



# developments

Summer 2001

## Polio Eradication Makes Progress in Africa

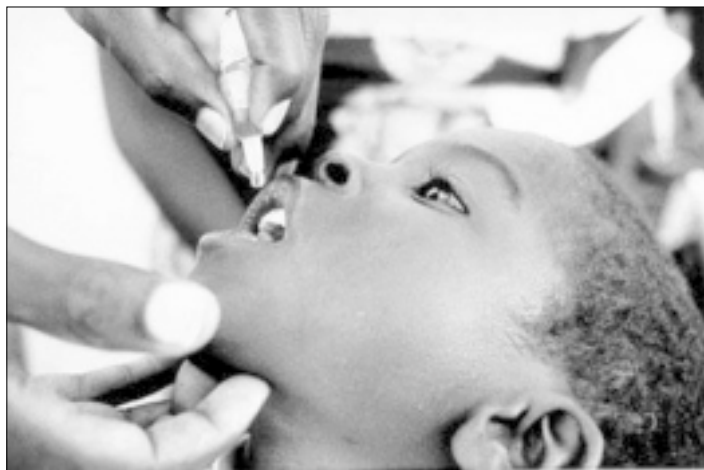
Since the goal of global eradication of polio was established in 1988, the number of cases of polio has declined by nearly 99 percent, from an estimated high of 350,000 in 1988 to a reported 2,850 as of May 2001. This dramatic decline is a result of the fact that in the past five years nearly two billion children worldwide have been immunized during National Immunization Days (NIDs). The transmission of wild poliovirus is now concentrated in two major reservoirs in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa—Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan in Asia; and Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan in Africa.

At the Global Polio Partners' Summit held at the UN in September 2000, participants from around the world pledged their commitment and launched the Global Polio Eradication Strategic Plan for 2001-2005. The major components of the global strategy over the next five years are to:

- ◆ Continue high levels of routine immunization of children under age one and intensify NIDs and mop-up campaigns (door-to-door immunization in high-risk areas) to provide oral polio vaccine to all children under age 5.
- ◆ Strengthen national immunization programs.
- ◆ Achieve certification-standard surveillance, for a minimum of 3 years, through a global network of laboratories.
- ◆ Contain all laboratory, hospital, and other medical stocks of the poliovirus.
- ◆ Develop a consensus strategy for when immunizing can stop.

USAID's Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) is a vital component of the global eradication effort. The U.S. government joined with other member nations of the World Health Assembly in 1988 to adopt a global resolution to eradicate polio by the year 2000 by developing strong and sustainable national immunization and disease control systems. However, due to political instability, civil strife, natural disasters, and some shortfalls in the vaccine supply, the timetable for certifying the world polio-free has now been delayed until 2005.

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*Receiving the polio vaccine.*

WHO/OMS

## Examining the Impact of Conflict on the Environment

*By James Shambaugh*

Armed conflict represents a serious threat to many sub-Saharan African countries today, with many either at risk of conflict, engaged in conflict, emerging from conflict, or in a long-term recovery phase. These conflicts have a devastating impact, shattering economies, fragmenting societies, and degrading the environment. The accompanying loss of biodiversity and depletion of natural resources represent long-term consequences, which are often felt for many years following the end of hostilities.

The USAID-supported Biodiversity Support Program's (BSP) Armed Conflict and the Environment (ACE) project was started in 1998 to identify and raise awareness about the negative impacts of armed conflict on the environment, and develop concrete strategies for mitigating these impacts before, during, and after conflict. The ACE project will conclude in mid-2001 ahead of BSP's phase-out at the end of this year.

The ACE project has identified several key lessons for improving conservation effectiveness in areas of armed conflict. First, the indirect or secondary impacts of armed conflicts, particularly the impacts of refugee populations, are often more damaging

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to the environment than direct impacts by military forces. Related to this, the greatest environmental impacts often occur not during the conflicts themselves, but rather during the post-conflict phase when nations are recovering and attempting to rebuild.

