:

- (c) *Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm;*
- (e) *Establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences;*
- (f) *Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lightings, drains and other public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces, or such public facilities as may be prescribed from time to time by the House of Assembly of a State;*
- (h) *Provision and maintenance of public conveniences, sewage and refuse disposal;*

Section 4 of the constitution also states that the functions of a local government council shall include participation in respect to some of the following matters:

- (a) *the provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education;*
- (b) *the development of agriculture and natural resources, other than the exploitation of minerals*
- (c) *the provision and maintenance of health services;*

Indirectly, the LGA Directory of Services should include each of the responsible officers for these areas and by inference, it could be concluded that the LGA has some responsibility regarding these matters. However, at this time confusion remains within the electorate. It is suggested that:

- 'LGA roles and responsibilities' become an integral part of one of the current initiatives.

#### **5.2.4 The Local Government Council Officials**

The general apathy, negligence and lack of commitment among the LGA staff are serious constraints to the DGG project. The work culture and ethics were such that staff members go to work at will.

This became very apparent during the MTR team's visit to the LGAs. In Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA staff began to arrive at the office at 10:30am and most had closed by 2 pm. The attendance rate for the staff during the visit was well below 10%.

In interviews, some staff referred to the greed of politicians and corruption. Section 5 of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 clearly sets out LGA *Officers Code of Conduct and Part 6.1 specifically states:*

*A public officer shall not ask for or accept property or benefits of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of his duties.*

Unfortunately successful prosecutions or bar from a public office for indiscretions are rare and the generally public feel powerless to change the current status quo as their urgent 'need' generally overrides any principles of good governance. It is suggested that:

- LGA Officers' own roles and responsibilities be covered in some of the on-going initiatives;
- Create public awareness of the expected Codes of Conduct.
- Help develop a simple grievance mechanism for those who wish complain.

#### **5.2.5 The Local Communities:**

The low literacy level and inaccessible terrains of some of the local communities are noteworthy constraints for the programme roll out.

#### **5.2.6 The Champions (or lack of them)**

The MTR team did not feel a 'Champion' had been identified in each LGA to drive the DGG Project forward.

- Beyond stakeholder identification and mapping, it is important to understand the motivations of participants and pitch new concepts / initiatives accordingly.

#### **5.2.7 The 2011 Election**

The up-coming election will change some of the political leadership within the pilot LGAs and there will be a requirement to establish new relationships and get buy-in to the programme with the new leadership. Without this, the efforts and initiatives undertaken so far will be frustrated.

With the change in political leadership, it is also very possible that some of the civil servant beneficiaries of the good governance training will be relocated to other LGAs. Whereas in some cases it could be regarded as positive and the message of the benefits spread further, without the support of their new Chairman, implementation of the Good Governance principles could be lost.

With every challenge however there is an opportunity. These relocated Senior Civil servants could help introduce the Developing Good Governance project implementers to their new LGAs at the point of replicating the programme.

### **5.2.8 The God Factor**

The grassroots surveys illustrated the level of helplessness felt amongst communities with many responding that '*God is their only Saviour*' and attendance in church is experiencing unprecedented levels. Whereas there is no intention to suggest that God and State should be mixed, it would be a pity to waste an opportunity to reach out to the masses. The promotion of the radio programme or other GTF activities could for instance, be read out in the messages given at the end of the service. This would neither compromise the Church nor the GTF and would certainly bring awareness of up-coming GTF activities in their areas.

### **5.2.9 Peace and Security**

Whereas it is true that Peace and Security is required to establish and sustainably embed Good Governance, it is also true that one needs good governance to bring about peace and security. The DGG Project is operating in an environment which is fairly volatile and although the situation has been calmer since the Amnesty Programme, the forthcoming elections will invariably disturb the good progress thus far.

Embracing the youth in the project as in the 'Accountability Corps' discussed above is one way to engage potential militants in a more peaceful and positive endeavour. It is presumed that some of the under-employed youth are the most likely to be engaged in helping facilitate poor election practices.

- There is an opportunity to further engage the youth prior to elections in additional activities that rather promote the possibility of free and fair elections and which may lead to better governance.

### **5.2.10 Unresponsive LGAs**

At the time of selecting the pilot LGAs, it was presumed that the leadership were serious about change and were willing to embrace new ideas. At the mid-term point, it has become clear that the motivation to accept support in one case, may have been driven by the presumption that international donor funding would be available for their own use.

To pull out may not necessarily be prudent. Relationships have already been established with the CSOs who have faith in the process, or at least are willing to strive for better governance. On the other hand, to stay and spend more funding an LGA that has clearly demonstrated that it has no interest in change would not necessarily be the right course of action either.

