

FRONT LINES



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U.S. Agency for International Development Employee News

JULY-AUGUST 2004



“I call all the countries of the world to participate in supporting Iraq and rebuilding Iraq.”

Cris Bouroncle, Associated Press
Iyad Allawi
Iraqi Prime Minister
Speech in Baghdad at transition to Iraqi sovereignty
June 28, 2004

Karzai: “Thanks”

Afghanistan’s President Hamid Karzai personally thanked dozens of Agency veterans of Afghan reconstruction projects at USAID headquarters June 14, during a trip to Washington, D.C.

“I don’t know if I have the vocabulary to describe the change you brought to Afghanistan,” Karzai said, wearing his trademark wool cap and green robe.

He said U.S.-supported improvements to roads, healthcare, and schools “are not coming through in the press.”

“The success of Afghanistan is the success of you all,” Karzai added. “Thank you very much. You can’t imagine—when I describe what you have done.”

▼ SEE KARZAI ON PAGE 15

Iraq Team Stays On Job As Embassy Opens Up

BAGHDAD—Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) leaders packed up June 26 and left for home after 15 months administering and reconstructing Iraq, but more than 160 USAID employees remained at their jobs from Basra to Baghdad to Erbil, expecting to accelerate aid to the Iraqi people.

“We do believe that over the coming months things will get better as Iraqis take charge and security is addressed,” said Gordon West, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Asia and the Near East.

The USAID mission, headed by Spike Stephenson, left its office in the convention center in the Green Zone, where it had operated since spring 2003. The Agency has shifted to temporary space and is working with the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Overseas Building Operations to identify permanent offices, said West.

Agency staff kept their housing in

trailers and elsewhere inside the Green Zone of Baghdad and in secure zones, such as the Basra airport, in other cities.

“The size of our staff, except for a few vacancies, is not to change,” said West. He noted that USAID had already obligated—begun or completed—\$3.8 billion worth of projects assigned to the Agency.

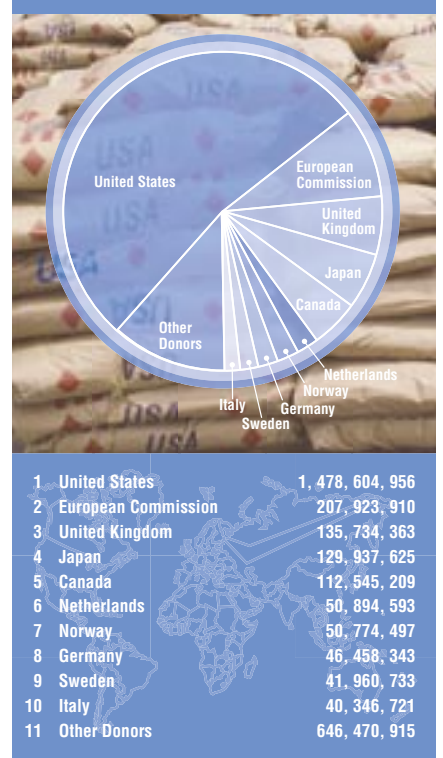
Since U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte arrived in Baghdad after CPA chief L. Paul Bremer III left, the USAID mission will report to the ambassador, just as it does in any other country, said West.

The mission will now coordinate with the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) to be headed by Ambassador William B. Taylor, who until recently served as Afghanistan Coordinator for the State Department.

Establishing the new embassy will involve dialogue between USAID and State and the new Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi over secu-

▼ SEE IRAQ ON PAGE 14

U.S. TOP DONOR TO U.N. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM 2003



New Business Model Launched

The time and effort spent designing country assistance strategies will be drastically scaled back following a recent review of the Agency’s business model (see *Notes from Natsios*, p. 3).

Missions will choose from a limited list of program objectives and use a standard set of performance indicators to measure progress. Temporary guidelines on the new process will be issued shortly.

▼ SEE BUSINESS MODEL ON PAGE 13

MCA Aid Hopes Spark Reform

The head of the new Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Paul Applegarth, said June 23 that developing countries are already clamping down on corruption and reforming their economies in hopes of qualifying for a share of the \$1 billion in MCC aid this year and the \$2.5 billion requested for next year by the Bush administration.

▼ SEE HOPE FOR AID ON PAGE 13

PRESERVING NATURE’S GIFTS

Jones/Shimlock, Secret Sea

Indonesia’s 17,000 islands extend 5,000 kilometers from east to west along the equator. The country is home to 47 ecosystems ranging from pristine coral canyons to tropical lowland forests. Protection of coral reefs and ocean ecosystems is just one of the bioconservation programs run by the Jakarta mission.

▼ SEE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON PAGE 2

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NRM Helps Preserve Flora, Fauna, Water Resources

Preserving forests, savannahs, coral reefs, deserts, and diverse animal kingdoms. Keeping water clean and providing it to the world's poorest. These are some of the challenging and crucial tasks of the Office of Natural Resource Management (NRM).

The office, which falls under the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, has a budget of \$19 million. But it also tracks and advises on some \$155 million worth of congressionally assigned biodiversity conservation programs managed by USAID missions.

"Our part in development is that we look at how to preserve natural resources in the long-term and find ways for them



USAID/Ecuador

One of USAID's natural resource management programs in Ecuador focuses on improving the management of the Galapagos archipelago, 97 percent of which is a national park. Seals are among the hundreds of animal species living on the Galapagos.

to be sustainably used to benefit communities and future generations," said David Hess, NRM director.

"One of our biggest challenges is to find solutions that offer a win for poor people's survival and well-being, and a win for the physical and biological resources they depend on."

DAVID HESS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Some 30 technical officers oversee USAID programs in four major areas: land, biodiversity, forestry, and water and coastal resources. The office also links missions to environmental experts at partner organizations such as the U.S. Forest Service.

In Latin America, the office helps fight illegal logging in the Amazon. It also provided experts to help communities who depend on income from tourism around endless miles of coral reefs along the coast of Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico.

In Africa, the office lends field support to richly biodiverse countries such as Madagascar, saving tree and animal species for future generations. Elsewhere—in Mali, Ghana, and Niger, for instance—it helps

bring potable water and sanitation services to poor and isolated regions.

The office manages two of the 19 presidential initiatives: fighting illegal logging and helping provide water for the poor in Africa. It also manages two of USAID's most successful public-private partnerships related to water and forestry.

The biggest obstacle to preserving nature is corruption, said Hess.

"The fact is that the elites in most countries directly benefit from cashing in on natural resources," he said. "It's hard to get policies passed and enforced. Because natural resources are a real wealth for the powerful elites, corruption is our biggest challenge."

But the office has found ways to get countries to invest in their natural resources. In 1991, for instance, USAID backed a swap program trading debt for natural resources management investments.

Under the deal, USAID and conservation NGOs bought \$341 million of Bolivia's debt at a discounted rate. In exchange, the Bolivian government committed \$22 million to its Natural Fund for the Environment, which provides grants for forest and biodiversity conservation, expands protected areas, and benefits nearby communities.

The government also ceded to NGOs access to large parcels of environmentally diverse land, allowing them to train local communities to preserve and manage the areas while earning incomes. ★



Citlali Córtez, USAID/Mexico

This cactus forest along the Sonora-U.S. border and between Guatemala and Mexico on the Yucatan Peninsula is protected under the Parks in Peril program, a massive USAID-funded effort to preserve parks throughout Latin America.

Second Largest Barrier Reef Threatened

BELIZE CITY, Belize—Growing tourism, pollution, and fishing off Belize and its neighbors have hurt diverse ecosystems that grow along the world's second largest barrier reef, prompting USAID to support efforts to preserve the huge natural resource in Caribbean waters.

The Mesoamerican Reef extends from the waters off the Yucatan Peninsula, south through Belize and Guatemala, to the Bay Islands off Honduras. Its waters are home to 66 species of corals and more than 400 species of reef fish, making the coral reef one of UNESCO's World Heritage sites.

The presidents of Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras and the prime minister of Belize signed the Tulum Declaration in 1997 to promote conservation and responsible use of the reef. Since then, USAID has funded protection work through the Mesoamerican Reef

Alliance and by The Nature Conservancy along the Belize section of the reef.

The Nature Conservancy helped set up Belize's Gladden Spit Marine Reserve, which covers 40 square miles and is home to a huge number of species, including whale sharks. The conservancy also helped designate parts of the reef as non-fishing areas during fish spawning season and other times.

Since the Gladden Spit reserve was founded, the ban on fishing during spawning season has helped identify 26 new species. As result, the government of Belize has created 10 more reserve-like, protected reef areas.

USAID is now expanding its program with The Nature Conservancy, and will pursue similar activities along the entire length of the reef through support to the Mesoamerican Reef Alliance. ★



A USAID-funded program through The Nature Conservancy works to protect the Mesoamerican coral reef along the coastline of Belize. The reef is the second largest in the world.

Senegal's Baobab Fruit Yield Profits

DAKAR, Senegal—For years, Adama Traore collected baobab fruit for a living, but after traveling 12 miles to the nearest market he barely earned more than his transportation costs when he sold his fruit.

Traore now heads the Baobab Producers' Group in the village of Sintiou Diokhe. The group recently negotiated a contract to provide 350 tons of baobab fruit for a price 75 percent higher than he was receiving.

Baobab trees grow in the arid Sahel region of Africa and look as if they are growing upside down—their fat trunks bear spiny branches that look like roots.

A U.S. foreign aid team linked the villagers who sold baobab with the Baobab Fruit Company, an Italian pharmaceutical firm that makes beauty products from the fruit.

The baobab, also known as monkey bread, is one of several natural products promoted through Senegal's Agriculture and Natural Resource Management programs.

"The idea is to increase the amount of income people derive from local forests so they place a higher value on the forests themselves and would therefore be less inclined to convert the forest to agriculture or some other more destructive use," said Peter Trenchard, Agriculture/Natural Resource Management advisor for USAID/Senegal.

"We are helping local communities obtain exclusive use and management rights for the forests instead of having all authority resting with central government."

Nontimber forest products such as nuts, fruit, and charcoal have traditionally been



Brook Johnson, USAID

Baobab fruit is one of several natural products being commercialized with the help of USAID/Senegal.

viewed as subsistence goods. But communities in Africa are now benefiting from the high commercial potential for these products, as USAID works to develop public-private partnerships to link local producers to industries.

In the case of the baobab, the mission helped link farmers to the local offices of the Baobab Fruit Company.

The USAID-funded program then provided technical assistance to help organize local producer groups to be more business-oriented. These groups, scattered through different villages, now work together and are able to command a better price than before.

The Senegal mission is also supporting work with fonio, a local cereal that resembles couscous; bamboo for artisanry; and moringa trees, whose leaves contain vitamins and can be used to purify water. ★

FIRST PERSON



“If we can have two successful harvests, I will be able to sell some food and buy some clothes. All we need is a little extra food and seeds so we can become strong and self-sufficient.”