Another lesson is that sustainable communities have greater resiliency and are therefore likely to suffer less from conflict. The interdependence between social welfare and the environment needs to be better understood and clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Innovative approaches are also needed to effectively integrate environmental concerns into emergency situations. For instance, prevention of and preparation for armed conflict disasters could be facilitated by conservation NGOs if they placed more emphasis on the identification and use of early warning indicators and became more involved in the development of national disasters plans.

The improved integration of environmental concerns into relief planning can greatly reduce environmental degradation as well as costs of site rehabilitation. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is beginning to do this by distributing fuel efficient stoves to refugees, for example, but the larger issue of where to place refugees remains. Devastation of Virunga National Park in Rwanda resulted from two years of exploitation by refugees who had been placed on the border of this World Heritage Site. Additionally, Rwanda needed to resettle refugees and was looking at previously unsettled areas in order to minimize conflict, such as areas surrounding protected land, and degazetting part of Akagera National Park. The government lacked the necessary land use planning expertise to perform this process and UNHCR did not consider this their responsibility. An environmental perspective might have been able to influence this process in a way that would have reduced environmental impact.

Likewise, humanitarian concerns need to be better integrated into conservation activities. Conservation organizations need to understand that relief has a short-term viewpoint and biodiversity has a long-term

viewpoint. Conservation groups tend to be very aware of the importance of government counterparts in preserving habitats whereas relief organizations are more focused on small local counterparts and associations within the emergency-affected population. Both groups need to establish a working dialogue.

Research, evaluation, and monitoring techniques need to be improved to make environmental rehabilitation efforts more effective. For example, because roads are extremely important to rehabilitation, USAID's Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) produced maps for use in analyzing where roads could be placed to give the greatest economic return with the least environmental damage. These maps are available on CD-ROM and allow decision-makers to make informed decisions. Conservation organizations need to be prepared with such tools when plans are being made, and they need to get the information to the people making or influencing the decisions.

Regional, transboundary approaches may also help reduce the negative effects of armed conflict on the environment and should be encouraged where feasible. When conflicts erupt and conservation organizations decide that safety concerns warrant withdrawal from an area, maintaining a regional stronghold or anchor in a peaceful neighboring country is often a way to continue providing low-level support and to prepare to return when the conflict subsides. Similarly, strengthening the institutional capacity of local in-country NGOs is vital for maintaining conservation efforts on the ground during times of conflict. Not only is this because expatriate staff are often evacuated when conflict breaks out, but sustaining a presence in parks throughout times of conflict can raise the profile of a project with the government and put the NGO in a stronger position to provide information and/or advice to policymakers immediately after conflict subsides.

To discuss these and other issues, the ACE project held a workshop on *Conservation in Conflict: Strategies for Mitigating the Impacts of Armed Conflict on the African Environment* in Victoria Falls,

Zimbabwe in April 2001. This workshop provided an opportunity for international and local conservationists, relief workers, and donors to exchange experiences and develop strategies for effective conservation in areas of armed conflict and post-conflict. The workshop generated a tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience that BSP is now consolidating into a set of general principles and guidelines for practitioners working in areas affected by armed conflict.

In June 2001 the ACE project will be holding a *Preparing for Peace* workshop in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This workshop will highlight the challenges currently facing conservation efforts in the DRC and explore strategies for improving coordination between the conservation, humanitarian, and development sectors. In addition, this gathering will provide an opportunity for participants from several sub-Saharan countries to share their experiences with doing conservation work in areas of armed conflict.

The ACE project has also launched a listserv ("REDlink") for exchanging information and improving collaboration between the relief, environment, and development sectors. To subscribe, send an e-mail request to [Requests@listserv.com](mailto:Requests@listserv.com). The body of the message should read "Subscribe redlink." Your e-mail address should be in the "from" portion of the message.

