

USAID IN AFRICA

Summer 2004

News, Updates, and Resources from USAID's Bureau for Africa

Presidential Initiative Brings Textbooks to Guinea

By Laura Lartigue

For the first time, every child in grades 1 and 2 in Guinea will have a textbook to use in class. Thanks to the Africa Education Initiative, USAID/Guinea handed over 500,000 textbooks to the Guinean Ministry of Education at a ceremony at the Frederico Mayor Primary School in the capital, Conakry, in May 2004.

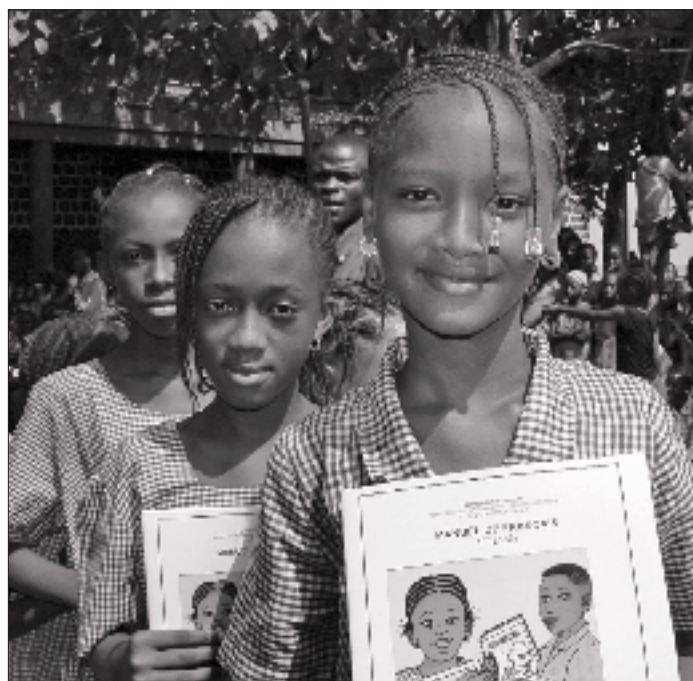
President Bush's Africa Education Initiative (AEI), in which Guinea was chosen to take part, has three clear objectives:

- ◆ To increase the number of girls in school;
- ◆ To train teachers; and
- ◆ To produce and distribute textbooks and pedagogical materials.

Guinea is the first of six African countries to have benefited from the textbook component of the Initiative.

The textbooks were conceptualized and produced through close collaboration between the Guinean Education Ministry and two historically black U.S. universities, Hampton and Dillard, which have committed to continuing their partnership with the Guinean Ministry. Kadiatou Bah, one of the authors of the textbooks, says "It was indeed the collaboration that made for a good product in the end. We were able to formulate subject matter and illustrations for the textbooks that are relevant to Guinean children's lives."

During the ceremony, local schoolchildren recited songs and verses on such themes as conserving forest resources, staying in good health, and the importance of getting a good education. Galema Guilavogui, Minister of Pre-University and Civic Education, said, "Our American partners understand that the success of our educational program in Guinea is a measure of the harmonious development of our country. In receiving this gift, which comes from the personal initiative of President George W. Bush, the Africa Education Initiative, I would like to say a big thank you to the donor from the bottom of my heart. Providing quality textbooks in sufficient



Guinean schoolgirls with new textbooks.

L. Lartigue/USAID Guinea

USAID Responds to Darfur Crisis

Darfur, Sudan, is witnessing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. Since February 2003, over 1 million people have been forced from their homes in the three western states that make up the Darfur region. The Government of Sudan and pro-government predominately Arab Jingaweit militias have conducted a campaign of ethnic cleansing that appears to be designed to empty the region of its Black Sudanese inhabitants and allow Arab Sudanese settlement.

"Today, the most we can hope to accomplish is the containment of this disaster," USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios said in early June. In a best case scenario, 300,000 people out of an estimated population of 6.5 million are

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expected to die from starvation and disease by the end of this year. If humanitarian access continues to be a problem, that number is expected to be much higher.

Half of those Darfurians in need have been cut off from emergency food deliveries, a situation that is getting worse now that seasonal rains have started. Fifty-four of nearly 140 encampments of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have become fully or partially inaccessible. The lack of humanitarian access to a desperate population, whether natural or caused by Sudanese government resistance, is a matter of highest priority for USAID. Natsios, U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan toured IDP camps in Darfur in late June to pressure the Government of Sudan to rein in the Jingaweit militias and allow the flow of humanitarian aid. At press time, a UN Security Council-imposed deadline for the Government of Sudan to improve security in Darfur had just passed.

USAID in Africa is published by the Africa Bureau Information Center, operated by the Academy for Educational Development under contract to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and is part of the Development Information Services project of USAID's Office of Development Evaluation and Information.