SOLOMAY EPOUCA,
RESIDENT OF HUAMBO AND MOTHER OF EIGHT.

Solomay Epouca is the head of one of 58,000 families in Huambo, Angola, who are benefiting from a food aid program that urges displaced people living in cities to move back to their home villages. The program delivered 300 pounds of corn, beans, and vegetable oil, as well as seeds, as well as hoes, machetes, and watering buckets so that villagers could start working their land again. People like Epouca also receive food as an incentive to attend agricultural training.

Notes from Natsios

★★★★★★★★



Last December, I asked the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) and the Bureau for Management to review the way USAID carries out its job—our business model. The goal was to improve efficiency by reviewing the means and the organizational structure we use to plan, carry out, and monitor assistance programs.

The Business Model Review Group (BMRG) conducted extensive interviews, reviewed a massive amount of current and empirical data, sent out an Agency-wide survey, and traveled to 10 countries. They reviewed opinions voiced in more than 500 emails.

Thanks to the contributions of many of you in Washington and the field, the review group has been able to develop a set of actions which, when implemented, should greatly streamline and improve Agency operations.

I have just approved the BMRG recommendations, giving a green light to plan and carry them out even as we continue to seek further Agency views.

We will streamline the Agency's strategic planning process. This will improve the coherence of strategies across the Agency, including their links to the National Security Strategy, the Joint USAID/State Strategic Plan, and White Paper principles.

Missions will choose from a list of strategic objectives with required indicators, rather than each mission naming and reporting on similar objectives differently. We will also make strategies more consistent by relating outcomes to a standard set of strategic goals, objectives, and indicators.

We will cut the time and resources expended in the strategic planning effort. Interim guidance will be presented to the BTEC for approval not later than July 30, 2004, with incorporation in the Automated Directive System as soon as possible thereafter.

PPC will lead the process. Until this new guidance is issued, we should avoid the preparation of new country strategies unless urgently needed.

We will create a system of mission program management reviews and conduct a portfolio review of pillar bureau support to field operations. These will evaluate the soundness of the strategic process, coordination with other foreign aid providers, program structure, staff size, accountability, performance, support from headquarters, and the effectiveness of regional service delivery.

The pillar portfolio reviews would look at questions such as the staffing and workload balance between Washington's pillar bureaus and field operations, relevance of central programs to field operations, and how effective the shift of technical capability from the regional bureaus has been.

Finally, to improve USAID's operational efficiency, we will institute a number of changes in three broad areas: field structure, staffing, and the use of regional platforms; human resources; and management efficiencies.

The full text of the Business Model Review Group report, including the decision memoranda, will be posted to the USAID intranet. ★

Mission of the Month

WEST BANK/GAZA

The Challenge

Conditions resulting from the second intifada, which began in September 2000, have made it difficult for Palestinians to attend school, go to work, get healthcare, or otherwise go about their daily life.

The West Bank/Gaza mission responded by delivering emergency assistance along with its long-term activities in construction, economic development, and governance.

The situation hampered work and made visits by USAID employees to West Bank and Gaza both costly and rare.

U.S. staff had to stop going to Gaza entirely in October 2003 after three U.S. bodyguards employed by the U.S. Embassy were killed when their vehicles were blown up there.

Keeping up with developments in the territories and working with local partners fell largely to the mission's contractors and Palestinian staff, although they also have to contend with the difficult security environment.

“The whole notion of oversight had to be rethought,” said Larry Garber, whose five-year tenure as mission director ended in July 2004.

Innovative USAID Response

As hostilities deepened, the mission revamped its development program to include providing emergency water, food, medicine, and reconstruction.

Emergency repairs got water flowing to villages. U.S. engineers traveled with local crews to get them through checkpoints.

Local researchers guided by Johns Hopkins University experts visited 1,000 households and found a significant increase in malnutrition and anemia, leading USAID and other donors to expand food and health assistance.

Unemployed workers were hired to empty abandoned trash dumps, clean streets, or renovate classrooms.

The Agency, through its support for the private sector, also helped Palestinian pharmaceutical firms improve their product quality and then bought the medicines for the mission's emergency relief program. A \$15 million project in 2003 hired 11 Palestinian construction firms to repair roads in West Bank.

To ensure that tax revenues were being used for the benefit of the Palestinian people, USAID helped the Palestinian Authority audit its accounts. The Office of the Inspector General employed local Palestinian accounting firms to audit all grants and contracts.

Given the difficulties of traveling in the territories, the mission relied more than ever on its local employees—especially foreign service nationals (FSNs) living in Gaza or the West Bank—to monitor projects. Contractors, FSNs, American staff, and local counterparts met in places accessible to everyone or talked via phone or videoconference, depending on the security situation.



Gina Benevento, USAID/West Bank/Gaza

A Palestinian lab worker checks on medicines prepared with the help of a USAID private sector program. This is one way the West Bank/Gaza mission, which celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2004, pursues long-term development goals while meeting urgent humanitarian needs.

Results

Despite the precarious situation, the mission's contractors and grantees have worked with few interruptions.

“We've been able to find a good balance between our development program and providing necessary humanitarian assistance,” said Garber.

In 13 towns and villages, more than 40 miles of roads were repaired, prompting mayors in some towns to take out ads in local papers thanking USAID. Reservoirs, wells, and pipelines doubled the amount of water available to 400,000 West Bank residents.

More than 2.6 million days of employment have been generated by USAID's projects since 2001.

Food aid increased and was targeted to better respond to malnutrition and anemia.

Although dependence on humanitarian aid remains high, followup surveys showed improvements in children's nutritional status.

Through these rough years, local and U.S. employees say the mission has remained a collegial place to work.

“I like the diversity of the people in the mission: it is perfect,” said Sana' Zeidan, one of the mission's senior managers. “We have Israelis working close to Palestinians, working close to Americans. We have Muslims, Christians, and Jews. It's mixed.”

“If we can have it happening here, we can do it in the region,” she added. ★

Food For Peace Saved Millions of Lives in 50 Years

Since it was established 50 years ago, the U.S. Food for Peace foreign aid program has shipped more than 106 million metric tons of wheat, corn, oil, and other food overseas and saved hundreds of millions of lives.

America's productive harvests have been sent to needy countries to nourish children, the elderly, and all others in need, while helping rebuild communities disrupted by conflict, famine, drought, epidemics, political instability, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and natural disasters.

Public Law 480 was signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower July 10, 1954. It became known as P.L. 480 and later Food for Peace. The program's director worked in the White House for much of the 1960s.

P.L. 480 created two programs that continue today. Title I finances foreign governments' purchases of U.S. food and is run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Title II is administered by USAID and helps countries and communities in need.

International and nongovernmental organizations generally distribute the food on the Agency's behalf.

Title II distinguishes between food aid given for development and food for emergencies such as in Sudan, northern Uganda, or Ethiopia today.

Food for Peace also helps communities that frequently find themselves in crisis. Food aid is coupled with long-term efforts to improve people's understanding of nutrition, promote better agricultural practices, and find new ways to earn income.

During World War I, Herbert Hoover led the American Relief Administration, urging voluntary rationing of food in the United States so that surpluses could be sent to Europe, where famine threatened.

In 1947, the Marshall Plan began shipping generous amounts of food to Europe as it recovered from World War II and fought off communist efforts to exploit hunger.

An indirect additional benefit of U.S. food aid became apparent over the years, when countries that once had received U.S. shipments—such as Korea and Taiwan—became major commercial buyers of American grains and processed foods. ★



Ramin Rafirasme, WFP

Zimbabwe Gets U.S. Sorghum

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe—Emergency food is handed out for free to rural people identified as needy by their communities, but because this approach does not work well in urban areas, USAID is selling low-cost sorghum meal to reach the poor during the economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

With corn priced beyond the reach of the average family, the Market Assistance Program sells subsidized U.S. sorghum as a cheap alternative. Since Zimbabweans generally prefer maize and wheat, it is mostly the poor who will switch to the low-cost

sorghum meal to survive the crisis, said Patrick Diskin, regional Food for Peace officer for southern Africa.

The sorghum is sold only at grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods and purposely offered in small packages so that consumers can get enough cash together to buy it, said Diskin.

In Bulawayo, the country's second largest city, shopkeepers like Tom Ndlovu in the poor Mokokoba neighborhood reported that sales of the U.S. sorghum meal shot up a few days after the price of a kilo of corn meal doubled to 2,000 Zimbabwean dollars, said Leslie Petersen of Food for Peace, who traveled to Zimbabwe in June. A kilogram of sorghum sold for only Z\$600 (12 cents).

Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and CARE formed the Consortium for Southern Africa Food Security Emergency in 2002—which is carrying out the sorghum program—to find alternatives to traditional food distribution for addressing the triple crises of HIV/AIDS, drought, and economic crisis in southern Africa.

The program also keeps millers, food distributors, and shopkeepers like Ndlovu going. Retailers are permitted a 15 percent markup.

In this drought-parched and mismanaged country, U.S. sorghum sales may revive appetite for the drought-resistant grain and prompt farmers to plant it once more instead of corn. The program will expand from Bulawayo, the pilot site, to other cities in the coming months.

Zimbabwe was once a major regional supplier of grain. In recent years, production and trade have been hobbled by an overvalued exchange rate, state control over food prices, and the disruptive takeover of many commercial farms by squatters and government supporters. ★



Leslie Petersen, USAID

A customer at Tom Ndlovu's T&S Shop in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, bought two 10-kg bags of sorghum meal June 5, 2004. He estimated the sorghum would last his family a month.

Ralte Got Aid, Now Hands It Out

In 1970, Anne Ralte was an orphan in Calcutta, getting milk, bread, and rice each day through a USAID-funded food aid program. John Becker was a graduate student working on an Agency-funded agricultural research project in southern India.

Today, Ralte and Becker use their personal experience with food aid in their work at the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination. Their latest project is to develop a methodology for measuring humanitarian needs that the wider aid community can agree on.

"I think Anne has a great appreciation for what it means for food aid to get to the ultimate consumer," said Becker. "She was in a school-feeding environment, and she excelled in school and class work. But, in reality, it's pretty tough to excel in anything if you're hungry. When you haven't experienced it, you don't have the same appreciation."

Having done on-the-ground research during the formative years of his career, Becker feels that he too has a particular appreciation for food aid programs.

"When you have that kind of first-hand experience and you meet with people that are beneficiaries of your work, it just gives you a perspective that you never lose," he said.

Ralte received P.L.-480 food aid between 1963 and 1971. During that time, as the Green Revolution spread throughout Asia, USAID provided some \$2.6 billion worth of food aid to India.

"I guess I knew it was food aid, but when

you're that young, you don't really think about where the food comes from," she said. "You get in line, you get your food, and, as a child, you're always hungry."