While the ACE project has achieved significant progress in raising awareness about the negative impacts of armed conflict on the environment and developing strategies to mitigate these impacts, additional follow-up is needed to build upon this progress following the project's conclusion in mid-2001. Only by continuing existing efforts at expanding outreach and improving communication can these challenges be successfully addressed.

*James Shambaugh is the ACE project coordinator at BSP. For more information on the ACE project, visit the BSP website at [www.BSPonline.org](http://www.BSPonline.org) or contact Mr. Shambaugh at (202) 778-9665, [james.shambaugh@wwfus.org](mailto:james.shambaugh@wwfus.org).*

# Stories Out of School



This special focus on basic education, sponsored by the Africa Bureau's SD Education Team, is a regular feature in SD Developments. USAID missions and others interested in sharing thoughts and experiences are welcome to contribute material for future columns.

## Workshops Target HIV/AIDS Toll on Education in Zambia and Malawi

By Joan Woods

**B**oth Zambia and Malawi have been hard hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. With prevalence rates among adults estimated at 20 percent and 16 percent respectively, the effects of the epidemic are strongly felt in the education sector. Many teachers and managers are sick and dying. Others are frequently absent from school to care for sick relatives and attend funerals. Many children are unable to attend school because they are caring for sick family members or due to lack of funds caused by the economic pressures of the epidemic. Teachers and children are frequently traumatized by grief and loss.

Within this context, USAID missions in Zambia and Malawi, in conjunction with AFR/SD, held strategic planning workshops early this year to plan for the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector. At the workshops, which were held in Lusaka, Zambia and Mangochi, Malawi, the ministries of education (MOE) called together planners, teachers, finance officers, curriculum designers, representatives of NGOs and other stakeholders to address human capacity needs in schools and ministries, and examine how to better communicate effective prevention messages, and support those living with HIV/AIDS. The working sessions were facilitated by members of the University of Natal (South Africa) Mobile Task Team. AFR/SD funds professionals in the fields of education, economics, development, and health in order to support ministries in addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS on the sector.



Participants at the Malawi workshop.

The timing of the strategic planning workshop in Zambia could not have been better as Zambia's MOE was in the process of strengthening its response to HIV/AIDS through its Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Program (BESSIP). The ministry had recently designated HIV/AIDS a major component of BESSIP and scaled up its response to the epidemic.

The two individuals responsible for HIV activities in the MOE, Alfred Sikazwe and Ireen Malambo, played key leadership roles in the success of the workshop and have pushed forward the

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## Guinea Reviews DHS Education Data

By Mamadou Badian Diallo, Kimberly Bolyard, and Talaat Moreau

**I**n February 2001, Guinea held a national education seminar to discuss the policy implications of the education module from the 1999 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). The results of the survey represent a base of pertinent data on the education system, which is available to decision-makers and administrators.

Nearly 60 district education officers, regional inspectors, and representatives from ministries and NGOs attended the seminar. Presenters discussed an overview of the DHS survey itself, the data collected, and the decision-making process involved in using the data. Participants raised pertinent questions: Is the low rate of girls' school attendance due to the school program or environment, or to other factors? Can the questionnaire be modified so that future surveys can compare different countries? Why were only the mothers asked for their perceptions about school?

Seminar participants appreciated the initiative of integrating an education module into the DHS survey and recommended further study of certain indicators and topics, the dissemination on a large scale of the results of the education module, particularly at the operational level, and increased investment in the education sector to remove obstacles in the way of children's schooling, particularly for girls and rural children.

Guinea, a pilot country for testing the education module, is looking forward to comparing its education system with that of other African nations, which will be possible as other countries prepare household education surveys. The experience in Guinea has helped to refine the education module for more pertinent data and more effective methods of collection.