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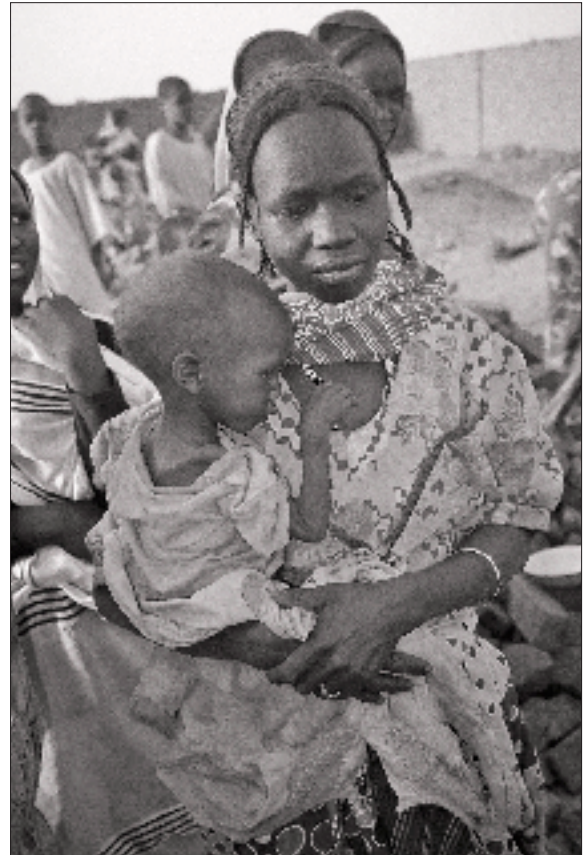
USAID in Africa provides news, updates, and resources from USAID's Bureau for Africa. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect USAID policies. Comments, letters, and articles are welcome. Send them to:

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In April, USAID mobilized a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to address the increasing scale of humanitarian needs. DART officials are now in field offices in the state capitals of El Fasher, Nyala, and Geneina, as well as Khartoum. They are participating in the overall coordination of relief activities in the three states of Darfur, including attendance at humanitarian meetings, monitoring the delivery and distribution of relief commodities, and participation in assessments with implementing partners throughout accessible areas of Darfur and recommending relief response.

Since February 2003, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has provided more than \$41 million to UN agencies and NGOs, including CARE, Catholic Relief Services, GOAL, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children Fund, and World Vision for emergency health, nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter, livelihoods, logistics, and coordination activities. To date, USAID's Office of Food for Peace has contributed 132,340 metric tons of emergency food assistance for Sudan and Sudanese refugees in neighboring Chad in FY 2004—enough food to feed one million people for nearly 9 months—valued at more than \$123 million. In addition, OFDA has delivered a total of 12,830 rolls of plastic sheeting—which will provide shelter for approximately 808,290 people—235,335 blankets, 40 water storage and purification systems, and 52,100 water containers via 35 airlifts.



A mother holds her 27-month-old child in the Kebkabiya camp for displaced persons.

USAID

At a meeting of Donor Consultations on Darfur in early June in Geneva, Switzerland, Natsios said “For over a year the United States has been deeply engaged in trying to put an end to the conflict in Darfur and provide assistance to those affected by the violence there. We’ve committed enormous resources to this effort, but without further resources from the international community and a commitment from both sides in this conflict to end the fighting and protect the vulnerable, this disaster cannot be contained.”

For more information, visit www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/sudan/darfur.html or contact the information officer for the Darfur Response Management Team, at rmtdarfur_io@ofda.net or 202-712-0039.

Fighting One of Africa's Biggest Killers

The World Health Organization estimates that 3,000 people die of malaria every day, one every 30 seconds. Worldwide, an estimated 300 to 500 million cases of malaria are contracted every year, resulting in up to 2.5 million deaths. In Africa—where 90 percent of malaria deaths occur—malaria is the leading cause of death for children under five years of age.

To combat this life-threatening illness, USAID has nearly quadrupled funding for malaria programs over the past six years, from \$22 million in fiscal year 1998 to \$83 million in FY 2004. In addition, USAID has contributed \$398 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria since the fund's inception in 2001, and will contribute up to \$398 million more in FY 2004.

As part of the Roll Back Malaria partnership (RBM), which is led by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank, USAID is working to ensure that by the year 2005:

- ◆ At least 60 percent of those suffering from malaria have prompt access to and are able to use correct, affordable, and appropriate treatment within eight hours of the onset of malarial symptoms;
- ◆ At least 60 percent of those at risk of malaria, particularly pregnant women and children under five years of age, benefit from the most suitable protective measures such as insecticide-treated mosquito nets and other materials to prevent infection; and
- ◆ At least 60 percent of all pregnant women who are at risk of malaria, especially those in their first pregnancies, have access to chemoprophylaxis or intermittent presumptive treatment, a proactive and effective intervention that prevents and controls the effects of malaria on mothers and their unborn children.

The primary focus of USAID's expanded response to malaria is on preventing malaria infection and illness. Even though research has shown that sleeping under an insecticide-treated net (ITN) can reduce mortality by up to 63 percent, particularly among children under age 5 and pregnant women, fewer than 10 percent of Africa's children sleep under a net, and even fewer sleep under an insecticide treated one. To help stimulate commercial investment in ITNs and therefore expand the availability of affordable ITNs, USAID launched NetMark, an innovative partnership with 13 major firms (representing over 80 percent of the global capacity to produce and distribute ITNs) to develop ITN markets in Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia.