Ralte was one of four orphaned siblings. An outstanding student, she attracted sponsorship from a New York state couple who funded her studies in India and eventually helped her come to the United States to further her education. She lived in New York, married an American, worked for the United Nations and NGOs in Asia and Africa, and joined USAID in 1996.

At USAID, Ralte led the Office of Food for Peace in developing the first strategic plan and performance management tool for Title II emergency food aid.

Ralte has dug through old reports tracking food aid programs in India. She discovered that the three groups that distributed USAID food in Calcutta during the 1960s and 1970s were the U.N.'s World Food Program, Catholic Relief Services, and CARE.

Last month Ralte narrowed down her results to identify CARE's program as the provider of food to her school.

"I've been thinking a lot about the work of these groups—the farmers, the transportation, the NGOs on the ground," she said. "That's tough to organize. It's an amazing thing to get things to where they are going."

Becker seconded the sentiment, and added: "I don't think there is any higher calling than helping poor people have enough to eat." ★



Anne Ralte—fourth student from left in the back row—received food aid through a school lunch program in Calcutta between 1963 and 1971.

Mozambique's Harvests Grow After End of Conflict

MAPUTO, Mozambique—Ana Antonio is a young mother who grows cassava and vegetables to feed her family and expects to earn a profit this year raising tomatoes and cabbages. She knows how to preserve food as well, assuring a healthy supply for her two children even if a crop fails.

Only a decade ago, families like Antonio's were struggling to stay alive in the wake of a 16-year civil war, relying on food donated by USAID and other aid organizations.

Since then, Mozambique has moved toward peace and development. While the country remains one of the world's poorest, its economy is growing, and the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization counts it among 22 countries that have "succeeded in turning the tide against hunger" since the mid-1990s.

U.S. food assistance in Mozambique has changed too, from emergency handouts to food that is sold commercially to finance agricultural development.

The USAID mission is investing \$20 million in food security programs in 2004, compared to \$67 million spent on free food distribution in 1993.

In 2003, more than 200,000 rural families benefited from the Agency's agriculture and nutrition education programs that helped them grow more

food, eat better, and earn higher incomes.

USAID finances its food security program by selling U.S. wheat on the local market. Because wheat is not produced in Mozambique, the imports do not compete directly with local farmers. The wheat imports do keep food costs down for the urban poor, who rely on bread as a staple. The imports also spur competition in the milling industry. Funds raised from wheat sales pay for local agriculture experts who introduce farmers to new high-value and high-nutrition crops, show them how to increase yields, and help them form cooperatives to market their products.

USAID also supports a network of community experts in nutrition. These volunteers teach mothers about preventing diarrhea and maintaining healthy diets for children, who often are fed only plain porridge even when other food is available.

Women like Antonio are also learning business and farming skills. For the first time in their lives, they are earning money with cash crops such as sesame, sunflower, and vegetables.

All programs also teach how to prevent HIV/AIDS, a growing health threat in Mozambique. ★

Melissa Thompson contributed to this article.



Suzanne Poland, USAID/Mozambique

Ana Antonio holds a basket with squash leaves that she will dry for later use. These leaves add protein and vitamins, especially vitamin A, to her children's porridge.

Marta Emilia Perez Runs Honduran Food Program



CARE

Marta Emilia Perez at a food security fair in the western Honduras village of San Juan in March 2004. A program by USAID and CARE helped farmers to organize the fair to display and sell their produce.

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras—In large part, it is the efforts of foreign service national Marta Emilia Perez that have kept the Honduras food aid program growing in quantity and in quality.

"Marta is one of those people who get rave reviews," said Alexander Dickie, deputy mission director, who joined USAID's mission in Tegucigalpa two years ago. He heard a lot about Perez then and, after working with her, he became a fan himself.

"She is personable, charming, and has gotten her share of training and rising in the system," Dickie said. "She is very autonomous."

Perez joined the Agency in 1989, after she and her husband moved from their home country, El Salvador.

Two years later, she started working with the Food for Peace program, and today she is Honduras's sole Food for Peace officer.

One of her first assignments, Perez recalled, was to carry out a cost-effectiveness study, comparing USAID's food aid program with a cash coupon program run by the Honduran government.

Another study showed the need to add a development aspect to the Agency's food distribution program. Since then, the mission has included health, education, food for work, and municipal development to its food program.

Under her leadership, the program has grown, and next year its funding is ballooning from \$5.5 million to \$15 million. The program will start up in parts of the

south and expand into more communities in western Honduras.

"This part of the country is very isolated, poor, and people don't have opportunities or access to health or education," Perez said. "It's my personal social interest to help those people. We can bring at least part of that population to another stage, where they can engage in other development projects that would give them more opportunities."

People like Perez are indispensable, Dickie said, and a must-have at every USAID mission.

"You always know that Marta is taking care of business, and that if there are problems she will let you know. We consider her a great asset to the mission." ★

U.N., U.S. TEAMS BATTLE WORLD HUNGER

Bringing down the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition is both a humanitarian concern and a development challenge.

- The number of chronically hungry people in the developing world jumped by 18 million from 1995–97, wiping out half the decrease achieved in the early 1990s. Political crises, armed conflicts, HIV/AIDS, as well as natural disasters put pressure on food production and contributed to the increase in food insecurity.
- The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has the lead in the world's fight to combat hunger. USAID is its largest single donor.
- Since its establishment in 1963, the WFP has raised \$27.8 billion in funds and distributed 43 million metric tons of food. In 2003, WFP fed 104 million people in 81 countries.
- Through USAID, the United States gave 56.8 percent of the \$2.6 billion in commodities and cash contributed to WFP in 2003. Almost half the resources were spent in sub-Saharan Africa.



Olav Saltbones, WFP

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

India's New Community Colleges Expand to North



Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development

A delegation of Indian educators exchanged information on curriculum development at the Eastern Iowa Community College District's Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center.

NEW DELHI—In northern India, the first seven community colleges are about to open their doors. They follow the lead of southern India, where more than 100 have opened in the past decade.

USAID supported the establishment of community colleges through funding the Madras Centre for Research and Development of Community Education. The center trains teachers, produces curricula and textbooks, and holds educational workshops. It also monitors and evaluates the performance of many of the colleges.

The community colleges are run by NGOs, community groups, and church parishes. They are not funded by the Indian government and are not recognized as official higher education institutions.

But Dr. Xavier Alphonse, head of the Madras center, has been in talks with the Indian government about allowing graduates to transfer to universities.

to the country's otherwise difficult-to-access higher education system," said Martin Hewitt, education program officer at the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

India has many top-notch universities, but a typical university annually receives 40,000 applications to fill a mere 3,000 slots. The result is that only 7 million of India's 168 million youth are enrolled in universities.

More youth can attend lower-tier higher education institutions such as polytechnics and technical teacher training institutes. But such institutions are low in number, their equipment and curriculum are dated, faculty training has been mostly ignored, and graduates are rarely well prepared for the job market.

In contrast, community colleges are tailored around the communities they serve and train students in the skills most employable in a given region, said Alphonse.

A basic program teaches life-coping skills—things such as maintaining high self-esteem or transitioning to modern culture—as well as English and computer literacy. The program focuses on a major, which could be herbal medicine, organic farming, mechanical repair skills, nursing, or clothmaking.

More than two-thirds of community college degree-holders are employed, said Alphonse.

As the community college movement moves into northern India, the Madras center plans to hold regional workshops to inform localities about the community colleges, attract new faculty, and approach prospective employers.

Alphonse also wants to see the creation of rural community colleges with a specific focus on agriculture and rural development. Seven new curricula would be developed for the new colleges, along with new train-the-trainer packages for faculty. ★

SNAPSHOT OF INDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- 69 percent of students are women
- 87 percent are poor, with incomes of less than \$60 a month
- 92 percent are from disadvantaged groups

in 1995. Since then, 111 more colleges have been started in the mostly rural south of India. More than 10,000 students have completed the one-year, \$100 education program, which is targeted at women, religious minority groups, and poor people between the ages of 18 and 25.

Now the Madras center is expanding the system into the urban north of India, hoping to set up 30 community colleges in the near future.

"The community college is essential to India because it provides a viable alternative

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Teachers Share Ideas at Online Learning Portal

Teachers in South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda, Ethiopia, Brazil, and Nicaragua can share their lesson plans and teaching approaches or discuss difficult topics such as AIDS education over an internet portal created by the Global Development Alliance (GDA) and the Office of Education.

Launched as a pilot project in October 2003, the Global Learning Portal (GLPNet) now averages 3,000 hits each month. There are more than 1,200 registered users of the portal worldwide.

Through the portal, educators can download free software or use search engines to find material such as case studies, lesson plans, and classroom activities.

The website also features online discussions where educators debate latest trends in education or tackle challenges. A recent discussion wrestled with how to save dying indigenous languages; another how to engage students to talk about HIV/AIDS.

A search option on GLPNet allows teachers to seek each other out by specifying region, grade, subject, or language. Translation is provided to help with language barriers, making the portal available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The portal is one of five components of GDA's \$5 million Worldwide Education Alliance. Private sector partners, led by Sun Microsystems, leveraged \$10 million for GLPNet.

The portal is being tested in six countries that have reliable internet connectivity and experience with high-technology education projects. Next steps will allow groups to set up their own "communities of practice," or customized discussion forums, on specific subjects.

An Arabic version of the portal may also become available as the program unfolds.

Eventually, the portal could be used by USAID's Office of Education as an information clearinghouse on education issues, said Greg Loos, technical advisor

on the program.

"We believe the portal will be an essential resource for educators worldwide as well as for USAID to address a global shortage of qualified educators," Loos said.

In Ethiopia, nearly 100 teachers are registered to improve teaching methods with GLPNet.

In Uganda, the pilot is used by 200 student teachers. There and in South Africa the focus is on creating pedagogical materials and finding better ways to engage students on the subject of HIV/AIDS. Some 100 South African educators are participating.

A trans-Atlantic connection links up teachers in Portuguese-speaking Mozambique with some 300 counterparts in Brazil. Some 90 educators are registered to exchange lesson plans and schoolroom practices using the GLPNet pilot in Nicaragua.

The portal is the primary component of the GDA Worldwide Education Alliance, which is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development.

