

ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT
FY 2005 RESEARCH OPTIONS FOR DCHA/PVC-ASHA

Background: DCHA/PVC-ASHA is a center of learning in organizational development, promoting sustainable, effective and accountable local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Learning is accomplished through a number of mechanisms, most notably:

- demonstration grants to test various priorities in organizational development;
- technical assistance to missions and other USAID operating units to address NGO strengthening issues within a broader implementation context;
- analysis of past evaluation and other documents that may have been prepared prior to the current office focus on organizational development but which may shed light on lessons learned; and
- original research that specifically targets topics where answers do not appear readily available through other means.

While PVC-ASHA supports research through its current grant and technical assistance programs as well as by reviewing past documentation, a major source of learning can and should be soliciting documentation from U.S. PVOs and other non-profit implementing partners of their years of experience in working with and through local NGOs.

Research Topics: The purpose of this APS is to outline key PVC-ASHA research topics and to solicit interest from U.S. PVOs and other non-profit organizations in providing research information, either based on past and/or current field experience or on primary research as part of this APS.

Key topics of interest to PVC-ASHA include:

- ***PVO/NGO Mechanisms:*** In the experience of your PVO, what key lessons have been learned about what works/doesn't work in developing a working partnership with a local NGO? What has been the purpose of the PVO-NGO partnership? What have been the key results, based on this purpose? What have been the costs and benefits of your partnerships?
- ***Networks:*** What key lessons has your PVO learned about what works/doesn't work in terms of working with/through networks (defined as a group of non-aligned organizations working on a common purpose)? What has been the purpose of the networks? What have been the key results, based on the purpose of the network? What have been the costs and benefits of your network experiences?
- ***Organizational best practices:*** Based on your PVO experiences, what lessons have been learned about structuring and/or prioritizing

- organizational development for local NGOs? What organizational development practices or methodologies have worked most effectively? And/or efficiently? (Note: you will need to define “effective” and/or “efficient” for your PVO and for the NGOs you highlight.) What cost-benefit lessons have been learned? Can any conclusions be drawn, based on your experiences, on what components of organizational development might need to be addressed first? And/or which components might need more funding than others?
- **Success and sustainability of local NGOs:** In the experience of your U.S. PVO, what makes some local NGOs (and networks) successful and sustainable and others not? (Note: you will need to define “successful” and/or “sustainable” for your PVO and for the NGOs you highlight.) Why do some NGOs (and networks) fare better in the face of donor funding and priorities than others? What characterizes those that are able to withstand donor and other external pressures and influences from those that have more difficulty in finding their own “voice” and/or in surviving after donor funding dries up?
 - **NGOs’ role in stability:** In the experience of your U.S. PVO, is there anything in particular that characterizes NGOs in countries where there has been (relative) stability in the face of potentially destabilizing events (e.g., Kenya, South Africa)? Is there anything we can learn from NGO experiences and examples in these countries that might be applied elsewhere? What has been the role of NGOs in maintaining/not maintaining stability in certain countries in the years, months, weeks leading up to conflict or peaceful transition? Were NGOs actively engaged in promoting peace (or conflict)? Were NGOs perceived by the public as a stabilizing or moderating force?
 - **NGOs in transition:** In the experience of your PVO, what is the role of NGOs in transition? What has been USAID’s and other donor’s experience in using the same/different NGOs as a situation moves from emergency to transition to greater stability/development? What has been the experience in: finding qualified NGOs in different circumstances? Working with them across transition circumstances (i.e., from emergency, to transition, to greater stability)? Do donors (including U.S. PVO partners, if/as appropriate) tend to change NGO partners as the circumstances change? Or work with the same NGOs as transition progresses? What can we learn from these experiences? What are the capabilities of NGOs in a post-conflict situation? Are there common characteristics we can identify and perhaps we should document?
 - **NGOs in other currently widespread circumstances** (e.g., HIV/AIDS, sudden change in economic conditions): In your PVO’s experience, what are the effects on NGOs in a country with rapidly changing and potentially destabilizing circumstances (e.g., high rates of HIV/AIDS infection and death)? How do NGOs respond to internal loss of staff? How do they cope with loss of client base and/or changing client base (e.g., increased number of widows and/or children)?