*Mamadou Badian Diallo is with the Bureau National de Recensement in Conakry, Guinea; Kimberly Bolyard is with USAID's Global Bureau; Talaat Moreau is with USAID/AFR/SD. A full report on the DHS data is available at [www.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/PNACK873.pdf](http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACK873.pdf), or contact Ms. Moreau at [TMoreau@air.org](mailto:TMoreau@air.org), (202) 298-9793.*



## IFESH Supports AFR Education Programs

By *Cap Dean*

In order for emerging democracies to be sustained in Africa and law and order to be upheld, a country's citizens must be literate and capable of making informed choices. Education and training must be the cornerstones of economic and social reform. In supporting these emerging democracies, the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) focuses on empowering individuals through the operation and support of community-based programs in the areas of literacy, education, vocational training, agriculture, nutrition, and health care. Their Teachers for Africa program (TFA) is one way IFESH is helping address education needs on the continent.

Funded primarily by USAID, the TFA program places "master teachers"—experienced American teachers, professors, and education administrators—in sub-Saharan African countries for one academic year. Since 1992, the TFA Program has placed nearly 600 professional educators in 14 African countries. This academic year, IFESH has 45 teachers in Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, and Namibia. Depending upon the needs and requests of USAID, the host countries, and institutions, TFA participants are assigned at primary, secondary, and university levels or in governmental education agencies and ministries. IFESH works closely with the various USAID missions to insure that the TFA program is as supportive of the missions' strategic objectives as possible, and is consistent with USAID's educational strategy.

Teachers are engaged in training their African counterparts in the effective development and implementation of innovative education curriculum and pedagogy. For example, American teachers

work at Montfort College in Malawi, one of the only institutions in that country for teaching seriously handicapped children. In Guinea, a new TFA program was initiated in September 1999 at the request of the Guinean government and USAID/Guinea. In conjunction with the Guinea Ministry of Education and USAID/Guinea, teachers are working in education institutions on areas such as curriculum development and academic counseling, as well as teaching English as a Second Language in rural schools. In the new Namibia program, four highly qualified teachers work in government agencies and colleges of education. The goals of all these programs are to improve the quality of education in those countries in a manner supportive of USAID's strategic objectives.

IFESH continues to improve its TFA programs in these countries. Over the past two years there have been a number of changes to ensure the program's relevance and effectiveness and to further improve its implementation. More detailed job descriptions, more rigorous language competency evaluation, careful matching of candidates with available positions, intensified recruiting efforts for TFA applicants, continuing improvements of the annual pre-departure orientation (including greater involvement of AFR/SD in that orientation), increased dialogue with USAID missions, and more focus on impact have all helped to ensure effective programs in our TFA countries that achieve their objectives.

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### HIV/AIDS *Continued from page 3*

plan drafted at the meeting since its close. The Zambia meeting was groundbreaking in its focus on the systemic impacts of HIV/AIDS on the sector and on identifying interventions to assist orphans and persons living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, the plan reflects the participants' understanding of the critical partnership needed between the government and communities to address the epidemic. The strategic and implementation planning initiated at the workshop significantly contributed to the minister of education's February launch of the Zambian government's initiative to mitigate the effect of HIV/AIDS on children.

Malawi's Ministry of Education, Sports and Training (MOEST) had also initiated a robust response to the epidemic at the time of the workshop. Five technical committees within the ministry deal with HIV/AIDS: planning and budget, curriculum, human resource management, teacher education, and guidance and counseling. Representatives from each committee attended the workshop.

During the week, participants worked to develop a draft strategic plan including a vision statement, goals, and objectives,

which include planning for the anticipated shortfall in education staff, incorporating HIV/AIDS indicators into education management information systems, ensuring safety in school, empowering school committees to reinforce regulations regarding sexual assault of students at school, and eliciting the support of communities in implementing school-based HIV/AIDS prevention programs. They went through an intensive exercise in activity planning so that when they returned to their offices, they could continue to develop the strategic plan with their MOEST colleagues.