Other components of the alliance include

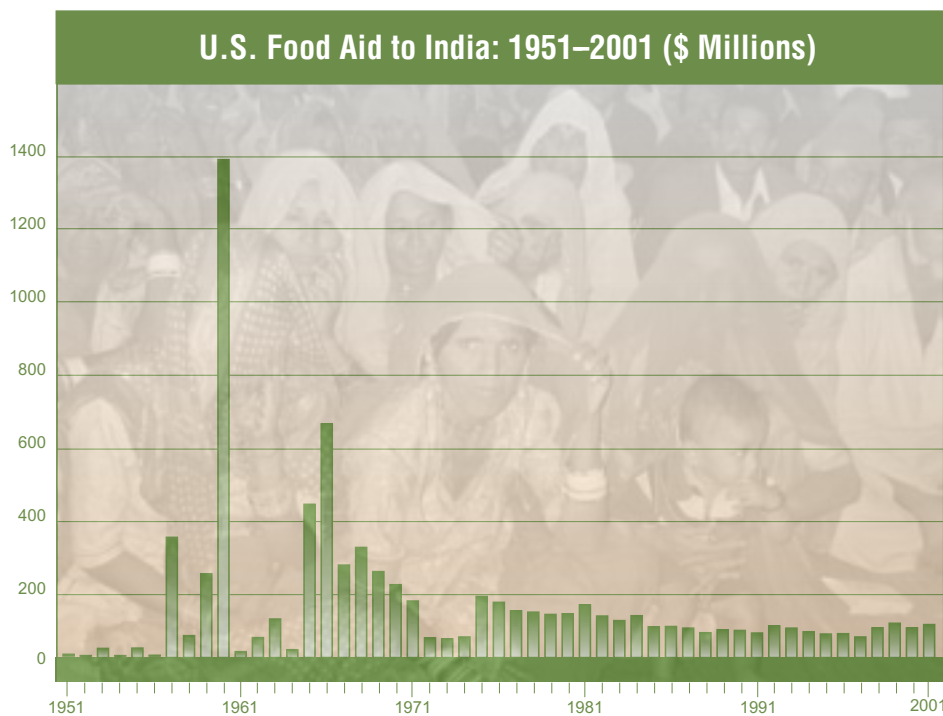
- Nigeria YES (Youth, Education, Self-reliance), an alliance with ChevronTexaco that offers business and entrepreneurship skills training to youth
- expansion of Escuela Modelada, a community-owned school reform program in Nicaragua, in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce of Nicaragua and the American-Nicaraguan Foundation.
- Readiness Matrix, an analytical tool for assessing a country's education sector
- a feasibility study for a university for women in Bangladesh, in partnership with the Asian University for Women Support Fund ★



Through the Global Learning Portal, created by the Global Development Alliance and the Office of Education, educators can download software and use search engines to find lesson plans, examples of classroom activities, and case studies. They can also engage in online discussions. The portal is available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and provides translation.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Food Aid Still Reaches Needy in India



NEW DELHI—U.S. food aid in India has gone beyond simply setting wheat or rice in front of those in need.

Food for Peace (FFP) programs combine food with health and education programs and use a vast network of government and civil society groups to look out for the needs of India's most vulnerable communities.

More than 50 years into its work, the FFP program in India has evolved into a "model that is sophisticated and impressive," said FFP Director Lauren Landis, who recently visited aid program sites in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

The food aid can be part of a school lunch program or humanitarian assistance to sustain people through droughts and food shortages.

In the village of Daddu, for instance, food aid and locally produced food is used to improve child and women's health.

"Judging by what I have seen, it is clear that CARE India has developed effective strategies to engage local governments in improving household security."

FOOD FOR PEACE DIRECTOR LAUREN LANDIS, USAID/DCHA

The terrain in this region at the heart of the Rajasthan desert is difficult, with small dispersed settlements separated by vast expanses of sand, very little vegetation, and no public transportation. The programs run jointly by the government of India and CARE provide growth monitoring of children, immunization, antenatal checkups, and preschool education. Women and children participating receive both a nutritious snack and a take-home ration.

Teaching girls and young women about

health helps delay early marriages and lays the foundation for positive health practices by future mothers, said district Women and Child Development Officer Kamala Jowahar, who is in charge of thousands of centers like the one in Daddu. The CARE Title II program reaches more than 6 million people in 100,000 villages, spanning nine of India's states.

At another village, Aloor, an hour's drive from India's newest "hightech city" of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, the USAID food program provides a nutritious meal, bringing girls who have been out of school and former child laborers back to the classroom.

The program runs accelerated learning courses for these youths to help them catch up on missed curriculum. The program is run by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and a local NGO, Mullapudi Venkatarangaiah Foundation, and is part of a larger effort to stop child labor.

Through about 2,500 partners, the food aid program of CRS reaches nearly a million of India's most deprived people living in remote regions.

These are just two examples of food aid programs that USAID has run in the past 50 years. India has been home to the largest USAID food program, which saved millions from starvation during acute food shortages in the 1960s.

Since 1951, USAID has supported India's efforts to improve food security. During the Green Revolution, this included the introduction of high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice, the production and use of fertilizer, and the development of irrigation and transportation infrastructure.

India's food aid program has been shrinking since the 1980s, as the country increased food production and achieved economic growth. Today, however, USAID/India continues to provide food aid to the most vulnerable sections of the population and works with the Indian government to feed those in need. ★

GLOBAL HEALTH

Women's Fistula Repaired As Surgeons Trained

Fistula is a medical condition caused by prolonged labor during childbirth or rape, leaving thousands of women, primarily in Africa and Asia, living in isolation and shame and often destitute.

Although treatable, few doctors are trained to perform repair surgeries. And because women are shunned by their communities, little is done to help them survive.

To help these women, USAID is spending \$800,000 to train doctors in fistula-repair surgery. These programs, offered through the Bureau for Global Health and the Uganda and Bangladesh missions, also support education to communities to prevent fistula and counseling to help women who have undergone surgery reintegrate into their communities.

Childbirth and pregnancy complications are a leading cause of death and disability among women in developing countries. Obstetric fistula alone affects at least 2 million women worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

Obstetric fistula is an abnormal opening caused by tissue damage between the vagina and the bladder or rectum. A timely Caesarean section can prevent the condition, but in poor countries births are rarely attended by skilled personnel.

Surgery can repair fistula, but few doctors in Asia and Africa are trained to perform such operations, and often women have to travel long distances to reach hospitals where such work is done.

Women who suffer from fistula leak urine and feces. Some suffer neurological damage that can affect their ability to walk.

Many feel shamed or disgraced and are deserted by their husbands and families.

Through the new program, USAID will help train doctors to treat fistula at two hospitals in Bangladesh and three in Uganda. Two more Ugandan hospitals are expected to join the program as it expands.

Hospitals will link patients with support services such as counseling. The program also will help reintegrate women into society and teach families about the signs of fistula and the importance of safe childbirth.

In Uganda, the program will also support an awareness campaign targeting men, so that they learn about the importance of safe childbirth. In Bangladesh, the government and the private sector will be asked to pay for patients to travel to hospitals.

In Ethiopia, where homebirth is the norm, USAID programs support community education teaching families to recognize childbirth complications, so that women are taken to health facilities in time to prevent fistula.

Although fistula most often results from difficult labor in childbirth, a growing number of women in wartorn regions such as eastern Congo acquire fistula through rape.

The Bureau for Global Health hopes to extend its new program to a hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but not until an assessment of the physical and emotional needs of populations affected by violence is undertaken in eastern Congo. ★

Mary Ellen Stanton contributed to this article.



Patient at the Fistula Hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 2002.

P. Viot, WHO

Uprooting and Transplanting: Staffers Play Global Musical Chairs

Each year, 200–300 Agency staffers complete their few years in an overseas mission and move to their next assignment, abroad or in Washington D.C. Hundreds of family members are boxing and shipping their books, furniture, toys, artwork, dishes, and clothing as the school year ends. But the memories they carry with them of friends left behind and jobs completed need no boxes. We interviewed a sampling of employees on the move this year—as we did last year—to get their thoughts as they set off, often to another continent, to carry out the mission of international development assistance.

Addleton Camped Beside Rivers in Mongolia's Wide Open Spaces

After three years in an “absolutely unique assignment,” Jonathan Addleton left his position as mission director in Mongolia in April to head up the Cambodia mission.

The vastness of the sparsely populated country and the beauty of its countryside make Mongolia special, he said. Some site visits even involved “camping beside a river bank,” he said.

Maybe it's true that small countries can make big changes, he said, noting that Mongolia was recently listed as qualifying to participate in the Millennium Challenge program, which is limited to countries with good governance.

Addleton credits Genghis Khan, who once ruled the Eurasian steppes, for some of the country's success. “Genghis Khan was 800 years ago and no one hopes to top him, so that's good from a democracy point of view,” Addleton said.

Mongolia has had four elected governments come and go since it declared itself a democracy.

A strong sense of identity means Mongolians “know what they are about,” he said.

Mongolians, Addleton said, tend to be “candid and blunt to people and think others should be, too.” Once a too deferential consultant prompted one of his local staffers to say, “He thinks we're Asians!”

The mission's small size—a director, three local program managers, two administrative employees, and a driver—allowed Addleton “to have one foot on the operational side and still be involved in the program.”

For instance, a project to restructure and privatize agricultural banks brought Addleton and his team to far-flung sites to monitor progress (see *FrontLines*, January 2004).

“We would fly to the furthest point, 1,500 kilometers away, and drive our jeep back to Ulan Bator and stop along the way,” he said. “You had a real feeling of adventure.”

Once, in the depths of winter, they drove 300–400 km in the steppe and did not see a soul. The distances did not keep the program from expanding the banking project, however.

“We had the country covered with banks—not a district was without an agricultural bank,” Addleton said, calling the project “the best I've seen in 20 years.” ★



Mendsaihan, USAID/Mongolia

Jonathan Addleton and his son camp beside the Hovd River bank in the Altai Mountains of western Mongolia.



Hilda “Bambi” Arellano poses with her daughter at her high school graduation in Budapest in May 2000.

Hilda ‘Bambi’ Arellano Moves from Budapest to Lima, Peru

Hilda “Bambi” Arellano leaves for Lima, Peru, this summer after serving in Budapest, Hungary, as director of the Regional Services Center providing support to USAID missions in Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro.

The Regional Support Center also manages regional programs to strengthen the not-for-profit sector, mitigate interethnic conflict, and support marginalized populations such as the Roma.

Asked to name her most satisfying accomplishment during her stay in Hungary, she said it was working with the Agency to get State Department approval to keep the regional services center in Budapest until 2008.

“We will continue to serve our clients from Budapest, which is a pretty easy flight or drive for most of them,” she said.

“We also provide services to Brussels, Cyprus, Geneva, and the East European countries we closed out of. We have a relatively small staff—67 staff members—although one of the largest accounting and contracting operations in the Agency.”

Arellano said that the Agency is “moving to a regional model, partly because of technological advances, which improve access. My feeling is this has worked very well in Budapest.”

She said that dealing with the problems of Eastern Europe after the long period under communism was similar to dealing with problems elsewhere in the world. Problems included unemployment, inequity, corruption, interethnic conflict, and fragile states. ★

Hall Found Tanzanians Compassionate and Peace-Loving

One week after his departure from Tanzania, Sean Hall said, “I’m missing it like crazy already!” Hall moves to Afghanistan in August.