In order to ensure access to ITNs by all segments of the population on a sustainable basis, the participation of the private commercial sector is critical. By engaging the commercial sector in promoting and selling ITNs to those who can afford to pay, the limited resources available from the public sector can then be used to subsidize ITNs for those who truly cannot afford to pay full costs. Competition is encouraged among these commercial partners to ensure customer access to higher quality and more affordable products. Sales of nets topped 1 million in the first year of activity.

NetMark also brought together key RBM partners to target subsidized nets to pregnant women and infants. Models for targeted subsidies are being widely

implemented in Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. In FY 2004, NetMark expects to expand into Ethiopia and Cameroon and generate total sales of 3.5 million ITNs through the commercial sector.

Another USAID focus is on expanding the reach of medical services. USAID/Benin, for example, is training community-based health agents to administer anti-malarials and other basic medications, which had previously only been dispensed at official hospitals and clinics. Community-based agents in the program area have not only successfully administered the products and information, but have also developed important links with health centers, increasing the number of serious and complicated cases referred to clinics and other health facilities. The program required a change in the national health policy, but has now been expanded nationwide.



Demonstrating the method to treat a mosquito net with insecticide.

Reducing malaria infection of women during pregnancy is another USAID priority. Placental infection is a significant contributor to low birthweight and subsequent neonatal death. Only 10 percent of women at risk of complications from placental infection during pregnancy have access to the recommended two to three doses of intermit-

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Millennium Challenge Account Expands Development Assistance Options

Eight African countries are eligible to compete for a new kind of development assistance. The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), announced by President Bush in 2002, seeks to roughly double the U.S. foreign assistance program by committing an additional \$5 billion annually to countries meeting specific criteria.

The principle behind the MCA is that countries already taking serious steps towards helping their citizens lead better lives should be assisted in that process. Therefore, only countries that, broadly speaking, are ruling justly, investing in improvements to health and education, and encouraging economic freedom will be eligible for the new funding. Sixteen countries have qualified so far, eight of which are in Africa: Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, and Senegal.

Eligibility alone, however, does not automatically mean funding will be forthcoming. Eligible countries are invited to submit plans for a “compact” or agreement between the country and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a U.S. government corporation independent of any government agency, although the secretaries of state and treasury, the U.S. trade representative, and the USAID administrator are among the directors of the board. These agreement plans should be developed collaboratively by the eligible country’s government, NGOs, and the business community. Once submitted, the plans will be “competed” and reviewed by the MCC. Not all will actually be funded.

Funding will also be available for five to eight “threshold countries,” which are nations that met all but one or two of the MCA selection criteria. Those

countries have not yet been named, but several will probably be in Africa.

USAID’s role will likely be different in MCA, threshold, and non-MCA countries. Once eligible countries become actual recipients, which will not be for some time, Missions may need to adjust their programming accordingly. For example, regional programs or those fighting HIV/AIDS might continue, while programs in a sector of MCA concentration might be incorporated into the MCA program.

USAID may play a major role in deciding how best to spend “threshold” funding, and regular USAID funding may also be used towards helping countries meet MCA eligibility requirements. Non-MCA countries are likely to maintain regular USAID programming.

For more information, visit www.mca.gov.

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tent preventive treatment (IPT), despite the availability of a cheap but effective drug, sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine.

USAID is working with several African governments to encourage delivery of known effective therapies. USAID/Tanzania, for example, initiated a project under the Maternal Neonatal Health Program to revise the national guidelines for treating malaria during pregnancy and to strengthen health services for pregnant women. The program uses a comprehensive antenatal care approach for pregnant women, which provides services in early detection and management of diseases including malaria and syphilis, counseling on health promotion, birth preparedness, complication readiness, and individualized birth planning. The new guidelines, which have been adopted nationwide, include the practice of IPT. According to the Tanzania National Malaria Control Program, the coverage of women

receiving IPT during antenatal visits increased from 29 percent in 2001 to 65 percent in 2003.

In Africa as elsewhere, growing resistance to antimalarial drugs, including chloroquine, and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine, is challenging malaria control. New drugs exist but are significantly more costly than current therapies. USAID and the RBM partnership are exploring the most efficient means of financing these newer, more effective treatments to ensure their wide availability. USAID is also supporting operations research to study issues affecting the introduction of combination drug therapies in Africa.

There is a growing recognition that African countries experiencing complex emergencies account for a rapidly growing percentage of the total deaths due to malaria in the region. This is especially true for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where

recent studies have shown malaria accounting for over 40 percent of the total deaths of internally displaced populations. As a result, USAID is providing expanded support for malaria control activities in the DRC.

In addition to prevention and control programs, USAID also funds a malaria vaccine development program and operations research on behavioral, community, drug use, and treatment regimen compliance issues. Support for potential community approaches to environmental management of malaria is a final important component in USAID’s fight against this deadly disease.

For more information, visit www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/id/malaria or contact Dennis Carroll, infectious disease specialist in USAID’s Global Health Bureau, at dcarroll@usaid.gov or 202-712-5009.