The dedication, creativity, and commitment demonstrated by those at the workshops gives hope that the HIV/AIDS epidemic can be brought under control by Africans working together. AFR/SD and the University of Natal's Mobile Task Team are continuing to work with the Zambia and Malawi missions and the MOEs, providing technical support as needed to facilitate the completion of the planning process and to move implementation forward.

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# Examining Sustainable Economic Growth in Africa

Numerous structural adjustment and economic reform plans have dominated the policy agendas of most countries in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1970s. For example, by 1996, the Government of Zambia had undertaken nine separate economic structural adjustment programs, and had abandoned them all with no tangible benefits.

Seeing this, Harvard Fellow and Equity and Growth through Economic Research in Africa (EAGER) researcher Malcolm McPherson wondered about the factors that make a government decide to scrap a major economic reform program. What makes many of these programs fail? What can make them succeed? While African governments have persistently emphasized the social, economic, and political costs of adjustment, why have they given little attention to the costs of *not* adjusting, one of which is continued economic decline?

These are some of the main questions that have driven the “Restarting and Sustaining Growth and Development in Africa” component of AFR/SD’s EAGER project. This large-scale study draws together a range of U.S. and African scholars from different disciplines to focus attention on what has to be done in Africa to restart and sustain growth and development. Researchers based in the U.S., including McPherson, have examined larger, theoretical economic issues while research teams in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda have probed specific obstacles to achieving and sustaining acceptable growth paths.

In October of last year, two of these researchers, Mwangi Kimenyi of the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis and Joseph Semboja of Research on Poverty Alleviation, located in Tanzania, presented preliminary findings from their respective countries at a seminar held by the EAGER project in Washington, DC. Also on the panel were discussants Lyn Squire, director of development policy at the World Bank; Steve O’Brien, a former World Bank representative in Nairobi; and Deborah Bräutigam, associate professor of political science at American Univer-

sity. During the seminar, common themes emerged that point to patterns of economic policy cause and effect, as well as to possible solutions. These relate to the three major thematic areas of the restarting and sustaining growth study: macroeconomic issues such as aid dependence, institutional issues of state and private sector capacity, and microeconomic issues such as productivity and competitiveness.

Since the 1970s, most African countries have had severe macroeconomic imbalances, which are reflected in high inflation rates, overvalued or volatile cur-

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## ***Governments that repeatedly reverse economic policy decisions undermine investor confidence.***

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rency exchange rates, and insolvent financial institutions. Huge levels of debt, both foreign and domestic, are another symptom of the imbalances that continue to get attention. While the panelists debated whether or not the current debt reduction program would work, all agreed that African governments need to be more proactive in addressing their debt problem. Kimenyi pointed out that domestic debt also needs to be addressed. He said that the disparity between 30 percent interest rates paid for loans and 6 percent rates earned for savings in Kenya does little to encourage domestic investments. Semboja concurred, saying that it is fiscally safer for Tanzanians to invest in treasury bills than to lend to agricultural projects. O’Brien added that this is a difficult cycle to break since reducing aid is only possible if private investment increases.

Macroeconomic stability works hand in hand with government stability and credibility. Governments that repeatedly reverse economic policy decisions undermine investor confidence, as does corruption and a lack of governmental transparency. Economic liberalization frequently implies political realignment in Africa, which requires a level of political will that the ruling parties in most countries do not have. In the meantime, salaries that have not kept pace

with inflation drive talented staff from the public to the private sector, and those with funds to invest often place their capital in more stable overseas markets rather than pressuring their government to improve the domestic economic environment.

The participants also felt that African governments have not placed an appropriate emphasis on improving or even maintaining infrastructure. In many cases, industrial technology has not increased in 30 years, critical communication and transportation systems have decayed, and energy supplies are far below demand. These factors make African countries less competitive in a global market. As a result, their economies are heavily reliant on resource and agricultural based exports instead of higher revenue-generating value-added manufacturing.