After arriving in Dar es Salaam in 2000, Hall won \$800,000 in support from the British development agency for a parliamentary assistance program. A public expenditure tracking system, which allows citizens and NGOs to see how much money is spent by federal and local governments on roads, schools, HIV/AIDS, and other services, won \$750,000 in support from the Danish Development Agency, DANIDA.

Hall also worked on a \$4 million education initiative in the island of Zanzibar.

“Zanzibar has lower enrollment rates, higher dropout rates, lower

test scores, and fewer girls going to secondary schools [than the mainland],” Hall said, adding that there was already extensive donor support for education in mainland Tanzania, but none in Zanzibar.

“Soup-to-nuts” assistance will include textbooks, lab equipment, teaching materials, and, above all, teacher training to improve instruction in English, math, science, and civics. Since secondary school is taught in English, one goal is to “help high school teachers get more confident in English.”

Due in part to public affairs work by USAID, a Department of State-funded research poll found that most Tanzanians have a positive image of the United States because of its aid.

One of the most memorable

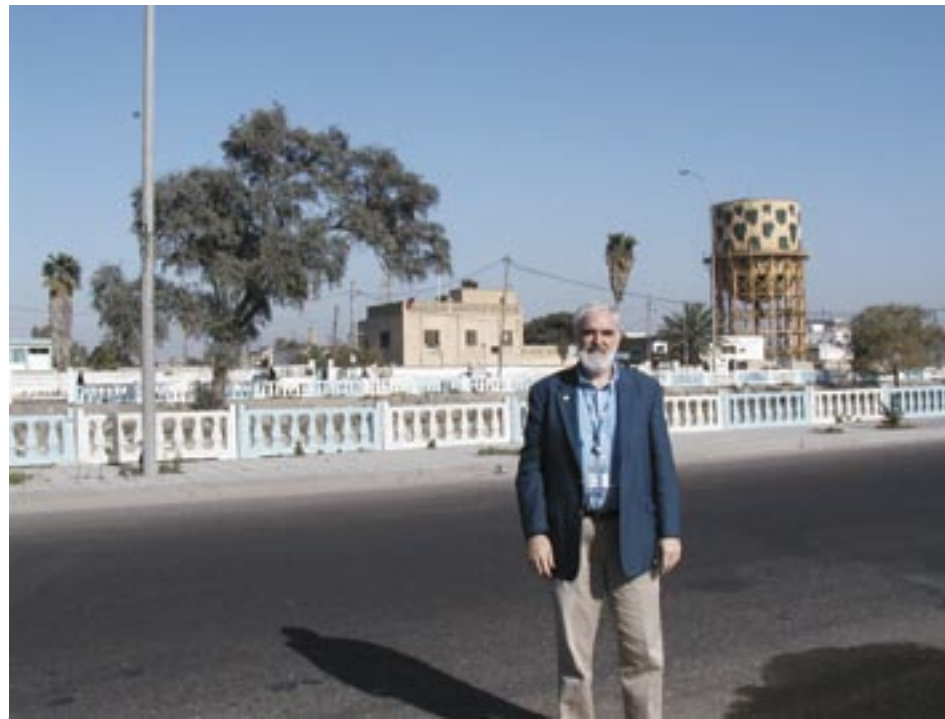
people Hall met in Tanzania was the head of the Massai Women Development Association. The only one of 17 children in her family to receive formal education that included study in Canada, Ndinini Kimesera came back to Tanzania to work for better educational opportunities for Massai girls and against practices such as female genital cutting.

“She embodied what Tanzanians are about—a very compassionate people and a peace-loving place,” said Hall.

Hall also spoke of the beauty of mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, saying the island “was unbelievable, as exotic as it sounds.” Hall learned to scuba dive and enjoyed “some of the best sailing in the world.” ★



Sean Hall on a site visit to a Massai community in Tanzania.



Jim Murphy, Kroll

Tom Staal stands across the street from the Basra house where he lived as a child.

Staal Goes to War College After Return to Boyhood Home in Basra

Tom Staal returned last year to Basra, Iraq, to run USAID’s programs in the city he had lived in as a child when his parents were missionaries. Now that he is packing up to attend the U.S. National War College, he reflected on the huge changes he had found in Basra when he returned there after 39 years.

“Basra is totally different now,” he said. “It is five times bigger or more. Now it has well over a million people. It’s dirtier, dingier than I remember as a kid. It was green and lush then. Basra has lots of canals. It was called the Venice of the Middle East back then. I remember as a kid catching tadpoles in the canals and climbing date trees.”

Staal said that in the early 1960s he witnessed “two, maybe three military coups and more attempted coups” and saw tanks from the roof of his house, thinking “it was great, just like in the movies.”

He said that these days the community

action program his office ran was “exciting to me because it...is letting the Iraqi people themselves determine priorities. I have gone into villages and seen damaged, looted schools and clinics. And I ask, ‘How could you let this happen to your school?’ And they say, ‘It wasn’t our school, it was Saddam’s school.’ This program will help them to feel that it’s their school.”

He said he is going to the war college because “whether we at [US]AID like it or not, we have to learn to work with the military. In places like Afghanistan, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, we are going to have to do more together.”

“Our security as a nation depends on good development work as well as military strength, and it needs to be a combination. And if I can learn how to talk to the military about security and about how development works, it could be a positive step.” ★

Whitworth Ends Armenia Posting and Joins Wife in Rwanda

Regan Whitworth and his wife left Montana three years ago for jobs in Armenia. After a year teaching economics at the American University of Armenia, Whitworth joined USAID’s Armenia program office in 2001.

In July, Whitworth will join his wife, Nancy Fitch, in Rwanda and start a new job working on USAID’s Rwanda health program.

“Armenians are friendly, delightful people,” he said as he contemplated the move. “I feel safe walking in town, traveling in the countryside. The biggest risk is that people will invite you in for coffee and it will be much more lavish than you expected and slow you down. Hospitality is an important cultural trait here.”

Whitworth noted that his home state of Montana has fewer people than Yerevan, the Armenian capital, although his home

in Montana was at about same altitude and also surrounded by mountains.

And he noted Armenia—like Montana quite recently—is confronting basic issues of land use and private property. He sees similarities to the American West’s privatization of public property through homesteads, land grants for railroads, and mining claims.

“The whole process of going from the government owning everything and turning it into private property—it’s a political challenge and not always a pretty process,” he said.

Whitworth found working for the U.S. government was “more bureaucratic than I was used to” in Montana, where businesses tend to be small, but said that he found “satisfaction comes from feeling like I’m part of an organization that is doing something useful.” ★



Regan Whitworth and his wife, Nancy Fitch, stand by a lake in the mountains around Yerevan.

AFRICA

Malawi Works to Improve Schools Hit by AIDS

LILONGWE, Malawi—The education system in this African nation of 12 million is short of teachers, and half of those in the system are untrained. School buildings are shoddy, and many classes are held under trees or in churchyards.

HIV/AIDS makes all these problems worse. Teachers are often absent because they are sick or caring for ill relatives. Students miss school or drop out to care for sick relatives.

In March, the Malawi Education Support Activities (MESA) began work with U.S. assistance in 126 villages. The program is helping communities identify weaknesses in their education facilities and working to improve them.

In Katambasula, a rural area in southern Malawi that is home to three primary schools, villagers identified HIV/AIDS as a challenge to the community. The program helped create a community preschool for orphans and a volunteer group that helps HIV victims so their children can go to school rather than care for the ill.

To avoid stigmatizing children whose parents are ill or have died, the community school was opened to all preschool-aged children. Now 62 children are enrolled and meet daily for lessons given by two volunteers.

Community members donate funds to the schools. They also donate things such as soap and maize meals to the volunteer group of 20 women who visit 60 people suffering from

HIV/AIDS. The women also bathe the ill and clean homes, freeing up the children's time so they can attend school.

The women recently asked for training in caring for the sick. The Creative Center for Community Mobilization, the local NGO carrying out the project, has said it will try to provide them with basic healthcare and nutrition training.

Villagers in Katambasula also identified adult illiteracy as an obstacle. Illiterate parents said they could not help their children with schoolwork. So MESA helped form an adult literacy class, which is led by two volunteers.

"Had it not been for MESA, I would have died illiterate," said Abiti Anusa, one of the women participating in the course. Most of the adult students are women.

Another concern was the shortage of funds for Katambasula's primary schools. The villagers decided to build a pond to grow fish they can sell to raise money for teaching supplies.

MESA now is expanding to provide training in financial management and proposal writing so school management committees can apply for government aid or grants from local NGOs.

With \$5.5 million of USAID funding over four years, the program will work with 820 communities in four of Malawi's 33 educational districts as well as carry out national-level teacher development activities. ★



George Jobe, MESA

Women make up more than 90 percent of the adult literacy class held through MESA in Katambasula, Malawi. The class meets daily, and is taught by two volunteers.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

New Species of Guanaco Found in Paraguay

ASUNCIÓN, Paraguay—The existence of a new species of guanaco—a llama-like animal that is a member of the camel family—was recently confirmed in the Paraguayan section of the huge area of inhospitable swamps, grasslands, and savannahs along the borders of Argentina, Bolivia,

and Paraguay known as the Chaco.

After people in the Paraguayan section of the Chaco reported sighting guanacos, which previously did not exist in Paraguay, USAID last year supported a scientific expedition through Fundación Desde El Chaco, a local nongovernment group,

to look for the animals. Expeditions in December and February found bones and footprints, but no guanacos.

Scientists saw eight guanacos on April 14, but estimate that the community totals 20–30 animals. The guanacos were identified as a species similar to—but not the same as—the guanacos that live nearby in the Bolivian section of the Chaco.

Guanacos are wild, hooved animals that look like llamas and alpacas. They are most abundant in the Andes, but some also live as far south as Argentina's Tierra del Fuego.

The animals' existence was announced two months after the Paraguayan government took away the park status of Medanos del Chaco, the country's section of the Chaco. This created controversy; the press attacked the government for not protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

"This is the reason why the spotting of

the guanaco is of such importance: to convince lawmakers that these areas are worth protecting and, in the case of Medanos, reclaiming it as a national park," said Sergio Guzman with USAID's environmental program in Paraguay.

The mission invested \$10,000 in its quest for the guanaco, including field trips to the Chaco and 20 hours of flight time circling the region where indigenous people had seen the animal.

A typical guanaco weighs about 160 pounds. It is brown on the back and sides, with light underparts and a dark face. It has a long, slender neck, and can reach about seven feet long and three to four feet high at the shoulders.

The guanaco in the Paraguayan part of the Chaco is smaller and has shorter hair, said Wilfred Giesbrecht, project manager at Fundación Desde El Chaco.

"There must be a whole population of between 20 to 30 guanaco individuals," he said. "That's the only species from the family of camelids that lives in Paraguay."

Fundación Desde El Chaco is now in touch with the World Conservation Union about listing the new type of guanaco as an endangered animal.

