



R E T H I N K I N G
INTERNATIONAL AID





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COVER PHOTOS

Clockwise from upper left:

A Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala. (Courtesy of Peace Corps)

Two boys in Honduras. (Courtesy of USAID)

In Osu, Ghana, a volunteer from the Presbyterian Church of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and library workers process books at a new library sponsored by the church. (© Milton McNatt)

A laborer's child at a construction site in India.
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About This Issue

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* dates foreign assistance programs to 18th-century Prussia and other European powers that subsidized their military allies. Foreign aid as we understand it today — a transfer of resources to improve the well-being of people in the recipient nation — began in earnest after the Second World War with Marshall Plan economic aid from the United States to the nations of western Europe, and with the founding of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

By the 21st century, combined annual foreign aid approached \$70 billion (thousand million). By some measures, it has totaled \$1.5 trillion since 1960. And yet poverty, hunger, and underdevelopment are still with us. The question, inevitably, is why?

This issue of *eJournal USA* offers leading thinkers' explanations of how the United States and other nations continue to wrestle with this question. In what ways has foreign assistance been structured, conditioned, distributed? What has been tried, and what works? How has the new “transformational diplomacy” described by Secretary Rice shaped the U.S. aid model, and how does that model differ from others?

This issue also profiles a number of American efforts — launched by the U.S. government, by individual American citizens, and by partnerships between the two — to help those in need. From the Peace Corps to the medical vessel USNS *Comfort*, and from Ethiopian Americans pooling their resources to establish an Addis Ababa medical clinic to an extraordinary citizen who works with local leaders to build schools for girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan, these stories illustrate how every one of us can find a way to help.

In our overview essay, Oxford University Professor Paul Collier explains and critiques the many distribution models that nations, NGOs, and other organizations have used to get the cash where it is needed. Many of these models, he suggests, have not worked as well as we might have hoped, but aid professionals do seem to learn from their experiences. Collier also outlines a potential alternative model for future foreign assistance.

Steven Radelet, a former deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Treasury Department, offers a detailed précis of U.S. foreign assistance programs. Because these offer a range of cash, commodities, and technical expertise, which are distributed through public, quasi-public, and private sources and initiatives, the scope of the combined American efforts is not always fully understood.

Carol Adelman, a senior fellow and director of Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity, focuses on how private capital plays an increasingly important role in the U.S. effort to assist the world's poor and to spur global development.

We hope this issue conveys a sense of the energy, determination, and creativity being applied to alleviate and, indeed, to conquer some of the world's most intractable problems.

— *The Editors*



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The Changing Face of Aid

Paul Collier



As Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte (top right) and Mozambique's President Armando Guebuza look on, Ambassador John Danilovich (lower right) shakes hands with Mozambique's Minister of Development and Planning Aiuba Cuereneia during a ceremony marking the signing of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact with Mozambique in July 2007. The MCC was established in 2004 to address problems with traditional foreign aid programs.

Paul Collier is a professor of economics and the director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University and the author most recently of The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It (Oxford University Press, 2007).

Aid used to be simple. Thirty years ago it was very largely provided through projects, and most of these were for infrastructure. Things changed partly because aid agencies became aware of fungibility: The aid was not, in reality, financing the projects to which it was ostensibly linked because often the recipient government would have done the project anyway, using its own tax resources. So, what the project really financed was whatever the government decided that it could now afford to do with the money released as a result of the donor financing the project instead. With project aid the donor

had no influence over this government decision.

Donors also came to realize that whether their projects worked or not depended to a considerable extent upon the larger policy context: how the government chose to run the economy. The next phase in aid thus was policy based: Aid would be provided in return for an undertaking by the government to change some specified policies. This was not very successful. It confused the key issue that a government should be clearly responsible to its own citizens. If policy was being set by donors, a government could not reasonably be held accountable by its citizens if things went wrong. The conditions were also readily gamed by recipient governments: The Kenyan government "sold" the same reform to the World Bank five times in 15 years! Donors simply had little incentive to enforce conditions because staff were subject to strong pressures to disburse.

NEW APPROACHES TO AID

Such policy conditionality has not entirely disappeared, but during the past decade there have been major changes. One is toward “budget support” conditioned upon the attained level of policies rather than promises to change them. This is how the International Development Association, the part of the World Bank that helps the world’s poorest countries, allocates its aid flow. Budget support is money that can be used by the recipient government for any purpose — it simply counts as a source of revenue for the budget. Budget support presupposes that the government and the donor are closely aligned in their preferences: This is why it is best conditioned upon a judgment that policies are already satisfactory.

A related major shift has been to “country ownership” and “citizen participation.” The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) mode of aid requires the government to engage with its citizens in some participatory process that helps to shape a document (the PRSP), that sets out what the government proposes to do. Donors then decide whether to provide aid based on this document rather than negotiating specific policies. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of the U.S. government works in a somewhat similar way, with the donor evaluating proposed expenditures based upon attained levels of governance.