Even in these industries, output is not as high as it could be. As long as workers are in poor health, are poorly educated, or are concerned about their own food security, they will not be fully productive members of society. By improving rural health and education, governments would begin to redress poverty as well as provide a foundation to move into labor-intensive manufactured exports. Bräutigam pointed out that the period of rapid growth in Asia was preceded by sustained high rates of increase in agricultural productivity.

The participants agreed that restarting and sustaining growth in Africa is possible, but that it takes a high degree of commitment from the governments involved. Africans need to take ownership of proposed economic reforms; otherwise, as Semboja noted, when donor pressure is removed, reforms slow down. Also, Bräutigam emphasized the importance of gradualism, thereby avoiding shocks to a financial system, in economic policy change. However, the underlying question of how to create the political will for real economic reform remains.

*For more information, see the EAGER Project website, [www.eagerproject.com](http://www.eagerproject.com), or contact Rita Aggarwal at (202) 712-1314, [ragnarwal@usaid.gov](mailto:ragnarwal@usaid.gov).*

— Christine Chumbler

USAID's PEI strategy is designed within the context of the global strategy for a strong, sustainable routine immunization system. Through technical assistance projects and financial support to international organizations and NGOs, USAID helps a variety of important activities including national and sub-national immunization days, mop-up campaigns, surveillance and laboratory networks, as well as the training, advocacy, and social mobilization needed to make these efforts succeed. USAID's support in Africa—through its overseas missions, AFR/SD, and coordination with Global Bureau health programs—is designed to complement ongoing efforts to develop sustainable immunization delivery systems. Since 1996, when USAID's polio initiative was established, the agency has spent more than \$93 million on polio eradication activities in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Progress in Africa**

The drive to “Kick Polio Out of Africa,” launched by South African President Nelson Mandela in 1996, has succeeded in creating widespread awareness of the importance of vaccination against polio. Regional communication, advocacy, and social mobilization workshops have contributed to this success. Surveillance, however, has only recently been

introduced and needs to be rapidly strengthened. All laboratories in the World Health Organization network system are receiving technical assistance to ensure accreditation.

Eradication efforts have also been hampered by the postponement of NIDs due to civil unrest in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone. The immunization of children in war-torn areas presents a special challenge that must be addressed. With the assistance of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, “days of tranquility” were negotiated in DRC and a cease-fire enabled the first NID to take place throughout the country in August 1999, which resulted in approximately 90 percent of the 10 million targeted children being immunized. Another cease-fire in DRC in September 2000 led to an additional round of NIDs.

As of October 1999, all polio-endemic countries in sub-Saharan Africa had conducted at least two nationwide NIDs, except Angola, where areas that are inaccessible to the government have yet to be reached. During two rounds of house-to-house NIDs campaigns for polio eradication in Nigeria in 1999, 34.2 million and 35.4 million children respectively, were immunized. In November 2000, NIDs were synchronized over a 10-day period in 17 West and Central African countries and 76 million children were immunized. This was the largest public health event ever in Africa and the active participation of presidents, ministers, and other high-level officials helped to increase the level of participation. Additional rounds of national and/or sub-national immunization days are planned for 32 countries in sub-Saharan Africa in 2001.

During NIDs, all children under age five receive a dose of oral polio vaccine over a two- or three-day period. Four to six weeks later they receive a second dose. To inform parents about upcoming NIDs, a combination of radio announcements on national and international stations (including the Voice of America), social mobilization through church, community, and local leaders, and miking and megaphones are used to generate awareness.