The manner in which the project pulls out is another consideration.

- Should it be on a fairly public '*name and shame*' basis, making it clear that any other pilot LGA beneficiary chosen should realise the seriousness of the programme,
- or should it be a quiet withdrawal of support?

Again, if the decision was made to pull out,

- should the DGG project focus on the remaining 5 LGAs,
- or adopt another pilot programme in its place?

These decisions are not easy.

- The recommendation here is for the Project partners to at least have the debate, undertake a risk analysis and come to an informed decision, one way or another.

## 6 LESSONS LEARNED

### 6.1 Mid Term Review

According to the DFID guidelines the aim of an MTR is to provide an independent assessment of GTF Projects past and current efforts, enabling strategies to be reviewed and implementation refined for the successful completion of the project.

The time allocated for this MTR was too restricted to achieve a fully participatory approach. The consultants have had to utilise various quantitative surveys, qualitative comments and focus group discussions to fulfil the requirement of the TOR. The methodology employed is not an exact science. It is hoped however that this data can be used in conjunction with the baselines of the project for the final evaluation. Additionally it is also hoped the process itself has at least raised issues with the various stakeholders, some of which had yet to be engaged with the DGG Project.

### 6.2 Project Semantics

Undoubtedly the project proponents and the implementing team recognise there is no quick fix to developing good governance in the Niger Delta. Although the stated goal is thought to be unrealistic, it is vague enough to ensure some level of success – *'to contribute'* to the accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, is at least less defined than *'accelerate'* - and *'contribute'* it will.

The use of language also played an important part in gaining initial buy-in from the LGAs. Changing *'Developing Good Governance'* to fostering better *'Communications'* to gain buy-in was an important change.

It is unlikely that LGAs would openly admit that their good governance was in question, especially by some foreign donor intent on imposing an external form of democracy on their internal processes. This in itself could be deemed as undemocratic. The *'presentation'* of the DGG Project is an important lesson for other Projects.

### 6.3 Multi-Pronged Approach

The most impressive aspect of this project is the range of initiatives developed to address all the stakeholders. It includes formal programmes such as the good governance forums and training programmes and the more indirect approach of the radio programmes, literary competitions, festivals and popular music CDs. It is a lesson for all future GTF initiatives.

### 6.4 Difficult Decisions

All Projects have (at one point or another) difficult decisions to make, especially if something planned is not realising its potential. In this case it is an LGA which is unresponsive to the initiatives. Whereas there is no attempt to influence the partner's decision making, there is a requirement to analyse the risks of continuing on regardless or pulling out as discussed above. The decisions will include the follow up actions in either case.

Beyond inter-partner discussions and input, and of course discussion with the LGA and the participating CSOs, guidance from lessons learned in other Projects would be useful.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 Summary of the Project Achievements to Date

Overall it was deemed that the Project at the mid-term stage had succeeded in commencement and development of the key outputs. The DGG project has begun to provide the necessary balance to meet the key objectives that are relevant to the current socio-political environment including:

- Improved capacity of LGAs;
- Empowerment of CSOs to influence and hold LGAs accountable;
- Increased awareness of good governance with the citizens of the pilot LGAs

Evidence exists that the designed programmes have begun to make impact with the key stakeholders and achieved quick wins including:

- Development of capacity of LGA employees through training programmes, technical and administrative skills development, interface with their constituents, the website and communication materials support;
- Development of capacity of Civil Society through Stakeholder Forums and training;
- Development of Awareness of Grassroots through participatory development of micro-projects, radio programmes, music CDs and literary competitions;

And the various Programmes have the potential for:

- Increasing relevance in the Niger Delta
- Replication
- Sustainability
- Promoting equitable development
- Providing Value for money

### 7.2 Recommendations Summary

Throughout the body of the text, a series of suggestions have been made including.

- Action measures for enhanced Partner Communications
- Refine budget balances and checks
- Address Roles and Responsibilities with all stakeholders
- Re-assess the Stakeholder Analysis to include '*What is in it for me?*'
- Address the State/LGA relationship and disbursement of funds
- Increase youth participation, especially during the election campaigns
- Have the debate on the issue of non-responsive LGAs.

### 7.3 Project Donor Limitations

The DGG Project addresses Governance at a local level with LGAs, CSOs and Communities, but is operating in a vacuum without similar initiatives with State Government, the media and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. It is finally suggested that:

- Donor support provides complimentary programmes to assist the State Governments in Good Governance;
- Joint meetings of DFID funded programmes should be facilitated to develop inter-cooperation and share lessons learned
- There is coherence between DFID funded programmes which contribute to the accelerated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to more effectively eradicate poverty in Nigeria.