Locust Swarms Threaten Crops in Northwest Africa and the Sahel

Desert locust swarms have moved from the spring breeding areas near the Atlas Mountains in northwestern Africa south into the Sahel region, stripping vegetation as they go and threatening to destroy crops in as many as nine sub-Saharan countries. Even a conservative estimate of 10-15 percent crop loss would mean a staggering loss of \$250-375 million to the region.



Locusts feeding on sorghum in Mauritania.

Two unusually wet years in the breeding areas created ideal conditions for these large and voracious migratory grasshoppers to breed profusely and invade massive areas in northwestern and northern Africa and along the eastern and western coasts of the Red Sea. Since an adult locust can eat its own weight in green vegeta-

tion daily (about 2 grams) and each swarm can range in size from a few hundred million to several billion individuals, swarms can cause widespread crop damage.

Significant crop damage has already occurred in Mauritania, where over 200 swarms, each up to 20 square kilometers in size, have arrived from their breeding grounds. Additional swarms have been reported in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal, and winds may yet carry them into the already devastated Darfur region of Sudan. The Gambia has declared a state of emergency in anticipation of an imminent invasion. Control teams funded in part by USAID and other donors as well as host-country governments have treated close to 3.3 million hectares in Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia with insecticides since October 2003, but it is difficult to find all the locust infestations in remote locations. If the rains are good and control efforts prove inadequate, it is possible that the whole Sahel region could be subjected to a full-scale plague (large groups of swarms and young locusts in many areas that have persisted for a year or two) by the end of the year.

The last locust plague was from 1986 to 1989 and cost more than \$300 million to control. USAID's Africa Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Assistance (AELGA) Project was created to respond to that event. However, work continued even after the plague had been controlled. Now called Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement, the project focuses on building capacity for local monitoring, management, and control of transboundary outbreak pests like locusts. For example, in 1995, AELGA-trained extension agents and farmers detected a developing outbreak early on in Eritrea and prevented a potential upsurge, which, if left uncontrolled, could have developed into a plague.

During the current outbreak, AELGA-trained agents are again on the frontlines, carrying out survey and monitoring operations. They have also treated approximately 183,000 hectares in Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal with insecticide. USAID has contributed \$3.64 million so far, one of the largest donor contributions to the effort.

For more information, visit www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm or contact Yene Belayneh, AELGA senior technical advisor, at ybelayneh@ofda.net or 202-661-9374.

Food for Peace Program Marks 50 Years

Fifty years ago, President Eisenhower created the Food for Peace program to share our country's rich harvests with those in need in postwar Europe and other countries. The 106 million metric tons of food aid that the United States has sent overseas over the past 50 years under the Public Law 480 (PL 480) food aid program—now called Food for Peace—have kept approximately 3 billion people in 150 countries from hunger, malnutrition, and starvation.

Early in his administration, President Kennedy underlined the importance of PL 480 to the United States and the rest of the world by renaming it "Food for Peace" and placing it in the newly created U.S. Agency for International Development. Programs currently focus primarily on sub-Saharan Africa and Asia where the objectives are the same as they were 50 years ago: fighting hunger and malnutrition and promoting sustained economic growth and development.

"The secret of Food for Peace's success," said USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, "lies in the unique combination of American compassion together with the unmatched efficiency of our nation's farmers. It is less a triumph of government than of working Americans, for in its essence, Food for Peace is the work of farmers, businessmen, grain elevator operators, truckers, bargemen, freight forwarders, port operations, NGOs, PVOs, and government officials."

Through the PL 480, Title II program, USAID makes food commodity donations to cooperating sponsors (private voluntary organizations, cooperatives, and international agencies) to address the needs of food security through both long-term development projects and emergency food assistance. As the food aid arm of the United Nations, the World Food Programme (WFP) is

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Bringing Banking Services to More South Africans

Up to 35 percent of households in South Africa have never had bank accounts, but this may soon change. South Africans who have never been banking customers will now have the opportunity to benefit from expanded lending and savings services as a result of a deal signed in March between South African companies Capitec Bank and Future-growth Asset Management and USAID. USAID is providing a guarantee that allows Capitec, a company that provides accessible and affordable banking services to the mass market, to borrow up to 50 million rands (approximately \$7.5 million)—the company's first loan from the private sector. Futuregrowth Asset Management, a specialist asset manager with a focus on socially responsible investments, will make the loan and Capitec will become the country's first fully fledged retail bank providing accessible and affordable banking services to the mass market, including the "under-banked" sector—those who have typically been ignored by the major lending institutions.

Studies in South Africa indicate that lower income groups often have savings, but most formal banks charge significant deposit, withdrawal, and other fees, making smaller accounts impractical for either the customer or the bank. Capitec is the only deposit taker available to lower income groups that provides returns on entry-level savings accounts. A recent USAID study on competition in banking found that while effective returns on entry-level savings accounts at Capitec are typically 4.04 percent, all other banks examined showed entry-level savers actually losing between 4.4 percent and 19.49 percent on a typical entry-level savings deposit. Among all banks in South Africa, Capitec is singularly able to encourage regular savings, providing both positive returns on savings and convenient banking for lower income savers with branches located at train stations, taxi-bus ranks,

townships, and rural, urban, and peri-urban centres.