USAID funds programs for conservation and management of protected areas of the Chaco, including activities to fight illegal logging and improve the conditions in Bolivia's section, which remains a national park. ★



Erika Cuellar, Wildlife Conservation Society

Guanacos live in a small herd made up of a male, several females, and young of various ages. If danger is imminent, the male warns the group with a sort of bleating noise. All immediately flee, with the male bringing up the rear. The guanaco has an ambling gait, created by moving both legs on the same side of the body at the same time.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

New Jordanian Plant Will Purify Wastewater

AMMAN, Jordan—To recover wastewater for use in irrigation, USAID is helping construct a \$169 million wastewater treatment plant to serve the capital Amman and other regions.

Workers at the As-Samra wastewater treatment plant broke ground May 10, and the project is expected to be finished in three years. The plant will treat up to 530,000 cubic meters of wastewater per day and will serve 2 million residents of the Amman and Zarqa areas.

Unlike the old plant it is replacing, the new plant will perform pretreatment screening as well as treatment, a process the old plant was too small to accommodate.

Due to high volume of water, the old plant held wastewater in stabilization ponds for only 20–25 days instead of the 40–45 required to complete treatment.

“With the expanded pretreatment facilities and the new treatment processes, the wastewater will be treated to a higher standard that is safe for the environment and acceptable for reuse in agriculture,” said Roy Ventura, senior water engineer at USAID/Jordan and As-Samra project manager.

The new plant will rely mainly on a process called activated sludge treatment. Tanks of wastewater are exposed to chemicals that help turn polluted water, full of sludge, into cleaner water. Sludge is also broken down by pumping air into tanks to encourage the growth of airborne bacteria that digest raw sewage.

Water scarcity has plagued Jordan for many years. In 1999, the water supply was estimated at 800 million cubic meters. By 2005, Jordan’s demand for water was expected to reach 1.3 billion cubic meters.

In landlocked Jordan, the natural water scarcity is made worse by rapid population growth, poor water management, and too few wastewater treatment plants. The Jordanian government plans address these problems.

USAID is investing \$350 million to help construct or rehabilitate three wastewater and three fresh water facilities and systems, including the As-Samra plant.

Improving wastewater management could make a huge difference in Jordan’s water problems, said Jim Franckiewicz, director of the Water Resources and Environment Office at USAID/Jordan.

“Agriculture requires large amounts of water, primarily for irrigation,” he said. “If more wastewater could be treated—enough to be reused for irrigation as well as for industrial purposes—the savings in fresh water would be tremendous. These steps also would create additional job and income opportunities.”

The plant at As-Samra will provide treated water for irrigation. This will help free up drinking water. The facility outflow will be meet Jordanian environmental standards for discharge into streams and rivers. ★



Ondeo and Morganti Group

Drawing of the As-Samra wastewater treatment plant, showing treatment tanks and other mechanisms used to clean polluted water.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Azerbaijan Farmers Improve Potato Yields

BAKU, Azerbaijan—Potato farmer Matlab Mamedov has increased his crop yields by half since a U.S.-funded program taught him how to use new fertilizers and drip irrigation.

Mamedov grows potatoes on 15 hectares of land in Jalilabad in the southern region of Azerbaijan, the former Soviet Republic of 8 million people.

Last year, he was one of 130 farmers at a regional workshop held by Agro-input Market Development in Azerbaijan (AMDA), a project funded by USAID. The program has been holding such workshops throughout the country since 2002, introducing farmers to new fertilizers and drip irrigation, helping them organize in seller groups, and linking

them to large buyers.

Mamedov learned about triple super phosphate (TSP), a mixed fertilizer that improves productivity. Using TSP, he increased his yield per hectare by one half to about 35 tons per hectare. He was also given tips on storing and sprouting potatoes and using fungicides to prevent potatoes from developing diseases.

“Treating potato seed with fungicides before planting—that was something new for me,” he said. “Actually, even one infected tuber often caused the spreading of disease in the field.”

AMDA also helped set up a dealers’ trade association, the Azerbaijani Agri-input Dealers Association, which has 90 fee-paying members and serves more than 42,000 farmers.

The association is helping Azeri dealers participate in trade events in Turkey, Israel, and Georgia. Earlier this year, the association also took part in the ChemAgroExpo 2004, a major fertilizer trade fair in Moscow.

Azeri farmers are often too far from markets and unable to sell their produce to wholesalers. They also tend to be poor and use outdated farming techniques. This has been changing since AMDA began teaching farmers about fertilizers and drip irrigation.

Nureddin Khasiyev, owner of a kiwi fruit orchard in Lenkoran village in Liman district, attended a seminar about drip irrigation and decided to try it.

Now, because of combined use of fertilizer and drip irrigation, the yields of his orchard have doubled. Khasiyev also began to cultivate tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and eggplants on land he previously deemed unsuitable for agricultural production.

The project was carried out by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), and runs through next year.

Although AMDA’s primary task was to inform agricultural input dealers and farmers about the use and quality of available fertilizers, the program also held workshops on managing farm expenses, dealing with financing institutions to access credit; setting up the agricultural inputs dealers’ association; evaluating growing of vegetables; and orchard production of apples.

The program also supported the creation of eight “best practices” publications, reference texts for farmers.

An oil-rich country, Azerbaijan has a large agriculture sector. The main agricultural export products are cotton, grain, rice, grapes, fruit, vegetables, tea, and tobacco. Some 60 percent of Azerbaijanis live below the poverty line.

After gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan’s infrastructure and economy were further shattered by a yet unresolved territorial conflict with neighboring Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous region in the west of the country. ★



IFDC/Azerbaijan

Matlab Mamadov inspects his potato field in Jalilabad, Azerbaijan. Yields increased 50 percent when he applied triple super phosphate fertilizer and treated potato seeds before planting them.

*May 2, 2004–May 29, 2004***PROMOTED**

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RETIRED

Michael T. Smokovich

MOVED ON

Teresa A. Allison
Titus C. Better
Heidi S. Cruz
Werner Kalatschan
Jeff S. Olesnevich
Wesley Dale Wilson

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Benjamin Jose Alvarez died June 13, 2004. Alvarez was basic education and child labor advisor in the Office of Education, Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, from 2000-2004 and served as a member of the basic education and technical leadership teams. He was the lead person for the interface between education and issues of child labor. He also oversaw a major study to project the growing gap in the number and level of quality of teachers worldwide.

REASSIGNED

Aurelia Stacie Albritton
E&E/PCS to AID/W TEMP
Freddy A. Blunt Jr.
M/IRM/CIS to M/PMO
Ebony L. Bostic
PPC/DCO to AID/W TEMP
Robbin B. Boyer
PPC/RA/PBI to PPC/SPP/SRC
Aimee M. David
M/IRM/CIS to M/PMO
Juliette K. Dorsel
OIG to ANE/MEA
Antoinette Ferrara
ANE/EAA to Kosovo
Tadeusz Findeisen
RSC/OD to Iraq/CO
Steven K. Gale
PPC/DEI to AID/W TEMP
Linda S. Howey
DCHA/CMM to DCHA/PPM
Phyllia A. Johnson Miller
OIG/A/FA to OIG/A/IT&SA

Calvin L. Kearns
M/FM/LM to M/FM/A
Kenneth W. Kerttula
M/IRM/OD to M/PMO
N. Kumar Lakhavani
AA/M to M/PMO
Kimberley Lucas
COMP/NE/OJT to RS Africa/SO4-5 E
Christine E. Lyons
COMP/FS/Reassign to REDSO/ESA/CON
Christopher B. McDermott
Egypt/HDD/H to Pakistan/OD
Erin Elizabeth McKee
WB/Gaza to Bolivia/RCO
Kifle Negash
ZAMBIA/D to USAID REP/Sudan
Richard Steelman
ANE/MEA to ANE/IR
Sharon D. Stilwell
E&E/MT/IC to M/FM/CMP
Christophe A. Tocco
COMP/NE/OJT to Rwanda

CPR Heroes Save 2 Lives

Two USAID employees saved lives in June, but not by supplying aid to a developing country.

Steve Herbaly, formally a new entry professional in the Democracy and Governance (DG) office, and Judy Grooms of the Food for Peace office both used cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to revive people in distress.

Herbaly was attending a training program at Management Systems International (MSI) June 1 when he performed CPR on an MSI intern.

Jessica Zaman of the DG office witnessed Herbaly's actions. “He did a great job. We're so proud of him,” she said.

The intern reportedly spent a day and a half in intensive care.

At lunch time in the 7th floor galley June 2, Grooms rushed to the aid of a choking coworker.

“I did anything and everything I was taught to help this lady,” Grooms said.

People in both offices say they are signing up for CPR training. ★

Correction

Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) is a newly founded consortium of organizations that sends American volunteers abroad. The May 18 event at which VEGA was launched celebrated “fifty years of international volunteerism.”

15 New Hires Join Agency

Eleven New Entry Professionals and four International Development Interns were sworn into USAID's foreign service June 14, 2004.

Of the 15 new hires, four have worked at USAID before and seven are former Peace Corps volunteers. Their average age is 38.

On average, the new recruits have worked four years overseas and have lived in the following countries: Armenia, Brazil, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Guatemala, Guinea, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. ★



Front row: David Billings (Program), Marcia Pierce (EXO), Mary Beda Andourou (Health), LeAnna Marr (Education), Cybill Sigler (Program), Gene Villagran (FM), Administrator Natsios, Deputy Administrator Schieck, Peter Cloutier (EXO), Kala Bokelman (EXO).
Back row: William MacLaren (FM), Mary Lou Carlson (Agriculture), Jeremiah Carew (Program), Sharon Wayne (Procurement), Bradley Bessire (Democracy), Siana Tackett (Health), Martin McLaughlin (Education).



E&E Training Professionals Recognized

Zubeida Kadic (USAID/Bosnia & Herzegovina), Rabiga Baytokova (USAID/Central Asia), Anoush Yedigarian (AED), and Anita Reichert (World Learning) were recognized by the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia for their “exceptional contribution” to its training program over the past decade. ★

Meyer Trades Internet Tasks For Bonsai and Writing Novels

After 27 years using mass communications to help developing countries foster social change and economic growth, Tony Meyer retired June 3 to write novels and raise bonsai trees in Eugene, Oregon.

Meyer, a former Jesuit priest and Stanford University social scientist, spent 27 years working for USAID, most recently as acting director of EGAT's Office of Energy and Information Technology.

Meyer's doctoral thesis at Stanford was on cardiovascular disease risk reduction, but his



Tony Meyer, who retired from USAID June 3.

focus changed when USAID recruiters came calling.

"It's exciting to be working on diseases and problems of poverty, where infants and others die prematurely because of the absence of clean water, the absence of sufficient food, and environmental pollutants—difficulties they have no control over," Meyer said.