- **NGOs in a democratic transition:** Based on your PVO's experience, what has happened to NGOs in countries that have had a peaceful democratic transition? Have NGOs supplied a significant portion of a new government's leadership? And, if so, what's become of the NGOs? (Has their potential sustainability been affected?) Are NGOs perceived differently with a change of government?
- **NGOs and ethnicity:** Are there any lessons your PVO has learned from NGOs and networks that work across inter-ethnic and/or inter-religious lines as part of their service delivery (i.e., other than groups that explicitly address inter-ethnic and inter-religious issues as their "service" – e.g., "conflict dialogue" groups)? Are there unique characteristics of NGOs that have managed to successfully bring different ethnic and other groups together peacefully?

Approach: PVC-ASHA welcomes research proposals on the topics listed above. If this research is based on past or current field experience, then PVC-ASHA would anticipate that associated costs might be relatively low (in the \$10,000-50,000 range) and related primarily to the staff costs associated with gathering information and writing up findings. Any research proposals requiring primary field research must fully justify the need for the original research and associated costs; given the limited funding available to cover all potential research, proposals requiring primary field research and associated higher costs (not to exceed \$100,000) will be given lower priority. Proposals must provide an hypothesis against which the data will be tested and must clearly outline the proposed sources of information, the research methodology proposed (including a clear listing of the countries and NGOs to be included in the study), the length of time required to gather and analyze data, and the proposed scope of the research to be reported on.

Many of the topics listed may overlap or intersect. Therefore, research proposals may include one topic, several topics combined, and/or parts of several topics. Variations, within reason, on the topics listed above may also be proposed, with explanation and justification for the variation. The key guidance on any proposal submitted should be that it furthers understanding in what makes a sustainable, effective and accountable local organization.

While research may be based on a single country or local NGO experience, greater consideration will be given to proposals that include a broader variety of countries (particularly those that cover more than one geographic region) and/or variety of NGOs. Particular emphasis will be given to proposals that include experiences from a variety of country circumstances (e.g., stable and less stable, humanitarian and development) and that provide comparative analysis on how NGOs and organizational development may differ depending on the conditions in the country.

Proposals should include, but necessarily be limited to:

- a brief outline of the research hypothesis to be addressed, with clear linkage to PVC-ASHA topics of interest as listed above (or justification if not directly linked to PVC-ASHA interests);
- a detailed description of what the proposed research will cover and how the research will be undertaken;
- a research methodology, including a listing of the countries, NGOs, and other relevant factors (e.g., conflict) that will be included in the research effort, and a timeline or other illustration of how the time and funding requested will be used to ensure completion of the research proposed;
- information on the proposing organization's previous experience with USAID grants and/or other donor or foundation grants;
- a planned completion date, including proposed submission date for PVC-ASHA;
- an itemized cost proposal
- a budget narrative explaining the proposed costs, including justification for any primary/field research proposed;
- information on proposed personnel to undertake the research, and their experience and qualifications;
- the offeror's negotiated indirect costs rate agreement (NICRA) (if the offeror does not have a NICRA they will be asked to provide audited financial statements for the preceding three years. Such offerors may also be asked to provide copies of organizational policies and procedures addressing accounting, purchasing, property management and personnel;

Successful offerors will also be asked to provide the following signed certifications:

- Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs;
- Certification Regarding Debarment; Suspension; and Other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions;
- Certification Regarding Debarment; Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters – Lower Tier Covered Transactions;
- Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements;
- Restrictions on Lobbying; and
- Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries.

Proposals will be evaluated on the strength of the proposed hypothesis and methodology vis-à-vis the research interests of DCHA/PVC-ASHA and on the potential significance of research results based on the breadth and depth of data (i.e., number of countries, NGOs, etc.) proposed for inclusion. These criteria are equally weighted. The offeror will also be evaluated on cost effectiveness, cost realism and past performance. The technical criteria are equally weighted and both are more important than past performance or costs. Awards for proposals offering valuable contributions to the PVC-ASHA research agenda will be made

in three tranches over a six month period from the date of initial offering. Dates for receipt of proposals will be May 31, July 31, and September 30 with awards being made within a month after submission of the proposals.

Proposals may be submitted by U.S. PVOs and other non-profit organizations (e.g., universities). Collaboration with local NGOs and/or academics from the countries being studied is welcome and encouraged.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Unless otherwise agreed, all research reports supported under this APS should be submitted to PVC-ASHA no later than September 30, 2006, i.e., one year after the date of final proposal submission.