No similar private sector venture to service the under-banked has been tried in Southern Africa and international experience with this approach is extremely limited.

USAID Deputy Administrator Fred Schieck noted, "USAID supports Capitec's efforts to expand its services to families which have not yet participated

with banking opportunities. This is an innovative program and a practical way of encouraging South Africans from lower and middle income households to benefit from savings and lending products." USAID is providing a guarantee for 50 percent of the loan.

For more information, contact Gloria Mamba, USAID/South Africa economic growth business specialist, at gmamba@usaid.gov or +27 12-452-2244.

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Food for Peace's biggest emergency response partner and has delivered assistance in recent crises from Afghanistan to Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia, and the countries of southern Africa. Eighty-three countries contributed to WFP in either 2002 or 2003, but U.S. contributions outweighed all 82 others combined, accounting for 60 percent of the world's food aid.

In 2003, approximately 13.2 million Ethiopians needed emergency food assistance. Fortunately, USAID had monitored conditions closely, and Food for Peace began shipments months before the crisis peaked. Food for Peace food aid totaled more than 1 million metric tons, helping avert widespread famine and preventing the large population movements that contributed greatly to the high mortality associated with the 1984–85 famine.

Since October 2002, the Consortium for the Southern Africa Food Security Emergency—composed of U.S.-based NGOs and funded by the Office of Food for Peace—has been working in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, countries that have been plagued by drought and, in some cases, devastating agricultural policies. The consortium has fed some 4.5 million people and provided food-for-work activities to renovate roads and irrigation systems. Another important part of the program distributes food aid to those directly affected by HIV/AIDS.

Many East African countries are still facing serious food emergencies including Sudan (and parts of Chad that Sudanese refugees have fled to), as well as portions of Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, and Kenya. In Southern Africa, fewer countries are in need of emergency food aid or require less assistance this year as more favorable weather conditions have improved crop production, but vulnerable groups in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe still are in need of supplemental food aid. Zimbabwe poses a serious challenge because, in spite of evidence to the contrary, the government has indicated it expects a bumper crop and will not require food aid assistance.

USAID continues to closely monitor conditions that affect food security throughout sub-Saharan Africa through its Famine Early Warning System, which uses U.S. satellite technology to identify early signs of drought by monitoring meteorological, crop, and rangeland conditions.

For additional information, visit www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/50th/ and www.fews.net.

Mountain Gorilla Conservation Creates Economic Opportunities

by Danielle Tedesco

The mountains of southwest Uganda and neighboring countries contain some of the most ecologically rich tropical forests on the planet. In addition to serving as home to the critically endangered mountain gorilla, these forests harbor a vast array of other important species and provide environmental resources such as water and traditional medicine to surrounding human communities. In order to preserve this area and its wildlife, USAID has been funding the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) to implement the Conservation of Afro-Montane Forest and Mountain Gorillas in a Landscape Context project.

The Uganda program activities place the conservation of the remaining 700 mountain gorillas and their Afro-montane habitat in a broader “landscape context.” This context includes an evaluation of relevant parks in Uganda, the threats to these parks that originate in the surrounding human settlements, the social and economic requirements of the parks and adjacent communities, and the transboundary and interna-

tional nature of these critical resources. Each of these activities supports mountain gorilla conservation as a means for expanded sustainable economic opportunities and improved landscape management in Uganda.

In implementing the three-year project (2002–2005), AWF has worked primarily through its International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP), a coalition of the African Wildlife Foundation, Fauna and Flora International, and World Wide Fund for Nature. Other collaborating institutions include the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC).

Mountain gorillas are a key reason for conserving the forests of southwestern Uganda, as well as one of the most important opportunities for generating benefits for UWA and local communities. The mountain gorilla population in both Bwindi and the Virungas Afro-montane forests are small and isolated, making them especially vulnerable to human impacts. Loss of the mountain gorillas would not only be ecologically significant, but would also remove one of the most important local and national economic resources from the forest.

The long-term viability of these small populations of mountain gorillas poses clear conservation management challenges. To ensure long-term viability of the population, the mountain gorillas are regularly monitored to provide information on demographic patterns and population dynamics. Research and monitoring results are integrated into protected area



M. Gray/AWF

A mother gorilla and infant in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

management for improved landscape-level planning, threat abatement strategies, and national and regional policies governing Uganda’s natural resources.

USAID/Uganda supported the Virunga mountain gorilla census conducted between September and October 2003 in collaboration with three conservation authorities (UWA, Rwandan Office of Tourism and National Parks, and the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature) in Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Census results indicated a 17 percent increase over the 1989 estimated population in this region. This growth is particularly notable given that it occurred in the midst of intense regional political instability.

AWF also works with local people to establish community business ventures that increase income for the people who are dependent on resources from the protected areas. These efforts in Uganda concentrate on working with community members whose lives are affected by the management of the



M. Gray/AWF

A silverback male gorilla in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

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L. Lartigue/USAID Guinea

Loading new textbooks for distribution to schools across Guinea.

quantity helps us fulfill an essential part of our program—improving educational quality—and will help our children succeed in school. We are extremely grateful.”