"I was very pleased to come to [US]AID to start working on these problems."

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Meyer started long-term programs promoting public health campaigns for oral rehydration of infants, agricultural and environmental communication, and combating HIV/AIDS.

"It's really tough to keep going on that intensity—long hours and people who are working with you fighting for their lives," Meyer said.

Then the internet "hit like a sledgehammer" and Meyer's focus shifted toward using it for development. He said there was a "tremendous secular trend" where people discovered the power of the internet and found cheaper access to the means of communication.

Most recently, Meyer was the key architect for the Last Mile Initiative—building wireless communication and internet capabilities in rural areas of developing countries. ★

Memorial for Slain Staff Planned

A memorial honoring USAID staff who died in the line of duty over the past four decades is to be dedicated in the Agency lobby at the Reagan Building in the fall.

The Agency will hold a ceremony to mark the event and hopes that relatives and

friends of those honored will attend, said Joe Fredericks, head of the agency information center.

Those interested in attending should contact the information center by email at jfredericks@usaid.gov.

New Business Model

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"We spend far too much time, effort, and money in the field developing strategies," said David Eckerson, who led the business model review. Missions are asked to cover too many subjects, rarely get enough money to pursue their approved strategy, and often must make revisions because the situation on the ground changes, he said.

The business model review looked at how well USAID is set up to carry out its development, humanitarian, and other missions; how quickly it can respond to new challenges; and how safely and effectively it operates in dangerous places.

The review, which Eckerson led on the behalf of the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC), led to a series of operational recommendations.

"The recommendations from the business model review will have wide-ranging implications for the way the Agency does its business. We're already acting on several of them. We also know that there is a lot of interest from OMB, Congress, and State," said Barbara Turner, PPC's Acting Administrator.

Reintroducing "mission management assessments" is another big change," Eckerson said.

Every three or four years, missions will get an "outside look" at their program, people,

and resources. A team drawn from different parts of the Agency will look at how mission programs are staffed, structured, and managed. They might review, for instance, whether it is warranted that staff in one mission have a smaller portfolio to manage than is typical Agency-wide. Such reviews should either explain or reduce discrepancies in the number of staff used to manage program dollars.

Another major recommendation is that USAID rely more heavily on regional missions to support programs in countries where it cannot afford or does not want to have a full-scale operation, such as in a high-risk post.

The report's recommendations, which have been accepted by Administrator Andrew S. Natsios, also call for management to take a close look at how well pillar bureaus are providing support to the field and whether the Agency's lawyers and procurement officers are posted where they are needed most.

It also suggests creation of a foreign service national (FSN) corps that would send senior FSNs to help in critical posts and could create greater "surge capacity" for crises. Setting up such an FSN corps will take some time and resources, said Eckerson, who is now Agency director of human resources. ★

Senegal, Vietnam Give Awards



Senegal's Minister of Education, Moustapha Sourang (left), presents USAID Deputy Director Patrick Fine (center) with a medal naming him as a "national officer in the Order of Merit of Senegal." Fine received the award—the highest honor for a foreigner in Senegal—on June 17. U.S. Ambassador to Senegal Richard Allan Roth is second from left. On the right are Fine's children, Joshua and Zachary, and his wife Susan Fine, outgoing USAID program officer in Senegal. Patrick Fine is going to Afghanistan to be the next mission director.



Jean Gilson, left, received an award May 12, 2004, from the Vietnamese government for her four years of service as USAID country manager in Vietnam. She was the first U.S. official to receive such an award since the countries normalized relations.

Hope for MCA Aid Sparks Reform

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Speaking to USAID and nongovernmental (NGO) officials, Applegarth also told them not to be "concerned" that the MCC might compete for resources with USAID.

"Rest easy—it's a superb working relationship," he said. "It would be crazy to try to accomplish our mission without...the larger resources" of USAID.

The MCC recently sent six teams to visit all 16 countries picked as eligible for MCC aid (see *FrontLines*, June 2004) and found that "the response in those countries exceeds our hopes and our dreams," Applegarth told a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid.

He said that one head of state waved a printout of the MCC website list ranking his country on 16 criteria for good governance, such as investing in health and education and fighting corruption.

The lists indicate in red and green whether

the country is failing or meeting criteria for good governance required for MCC aid. The head of state disagreed with some of the red marks.

Countries must make a proposal for compacts that will be judged by the MCC on three issues: Does it lead to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction? Is there broad civic involvement? What more will the country do for itself on the policy side?

Applegarth assured NGO leaders that they would play a role in the program that President Bush announced three years ago and pledged would increase to \$5 billion a year by 2006.

NGOs could provide technical assistance; provide local teams; participate as professionals in the priority-setting process; and possibly implement, monitor, and evaluate projects, Applegarth said. ★

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Readers are encouraged to send in stories, feature articles, photos, nominations for “First Person” or “Mission of the Month” columns, and other ideas.

Letters to the editor, opinion pieces, obituaries, and requests to be added to the mailing list should be submitted by email to frontlines@usaid.gov; by fax to 202-216-3035, and by mail to Editor, *FrontLines*, USAID, Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 6.10, Washington, D.C. 20523-6100; tel. 202-712-4330.

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Haiti Struggles to Recover

RICK MARSHALL, LPA

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—From the air, Port-au-Prince is the color of granite. Grey is the color of poverty, of cinderblock houses, crumbling sidewalks, and potholed streets. Even the debris that fills the gutters and spills out onto the streets has a greyish hue.

Haiti has seen its share of disasters. The tumultuous end of the reign of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on February 29 and the devastating May floods in Mapou and Fonds Verrette that claimed about 3,000 lives are but the latest examples.

Port-au-Prince is now largely calm, though security remains an important concern. The U.S. and French forces that established security after Aristide left handed the job over to the United Nations—under Brazilian leadership—June 25.

But many of the “chimères” (street gangs) that Aristide armed still retain their weapons and, as of mid-June, a visiting Agency staffer was not allowed to walk the streets of the capital or visit other cities.

Yet life and color are returning to the streets of the capital. Shops are open and merchants line the streets everywhere. “Tap-taps” (minibuses) and four-wheel drive vehicles jostle for spots along the rutted roads. Electricity is back on most of the time, thanks to USAID efforts. Every morning, one can see young children stepping carefully along their way to school. Some schools even held competitions to see who could pick up the most garbage.

The political situation is stabilizing too. Haiti’s new prime minister met with

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell in early May and helped negotiate a U.S. aid package worth approximately \$160 million.

To carry out a program of this magnitude at a post the size of USAID/Haiti will be no simple task.

On the positive side, more aid can be expected when the international donors meet in Washington, D.C., July 19. At the same time, remittances from Haitian-Americans continue to pour into the country, and many NGOs and private and faith-based groups continue their work throughout the country.

Florida Governor Jeb Bush saw some of these projects during a June 16 visit with Administrator Natsios. They toured a hospital and soup kitchen run by the Florida-based Food for the Poor, an apparel assembly shop, and a handicrafts atelier funded by USAID/Haiti’s Aid to the Artisan program.

Haiti has always been known for its painters, and their work is in evidence in galleries as much as streetside stalls from Port-au-Prince to Petionville.

The USAID mission has its painters, too—young men, mostly—who now have been provided a place to display their work, thanks to the efforts of Evelyne Perpignan, a French and Creole translator who has worked for the mission for many years.

Skilled craftsmen abound in Haiti too, and many people hope that their exhibits at this year’s Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall will help spark a revival of interest in their work. ★



Nick Swedberg, USAID

Haitian artisan Jean Pierre Richard Desrosiers works on a decorative screen at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. The festival, which ran from June 23 to July 4, included Haitian craft workers brought to the United States through Aid to Artisans, a USAID-funded nonprofit organization. The Federation of Haitian Coffee Growers spoke of its trade at the festival as well. It also receives support from USAID/Haiti.

Iraq Team Stays On Job

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ity for residential compounds, entrance to the country and to secure zones, logistics, and security for grantees and contractors.

The current mission security service will remain in place, under the overall supervision of the State Department’s Office of Diplomatic Security.

The mission will consult with Taylor and Negroponte on priorities and how the reconstruction money should be spent.

Electricity, water, and sanitation are

to remain the biggest projects, mainly managed by the Bechtel Corporation.

New contracts are to be awarded for projects in democracy, health, education, job creation, and economic reform.

“We are happy with what we’ve done—there’s been tremendous progress in all areas,” said West. “Negative news on security often takes the front page, but there has been tremendous progress in little over one year.” ★



Former CPA head L. Paul Bremer III (left) and Iraqi Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi (right) meet a student at an Iraqi school.

Repayments Help Sudan



On May 25, the *IVS Viking* docked at Port Sudan carrying 30,000 metric tons of wheat donated by USAID's Office of Food for Peace. The good will supply 1 million people for two months.

USAID collected \$164 million in back payments in May and June in reimbursement for extra expenses incurred by using U.S. vessels to ship food aid. The Office of the Inspector General (IG) discovered four years ago that USAID had been paying extra costs—required by law—to ship U.S. food aid on U.S. ships, but it had not been repaid for the added costs—also required by law—for nearly a decade.

The funds came in as a humanitarian crisis unfolded in Sudan and were used to provide food aid in Darfur.

A 1985 law requires that three-quarters of all U.S. food aid be shipped on U.S. commercial vessels. But it also requires that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) reimburse the food aid program, which is run by USAID, for one-third of the extra cost of using U.S. vessels.

A second provision requires additional reimbursement if annual transportation costs exceed 20 percent of the costs of delivering food aid.

“From a taxpayer’s perspective, it may make no difference if one agency doesn’t reimburse another, but in terms of food assistance there is a big difference,” said Jay Rollins of IG, who led the review five years ago. “If USAID has to pay more to transport food, it can’t deliver as much aid.”

Rollins first heard of the problem at a 1999 meeting with food aid distributors when

another USAID official mentioned that reimbursements from DOT were delayed.

“As an auditor, my ears pricked up,” said Rollins, who proceeded to review the problem with three other auditors.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through which food aid is purchased, is responsible for submitting requests to the DOT for reimbursement. But USDA was behind in submitting requests and, since 1993, had submitted no requests against the 20-percent rule.

DOT was paying only partial reimbursements, saying USDA was not documenting its requests adequately. USAID, however, needed to hold shipping agents responsible for submitting documents promptly.

One company, for instance, had never sent in any of the required invoices and documents. So USAID’s Office of Food for Peace cut it off from further business until it caught up on its paperwork.

Other firms put extra staff on the job to deal with their backlog. Within a year, half the missing documents from shipments made between 1993 and 2000 had been sent in.

USAID and USDA inspectors worked closely on the audit, which eventually prompted a Transportation audit. So far, \$164 million of the \$172 million USAID estimated is owed to its food aid programs has been returned to the Agency. ★

Field Office Moves Money Quickly

DAKAR, Senegal—USAID moves foreign aid funds much faster than other major donors, according to a new report by a Senegalese accounting firm.