Much of the support USAID provides goes toward the months of advance planning that are needed to ensure successful

NIDs. USAID support to UNICEF and WHO's Africa regional offices enables these organizations to provide additional technical and financial assistance to polio endemic countries. For the first time, nearly 500 international and national epidemiologists, logisticians, social mobilization experts, and administrative staff were recruited to assist in preparing for the fall 2000 NIDs and to conduct, supervise, and evaluate the NIDs. They arrived in country several months before the first round of NIDs to assist with detailed microplans, arrange logistics for the distribution of vaccines and other supplies, and many stayed on to evaluate the NIDs after each round. To help countries in developing successful immunization communication programs, USAID provided funding for a joint UNICEF/WHO *Communication Handbook for Polio Eradication and Routine EPI*. This is available in PDF format at [www.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/PNACJ013.pdf](http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACJ013.pdf).

### **Effective Partnerships**

From the inception of the PEI, USAID has worked closely with WHO, Rotary International, UNICEF, CDC, and host governments to coordinate eradication activities and the strengthening of national health systems. Other recent partners that have supported the PEI include the CORE group (a coalition of 32 U.S.-based NGOs), the Peace Corps, Voice of America, WORLDNET TV, and the United Nations Foundation. Many of these partners are focusing on mobilizing communities to improve case detection and reporting of acute flaccid paralysis (one of the most severe symptoms of polio) in some of the most difficult countries under extreme circumstances. Collaboration under the U.S.-Japan Common Agenda has also led to increased resources for polio and other immunization activities.

The global campaign against polio is considered the most successful private-public partnership and the largest public health initiative in history. This polio partners' collaboration is proof that significant improvements in global health are possible when governments, institutions, communities, and individuals work together to address common health concerns.

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### **Polio Resources on the Web**

[www.afr-sd.org/poliointro.htm](http://www.afr-sd.org/poliointro.htm)

Provides information about polio eradication activities supported by USAID's Africa Bureau.

[www.inside.usaid.gov/g/phn/polio](http://www.inside.usaid.gov/g/phn/polio)

This USAID intranet site provides USAID missions with a Polio Eradication Initiative Information Kit. This information kit can also be downloaded by non-USAID readers at [www.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/PNACK426.pdf](http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACK426.pdf).

[www.polioeradication.org](http://www.polioeradication.org)

The official Global Polio Eradication Initiative website. Includes links to worldwide polio resources.

[www.unicef.org/polio](http://www.unicef.org/polio)

UNICEF's polio website.

# SD at Your Service

*In this issue, we continue the series of profiles to introduce the staff members of the Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development. Tracy Brunette and Yolande Miller-Grandvaux are both members of AFR/SD's Education Team.*

**M**y mommy helps kids go to school in Africa." That is how six-year-old Olivia describes the job her mother, Tracy Brunette, does. Brunette laughs as she recounts that statement. "What I do sometimes seems a few steps removed," she says, "but we're all working towards that end."

A member of AFR/SD's education team for three years, Brunette specializes in performance measurement and monitoring. This means that she tries to make information make sense for people, whether they are in USAID's missions, ministries of education, or communities. "I try to promote a culture of using information to make

better decisions," she says.

One of her ongoing projects is to present data from the DHS surveys. These sur-



veys detail education statistics for selected countries such as literacy and school attendance rates, broken down by region and gender where available. She hopes that missions and partner organizations will find the information helpful in making programming decisions. "I'm a true believer in surrounding ourselves with useful information," she says.

Brunette describes herself as going from interesting opportunity to interesting opportunity. Her experience in Africa started in the 1980s when she taught math in The Gambia as a Peace Corps volunteer. After returning to the United States, she taught pre-school, but the lure of Africa proved to be too great and she went back, this time to teach in Zimbabwe for a year.

She returned to the United States again in 1991 to complete a masters degree in

public health and a doctorate in demography at the University of California, Berkeley, but Africa was never far from her thoughts. When she was offered a AAAS Fellowship, which led to her current position, she did not hesitate. "There's something about Africa," she says. "There's no doubt I'll keep going back."

She says one of the most interesting aspects of her job is being able to look at information from countries across the continent and share the lessons learned between them. "Getting people in the field missions talking to each other is very exciting," she says.