In a country where the adult literacy rate is only 41 percent, and where rural children and girls, in particular, face daunting barriers to obtaining even a basic education, strengthening Guinea's educational system and ensuring quality in education are essential to the country's development.

Guinea is fortunate to have received financing from USAID to meet all three of AEI's objectives. To encourage girls to attend—and stay in—grade school, USAID has announced the financing of scholarships for girls to begin in the fall of 2004. In addition, teacher in-service training sponsored by USAID is an ongoing activity designed to improve the quality of primary education in Guinea.

One example of teacher training is showing teachers how to use storybooks, locally made classroom materials, and child-centered teaching approaches to get kids hooked on reading. Aboubacar Touré, a third grade teacher in Mamou says, “The training we've received helps us learn how to get children interested

in reading and to love it. The strategies have children play games or work in groups. It's really wonderful to see in the classroom.”

The first of its kind in Guinea, the program is ensuring that all children in grades 1 and 2 have their own set of storybooks to use in class, and to take home to share. Ninety-six percent of participating teachers say they have seen improvements in student's reading abilities since the introduction of the program in 2001.

To ensure the sustainability and long-range impact of these initiatives, USAID works closely with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and is currently the largest bilateral contributor to Guinea's Education for All program.

Though Guinea remains plagued by a teacher shortage, and has long had a lack of classroom materials, there are signs for optimism in recent years. During the 2002-2003 school year, the MOE reports that the percentage of school-aged children attending primary school increased, particularly grade 1 admission rates, which jumped from 51 percent to 61 percent.

The Government of Guinea's firm commitment to and continued success in improving education sector management is reflected in its plan to achieve universal primary education (UPE) by 2015, a plan that is supported by the Group of Eight Nations' Education for All Fast Track Initiative. This support is only offered to countries demonstrating the most tangible progress towards the goal of UPE.

Laura Lartigue is a technical writing specialist with USAID/Guinea. For more information, visit www.usaid.gov/gn/education/news/040521_pres_initiative/index.htm or contact Natasha de Marcken, USAID/Guinea education officer, at ndemarcken@usaid.gov or +224 422-163.

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gorillas and/or Afro-montane forests. Unless local communities can benefit directly from natural resources, the future of the forests of southwestern Uganda will be exceedingly difficult to ensure. USAID has supported innovative and effective initiatives to integrate conservation and development in the region, such as the creation of community-owned campgrounds and craft-making cooperatives, as well as research methodologies needed to increase understanding of park-community relationship dynamics.

In addition, USAID support for this project has helped UWA to use protected areas to expand economic opportunities for the rural communities surrounding critical mountain gorilla habitat. These range from capacity building for income generating projects such as bamboo, mushroom, and honey production to the creation of an eco-lodge and community campground in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Both the Nkuringo eco-lodge and Buhoma community campground are private-public partnerships developed to improve livelihoods in Uganda.

By enlisting the support of the local communities and providing training and equipment for park staff, USAID and its conservation partners plan to maintain key wildlife populations, including the mountain gorilla, in Uganda's tropical forests.

Danielle Tedesco is the communications officer at AWF. For more information, contact Sudi Bamulesewa, USAID/Uganda natural resource project management specialist, at sbamulesewa@usaid.gov or +256 31-387-225.

Pre-Election Fora Educate Voters, Mobilize Civil Society in Malawi

In mid-May, voters in Malawi went to the polls to elect a president and parliament for the third time since 1994, when former President for Life Hastings Kamuzu Banda first allowed open elections. Because Malawian democracy is so young, civic education, for both voters and candidates, is necessary for meaningful elections. USAID/Malawi therefore supported a series of trainings and debates organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), along with local civil society organizations (CSOs), which were designed to encourage a more informed electorate as well as to create an opportunity for CSO mobilization and advocacy.

Initial planning for the trainings and debates started a full eight months beforehand. Representatives from various diverse stakeholder groups formed a consultative board to play a large role in organizing the fora.

One major component of the preparations was to identify issues for debate. NDI held a training event on survey methodology and the overall conduct of the fora with 10 CSOs. Through focus group research, NDI assisted the civic groups in refining issues to raise at the fora, with a special emphasis on legislative efforts to increase agricultural production, promote gender equality, strengthen the rule of law, and improve basic education.

In April, IRI conducted two one-day debate trainings for candidates in the elections. Seventy-two candidates, 20 percent of whom were women, participated in the training. Organizers hired local actors to illustrate the proper ways to speak in public as well as to give candidates an idea of the audience reaction they might face on the day of the debate. Organizers also presented information about the responsibilities of members of parliament, including balancing the needs to represent one's

constituency and one's party. Finally, participants were asked to sign a code of conduct for the debates.

Nicholas Dausi, vice president of the Malawi Congress Party and a parliamentary candidate, said "It was an eye opener, an important training.... It was an opportunity for everybody to put forward issues and policies that his or her political party stands for. The training was an opportunity to share political experiences from all sides in a democratic way."