The report, requested by the prime minister’s office and finance ministry, found that donors who give their field offices greater independence on running projects allocate aid money more quickly.

The USAID-funded report “found a clear and direct correlation” between the speed of donor spending and decision-making authority in the field, said Mission Director Olivier Carduner.

In Senegal, not more than 30 percent of all donor funds available for spending are actually spent each year.

“Donor operations are a huge variable that no one has talked about,” Carduner said.

The low average and wide range of disbursement rates—from 9.7 percent of available funds by one multilateral donor in 2002 to 87 percent by USAID in 2003—has sparked discussion and press reports in Dakar.

Abdoulaye Diop, Senegal’s minister of economy and finance, was quoted in the Dakar newspaper *Le Populaire* on April 30 as expressing his government’s satisfaction with the 87 percent absorption rate for allocated resources and calling on other donors to follow USAID’s example.

Carduner credited USAID’s quicker programming to the mission’s care in involving Senegalese officials and citizens in developing its strategy, its extensive

use of local experts, and the fact that most decisions are made in the field rather than Washington, D.C.

The Senegalese research team asked donors where key programming decisions are made, such as approval of overall strategy, approval of specific projects, authority to obligate funds, approval of tender documents, authority to award contracts and grants, authority to disburse funds, and authority to end a poorly performing project early.

USAID makes six out of seven of these types of decisions in the field, while other donors make as few as one to three such decisions in the field. As a result, other donors “move money” far more slowly.

The report authors also recommended that the Senegalese government pursue management and procurement reform more vigorously.

Specific recommendations included reducing exceptions to competitive procurement, training procurement staff, and decentralizing the government’s system for paying bills.

Financial management and procurement systems are likely to attract the scrutiny of the newly created U.S. public aid entity, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which named Senegal as one of 16 countries eligible to receive funding this year.

“We’re using MCA as encouragement to...work on financial management issues such as budget transparency and procurement integrity,” said Carduner. ★

Seven Key Decisions	Multilateral			Bilateral	
	USAID	Donor A	Donor B	Donor A	Donor B
Approval of strategy	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
Approval of specific projects or activities	Dakar	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
Authority to sign financing agreements	Dakar	HQ	HQ	HQ	Dakar
Approval of tender documents	Dakar	HQ	Dakar	Dakar	Dakar
Authority to award procurements	Dakar	HQ	Dakar/HQ	Dakar/HQ	Dakar
Authority to disburse funds	Dakar	Dakar	Dakar	Dakar	Dakar
Authority to terminate projects	Dakar	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
Total decisions delegated to field	6	1	3	3	4
Disbursement rate in 2002	68%	10%	33%	20%	NA
Disbursement rate in 2003	87%	13%	N.A.	N.A.	75%

Karzai Says Thanks for U.S. Help

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Karzai said the grueling 18- to 20-hour road trip from Kabul to Kandahar has been cut to a smooth five-hour drive by the U.S.-funded road completed last year. This has reduced transport costs.

He thanked the Agency for building or repairing 350 schools and an equal number of clinics that aim to reduce what he called “the highest woman and infant mortality rate in the world.”

At a luncheon afterward at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Administrator Andrew S. Natsios said, “The key to Afghan development is the private sector.” He said the Agency is helping the Afghan Central Bank reform and is supporting creation of an International Chamber of Commerce for Afghanistan.

Karzai told the chamber that Afghanistan—with historic trade links to the ancient Silk Road—is “friendly to business.” He said that transportation, especially to ship goods throughout Central Asia, would be a key sector for investment.

Afghanistan’s economy grew 30 percent in 2002, the first year after U.S.-led forces overthrew the Taliban regime. It grew 25 percent in 2003, said Karzai, who expected 15 percent growth each year through 2008.

To lift per capita income from about \$150 per year to \$700 per year within seven years, Karzai called for development help.

Key projects include packaging grapes and pomegranates for export and development of iron, copper, and gas reserves. Textiles is another sector that could benefit

from a “young population eager to work and the lowest-cost labor in the area,” he said.

Karzai said that school enrollment shot up from 1 million to 5 million children, of which 30 percent are girls. Universities are open, and 3.8 million voters have registered for fall elections—35 percent of them women.

The following day, Karzai thanked a joint session of Congress for support in fighting opium, enrolling girls in school, and repatriating exiles.

Afterward, at a sweltering outdoor White House press conference, President Bush told Karzai, “My government reaffirms its ironclad commitment to help Afghanistan succeed and prosper.” Bush announced five initiatives:

- a training program for newly elected Afghan politicians
- a \$4-million women’s teacher training institute in Kabul
- an increase from 100 to more than 250 the number of Afghans who participate in Humphrey, Fulbright, Cochran, and other exchange programs
- intent to pursue a bilateral trade and investment framework agreement
- \$5 million to provide Afghan women with small business grants and training

“The road ahead for Afghanistan is still long and difficult,” Bush said. “Yet, the Afghan people can know that their country will never be abandoned to terrorists and killers.” ★

Sudan Asked to Allow Aid Team Access

KHARTOUM, Sudan—Secretary of State Powell and Administrator Natsios traveled here June 29 to visit displaced persons camps and to request that Sudan's government allow relief workers access to up to 1 million displaced people in the western Darfur region.

Powell and Natsios have warned that many of the mainly African villagers—fleeing attacks by government-backed ethnic Arab militias—could die of hunger and disease in the coming rainy season unless aid reaches them and attacks end.

Natsios said that 300,000 people might die by the end of the year, even if aid deliveries are allowed, because of their weakened state.

Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail said, "We admit there is a problem," but then said: "There is no famine. There is no epidemic."

The United States is the largest donor in the current crisis, having spent \$132 million since spring 2003 and pledged another \$167 million by the end of next year. Other donors are contributing \$125 million.

Experts on international law at the State Department were studying whether the systematic destruction of more than 376 villages, the rape of women, and the other attacks on African Sudanese constitute genocide, which would then require nations such as the United States to intervene.

Free Trade Can Alleviate Poverty

At least 500 million people could be lifted above the poverty line over 15 years if a global free trade policy were followed, according to a new report.

The report, *Trade Policy and Global Poverty*, was written by William Cline, a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development and the Institute for International Economics, Washington thinktanks. Published in June, the study says eliminating tariffs and other protective barriers globally would save developing countries as much as \$200 billion annually.

USAID supports free trade in developing countries and recently the Agency helped five Central American countries—Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica—join the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Newman Sworn In at State

Constance Berry Newman was sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in a small, informal ceremony June 24. In her new job she will advise Secretary of State Colin Powell and guide the operation of the U.S. diplomatic establishment in sub-Saharan Africa.

Newman served as USAID's Assistant Administrator for Africa since 2001. Agency Counselor Carol A. Peasley took over as acting Assistant Administrator June 25. ★

Foreign Correspondent Advises USAID Information Officers



Dennis Hale, Bowling Green State University

Nicholas Wood, a foreign correspondent for British and U.S. papers, gave advice on writing effective stories to public information officers attending training in Croatia.

Public information officers from across Eastern Europe and Eurasia met in Croatia in May for a communications workshop led by Bowling Green State University.

The training included field visits with USAID partners, interactive lectures, writing sessions, technical labs with software and photography equipment, and panel discussions with guest speakers.

Nicholas Wood, a veteran foreign correspondent based in Central Europe, gave advice on how to interest journalists in USAID's work.

"Personal accounts of a program's success are exactly the kind of news that interests

American newspaper editors and can lead to front-page, in-depth features," he said. "The story that's going to interest us is that child or that family...who has water now or who has electricity for the first time in ten years."

The two-week training was a pilot for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia's new Academic Collaborative Initiative, which aims to create training opportunities for Agency staff with professors who volunteer through U.S. academic institutions.

"At home, we are immersed in USAID morning, noon, and night," said one participant. "But here, we have a chance to concentrate on our writing." ★



Jatinder Cheema, USAID

A camel kneels in front a well contaminated by animal waste in the village of Ebrema, in the northern Red Sea area of Eritrea. With USAID assistance, the well is being rehabilitated and a solar pump installed to power water to a new reservoir closer to the village. A drinking trough for animals will be built further away from the water source.

Postconflict Aid Debated

The challenge of foreign aid work on the borderline between conflict and post-conflict gripped the attention of Agency and other aid officials and experts at the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid meeting June 23.

A new office is being created at the State Department to coordinate U.S. government efforts in reconstruction after conflicts, said Jim Kunder, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East.

Ambassador Carlos Pascual, a former USAID foreign service officer, is to head the office, which will have experts to deal with NGO-military relations and provide expertise in police training and demining.

Getting economies, currency, and financial markets back online after a conflict "was seen as the second stage of reconstruction but now is considered part of the early stage," Kunder said.

Focusing on Iraq and referring frequently to lessons learned in Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti, and Mozambique, speakers discussed the difficulty of working as civilians in a militarized environment.

"We need to know when we are post-con-

flict—it's not fair to have people building schools while bullets are flying," said former USAID official Frederick Barton, head of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Mary McClymont, head of the NGO group InterAction, said her group has produced a DVD in which a military officer explains how the military operates in humanitarian and reconstruction operations and how NGOs can best work together with the military.

Charles MacCormack, head of Save the Children, said, "We were born in the [Second World] war but the problem now is the scale and targeting. Before, a couple of people would be killed and now buildings are blown up with a couple of hundred people."

Summing up the discussion, MacCormack said that post-conflict reconstruction requires security; clear accountability; focus on who in the government is in charge; sustained funding; and a long-term strategic plan with better dialogue among the military, State Department, NGOs, and USAID. ★

Tribeca Screens Mass Graves Film

A documentary film called *Saddam's Mass Graves*, which was produced with support from USAID, premiered May 7 at the annual Tribeca Film Festival in New York. About 150 people showed up for each of three screenings of the 58-minute film written, directed, and produced by Iraqi filmmaker Jano Rosebiani.

The movie includes graphic interviews with people who search for their missing relatives and friends in some of the 50 sites confirmed to be mass graves. More than 1 million Iraqis disappeared in repression of Kurds, Shiites, and political opponents of Saddam Hussein and 300,000 of them are feared to lie in the mass graves.

The filmmaker also interviews Iraqis who escaped mass killings and describe on camera what happened.

Rosebiani and two Iraqi survivors of Saddam's torture and imprisonment will be hosted by USAID during a two-week tour in July to Washington, New York, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles to discuss crimes against humanity committed by the former regime and U.S. efforts to help Iraqis account for the missing victims.

The film has been broadcast many times on Iraqi television stations.

Rosebiani will also show a new film during the U.S. visit—*Chemical Ali*—that documents the use of poison gas against the Kurds in 1988 and suppression of Shiites in 1991. Both films were supported by grants from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives. ★