But, of course, it is the children of Africa that give her the most joy in her work. "I love going into classrooms and seeing the kids raise their hands, their hands about to fly off their arms [to answer a question]," she says enthusiastically. "Everyone should go to a school in Africa to see and feel that energy."

*Tracy Brunette, performance measurement and monitoring specialist with AFR/SD/HRD/ED, can be reached at (202) 298-2985, TBrunette@air.org.*

**A**s a girl in France, Yolande Miller-Grandvaux dreamed of helping the Tuareg people of the deserts of northern Africa build schools for their children. Years later, she realized that dream by joining a CARE team going to northern Niger to bring schools to the caravans. She could not be happier, even though she has since left Niger. "This work is the love of my life," she says. "If I were a millionaire, I would still do what I'm doing."

True to her dream, most of Miller-Grandvaux's work in Africa has been in the Sahel region. After realizing that academia, where she had been to get a PhD and two masters degrees, was not where she belonged, she accepted a position with the Basic Education Expansion Project in Mali. While she was there, she set up the monitoring and evaluation unit at the Ministry of Education. "We helped the Government of Mali see, for the very

first time, what the status of education in their country really was. They were astonished," she says.

In her current role as an education advisor for AFR/SD, Miller-Grandvaux continues to focus on Mali a good part of the time. She is very involved in the community schools movement that has grown out of increased democratization and decentralization in that country (see *SD Developments* Summer



2000), and is helping USAID/Mali manage its relationship with an increasing number of partners, from local NGOs to parent-teacher associations. "The development of new partnerships in Africa is what I'm interested in," she explains. "We need to open up to other voices that need to be heard."

She sees Malian community schools, which have been initiated and run by members of a local community rather than by central government, as part of an overall trend towards alternative schooling. "Education has radically changed in the last five years," she says. "Our role is to identify other innovative options and support them."

Like Brunette, the children are her true motivation. She says that Africans sometimes ask her why she devotes so much of her life to such a distant land. She always gives them the same answer, explaining her view that the inability of one country to provide for its citizens resonates throughout the world. "If your children fail in school, my children will eventually fail," she tells them. "The interdependence is clear and is what motivates me."

*Yolande Miller-Grandvaux, education advisor with AFR/SD/HRD/ED, can be reached at (202) 884-8637, ymiller@aed.org.*

— Christine Chumblor

### Remaining Challenges

While great strides are being made worldwide in polio eradication, many challenges remain before the remaining 1 percent of the poliovirus can be eliminated and global certification achieved. Maintaining high-level political commitment as the disease disappears is vital given that high quality surveillance will be needed for three years or longer after the last case of polio is detected before a region can be certified polio-free. Immunizations, surveillance, and containment of lab specimens may be needed even longer, and the earliest estimated date for stopping immunizations is 2010.

Ensuring adequate levels of funding for the global initiative is also critical to the campaign's success. Once polio vaccination ceases, global savings are estimated at more than \$1.5 billion a year, but even greater savings will be gained in eliminating the physical, social, and emotional burden that the disease brings to its victims and their families.

"Every Child Counts," the slogan adopted for the final push for polio eradication, emphasizes the importance of reaching and vaccinating all children. Since 1988, when the Global Polio Eradication initiative was launched, 3 million children have escaped the paralysis of polio. The focus of USAID's PEI on strengthening the routine immunization system, surveillance, and the laboratory network is a deliberate strategic approach that is hoped will lead to the establishment of sustainable national health systems and the resulting improvement of global public health. This has the potential to be the most important long-term legacy of the entire polio eradication effort.

*For additional information about USAID Africa Bureau polio activities, contact Mary Harvey, technical advisor for child survival at AFR/SD, (202) 712-5483, maharvey@usaid.gov; or Elyn Ogden, G/PHN worldwide polio eradication coordinator, (202)-712-5891, eogden@usaid.gov.*

— Patricia Mantey

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