This training helped candidates prepare for the Citizen Advocacy Fora (CAFs) or public debates held in 12 constituencies around the country, selected because of the slim margin between the top two vote-getters there in previous elections. Cosponsored by NDI and the Institute for Multi-party Democracy, the CAFs were designed to promote greater citizen participation in the legislative process, raise the visibility of citizen concerns, and render citizens more informed in the march toward polling day. The CAFs are also expected to enable Malawian CSOs to better hold elected representatives accountable to promises made during the campaign period.

Approximately 33,500 voters turned out to hear 76 of the 83 candidates running for office in those constituencies debate issues such as health, agriculture, education, gender, corruption, and good governance. Audience members were also invited to ask questions, the subjects of which ranged from concern over crime rates to complaints about members of parliament using constituency allowances for personal needs instead of development projects.

Organizers were concerned about possible problems with security given the tension between the political parties and previous violence that occurred in some constituencies. In fact, one candidate in Zomba refused to participate for security

reasons. But while there was jeering from the audience at some CAFs, there was no violence.

Citizens, candidates, organizers, the media, and government officials were all extremely pleased with the events, requesting that the dialogue continue after the elections and that even more CAFs be held before the next presidential elections, scheduled for 2009. "We felt that this was an opportunity for voters to screen candidates and be able to make an informed decision when voting," said Moses Mkandawire of the Church and Society Program Livingstonia Synod, as quoted in the *Malawi Nation*, May 5, 2004.



Hundreds of citizens gathered for a voters' forum in Lilongwe, Malawi's capital.

As a result of the fora, citizens were more informed in choosing their legislative candidates; aspiring candidates (both elected and those who were defeated) gained a clearer sense of what concerns their constituents have; CSOs became more familiar with the issues and positions of the various candidates; CSOs mobilized citizens and strategies to identify issues through focus group research; and the electorate now has specific issues on which to hold its elected leaders accountable in the post-campaign environment.

For more information, contact Ryan McCannell in the Africa Bureau's democracy and governance division at rmccannell@usaid.gov or 202-712-1992.

A F R I C A R E S O U R C E S

A selection of recent USAID-funded publications on Africa

Behind The Violence: Causes, Consequences, and the Search for Solutions to the War in Northern Uganda

Zachary Lomo and Lucy Hovil, et al. International Rescue Committee; USAID/Uganda. February 2004.

PN-ACX-535

www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACX535.pdf (707 KB)

The war in northern Uganda is now entering its 18th year. Initially rooted in a popular rebellion against President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) government, the conflict has since been transformed by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) into a brutally violent war in which civilians are the main victims. Over 1.4 million people have been displaced, and tens of thousands more have been killed, raped, or abducted.

This report examines the structural causes that underpin the war, its current dynamics, the implications of the conflict spreading further east in 2003, and ideas for resolution. The report asserts that while people living in the north have deep-rooted grievances against the current government, Kony's LRA is a poor expression of these and enjoys no popular support. The war is thus two conflicts in one: a multi-faceted northern rebellion against the NRM government whose root causes have never been fully resolved, and a war with an LRA that does not fit conventional models of political insurgency and is instead motivated by an apocalyptic spiritualism. In addition, the protracted nature of the war has created new conflict dynamics, with many of the war's horrific consequences – such as mass displacement, a perceived war economy, and a military response that often fails to protect communities – having turned into reasons for its continuation. With the population blaming the conflicting parties for such suffering, the ensuing lack of trust has led to intense three-way tensions between the LRA, the civilian population, and the government that has compromised intelligence gathering and turned the rebels against civilians. The recent spread of the war has also raised several new issues. The government-sponsored militias in Soroti and Lira, while protecting the populations in their regions in the short-term, is of long-term concern since arming over 20,000 civilians may potentially threaten the security of the country. The report concludes with general recommendations addressing the three main strands of the conflict: root causes that continue to feed grievances in northern Uganda; the LRA conflict itself; and the long term consequences of the war.

Community Health Fund: Assessing Implementation of New Management Procedures in Hanang District, Tanzania

Stephen Musau. Abt Associates, Inc.; USAID/ REDSO/EA; USAID/GH/HIDN. January 2004.

PN-ACW-592

www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACW592.pdf (100 KB)

A dearth of well-trained health managers threatens the viability of community-based health insurance initiatives in Africa. To address this issue, the Community Health Fund (CHF) in Tanzania's Hanang district has introduced procedures to control revenue collection and reporting and provide information for assessing the Fund's performance. This report examines implementation of the new procedures, identifies successes and shortcomings, especially regarding record keeping and reporting requirements, and recommends steps to improve record keeping at health care facilities, reporting of data to the district level, and use of the new data by the district.

Key findings are as follows: 1) The new guidelines are easy to understand and implement, and staff are willing to comply with the new procedures. All facilities have implemented them. 2) Facility heads who were trained have provided some training to other members of their staff, but not all staff are able to prepare the required reports. 3) Submission of monthly status reports by facilities has been poor. New procedures for submitting reports have been instituted and most facilities have submitted all their reports. 4) The Council Health Management Team has not provided adequate supervision and support to the facilities to encourage better CHF management. 5) Community committees have been formed, but not all are active due to the absence of allowances for members. This issue is currently being addressed. 6) CHF membership continues to be very low (about 2.4 percent of households are enrolled), but service utilization by members is 45 percent of all outpatient visits. Of the revenue collected at the facilities, CHF membership fees (excluding the matching grant) account for about 15 percent, while user fees account for 85 percent. 7) There is an urgent need to review the CHF design in the district to make it viable. Premium and user-fee levels and exemption policies all need to be reexamined to encourage membership while making services accessible to those who cannot afford the premiums.

Indigenous Democracy: Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms—Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, and Marakwet, Kenya

Ruto Pkalya and Mohamud Adan, et al. Intermediate Technology Group, Eastern Africa; Global Environment Facility; UNDP; USAID. January 2004.

PN-ACX-802

www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACX802.pdf (1,677 KB)

This report details the indigenous methods of conflict resolution among the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, and Marakwet communities of North Rift, Kenya. The report outlines scarce and unequal access to natural resources and power, ethnic mistrust, inadequate state structures, border tensions, and proliferation of illicit arms into the hands of tribal chiefs, warlords, and fellow tribesmen as some of the causes of inter-ethnic conflicts in the region. Cattle rustling and land clashes can result when tensions grow too high.

Over time, the study communities have institutionalized an elaborate system and mechanisms of resolving conflicts, whether intra- or inter-community. The study focuses on the unique pastoralists' cultures that emphasize the resolution of conflicts amicably through a council of elders—who are believed to control supernatural powers and form a dominant component of the customary mechanisms of conflict management—dialogue, traditional rituals, and common utilization of resources, especially dry-season grazing land. Nonetheless, any peace pacts are generally flouted as soon as the conditions that necessitated them cease to hold.

The study communities have consistent and more elaborate methods of intervening in intra-ethnic than in inter-ethnic conflicts. There is a marked absence or inadequacy of enforcement mechanisms/frameworks to implement what the elders and other traditional courts have ruled. The customary courts rely on societal goodwill to adhere to its ruling. Consideration for gender issues is typically inadequate. Also, limited government understanding of pastoralists' livelihoods and the ensuing marginalization of pastoralists' issues have corroded the efficacy and relevance of customary institutions of conflict management. The study includes recommendations based on African traditional methods of conflict resolution, which differ fundamentally from those in the West.

Technical Report: Action Plan of Priority Actions for Integrating Regional Supply Chains to Increase Competitive Trade in the Textile, Garment and Handicraft Sectors

Chemonics International Inc.; USAID/RCSA. January 2004.

PN-ACX-725

www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACX725.pdf (188 KB)

Recognizing the importance of improving the competitiveness of Southern Africa's garment supply chains, USAID's Southern Africa Global Competitiveness Hub undertook a strategic assessment to identify the principal constraints to increased trade. This action plan is based on the results of that assessment. The plan first identifies the constraints inhibiting needed changes in trade patterns: markets, textile and garment production capacity, and competitiveness factors such as price, quality, and response. The plan then details specific actions to be taken by regional stakeholders to overcome some of those constraints: develop a prototype marketing and production database; enhance small and medium scale enterprise outsourcing services; identify strategic investment opportunities in the textile industry; conduct marketing seminars for exporters of handicrafts; conduct national-level assessments; develop a business plan for a regional textile and garment association; improve transportation services for the textile and garment sectors (lower airfreight costs and increasing traffic through the port of Walvis Bay, Namibia); and develop a strategy for removing non-tariff barriers to textile and garment trade from Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia to the Southern African Customs Union.

Unless otherwise noted, these and other documents can be downloaded in full-text free of charge at the web address given or at www.dec.org/title_search.cfm. Search for the desired document ID number (DOCID), for example, PN-ACX-535, in the field search option.

Partnership Doubles Number of Computers at University of Asmara



An Eritrean student takes advantage of a new computer at the University of Asmara.

Just last year, there was only one computer for every four or five of the approximately 500 students registered in the introductory computer science course at Eritrea's University of Asmara, making it nearly impossible for most students to practice newly learned skills.

Thanks to a partnership with USAID, each student will now have access to a machine while in class. The number of computers at the university doubled this spring when USAID/Eritrea delivered 400 Pentium 4 machines, 15 laptops, and 10 servers to the campus. These computers will also be used by the engineering, statistics, journalism, geography, and business and economics departments, the Digital

Research Library, and the Consultancy, Training and Testing Center (CTTC).

The Digital Research Library will provide important on-line research opportunities for graduate students starting long-distance master's degree

programs, helping them meet the country's needs in social science, journalism, and health through interdisciplinary research and teaching.

The CTTC provides testing services for international standardized academic preadmission tests such as the GRE and TOEFL and will eventually offer an online master's degree program. The center also provides information technology consultancy services to local businesses and government and executive education programs for working professionals. All proceeds from testing and consultancy services go back into the university's programs.

In addition, the computers will provide access to the Internet and information otherwise not available to students in Eritrea's very underdeveloped media environment.

For more information, contact Josh Kefauver, project management coordinator for USAID's capacity building team, at jkefauver@usaid.gov or +291 1-126-546.

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