This is edging toward governance conditionality instead of policy conditionality. Whereas policy conditionality tells the government what policies it should adopt, governance conditionality tries to incentivize government accountability to its own citizens: For example, it might require that the budget be transparent so that citizens can see not only how aid money is spent, but how tax receipts are spent. This approach may have some weak incentive effect toward improved governance, but mainly its purpose is to select between governments, channelling aid to those that for whatever reason, already have reasonable governance.

While budget support, the MCC, and country ownership are good approaches where donor and government preferences are closely aligned, they are manifestly inappropriate where they diverge. For example, if the donor believes that a government’s spending priorities favor narrow elites or public-sector workers over ordinary people, it would be foolish to hand over money for the government to use as it liked. At present

there is no satisfactory architecture for delivering large amounts of aid in these difficult circumstances. Typically, where policies and governance are very poor, the needs of ordinary citizens are greatest, so there is an acute tension between what is needed and what can realistically be achieved by channelling large aid flows through the government. This dilemma is often at its most acute in post-conflict situations, where the civil service has collapsed leaving corrupt and ineffective public delivery systems.

One recent approach has been to earmark specialized funds for specific purposes, usually health, and to use the money to finance ad hoc programs on these issues designed by recipient governments. The donor hopes to enforce effective use of the money by threatening not to renew financing if targets are not met. Hence, the enforcement is designed around specified outcomes rather than policies. One problem with this approach is that the weaker recipient governments lack the strong public delivery systems to attain the desired outcomes, and short bursts of money do nothing to build them. A second problem is that governments or civil servants in weak governance environments may be so used to snatching short-term opportunities as they arise that the threat of future loss of funding is ineffective. Hence, the specialized funds approach may face similar obstacles as the budget support approach — being excellent for the stronger environments but not for some of the most needy.

REACHING THE NEEDEST

An alternative approach that is about to be piloted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is tailored specifically for the most challenging environments. It proposes to use aid to fund alternate, extra-governmental delivery mechanisms for key services. For example, aid for education might be channelled to the churches that already run successful mission schools so that these can be scaled up. To an extent this is already done through the World Bank’s Social Funds program. However, the social funds usually only finance the capital cost of a project — the building of a school but not its running costs. They are also typically quite small.

The key idea here is that many nongovernment suppliers should become eligible for aid finance, including local and international NGOs, not-for-profit companies such as the Citizen Development Corps and the Crown



© AP Images/Lucy Pemoni

At a school in Liloan, Philippines, that was converted into a temporary shelter for families evacuated after a landslide, a U.S. Marine gives a young girl a taste of an MRE (Meals Ready to Eat).

Agents, and for-profit companies. I have proposed a version of this approach called Independent Service Authorities (ISAs). An ISA would be a government agency outside the civil service, a little analogous to an independent revenue authority. It would contract with service providing NGOs and firms, but would not itself directly provide the services. Instead, it would monitor performance. Although the ISA would be a part of government, it would be participatory, including some representation from civil society and donors. Hence, both citizens — including the local media — and donors would see the evaluations of service performance. Government would thus be more accountable to citizens, and donors would be able to channel large financial flows into needy environments with some confidence that money was being used as intended.

There have also been changing fashions in sector priorities. Thirty years ago the priority was seen to be infrastructure. In the past decade the fashion has shifted massively toward social sectors like health and education, and within these to the primary delivery systems — rural clinics and primary schools. This was partly because of a misplaced belief that infrastructure would be funded by the private sector, and partly because NGOs, dependent on their own fund-raising efforts, adopted a more emotional approach that promoted popular awareness among the citizens of developed countries. Thus, the more photogenic aspects of development, especially anything directly related to young children, came into relatively greater prominence. Inadvertently, as a result of these pressures, aid probably became less focused on a strategic growth agenda: There were more primary schools but

fewer power stations. As fashions move on, there is now a shift from basic health and education to agriculture, generally linked to concerns about food supply. While the recent rise in world food prices adds to the rationale for this shift, it, too, may prove more effective in meeting short-term humanitarian rather than long-term strategic objectives.

BEYOND THE PHOTOGENIC

A final set of issues concerns donor coordination. As more countries become developed, the number of national aid programs is proliferating. Even within countries there are often many different agencies delivering aid: The U.S. government alone has some 19 distinct agencies providing aid in some shape or form. There has been an even greater proliferation of international NGOs, often channelling large amounts of government money as well as private donations, but with very weak systems of accountability.

Periodically, all these different donors get concerned to coordinate or at least harmonize their efforts. Recipient governments are often ambivalent. They object to the burden of dealing with many different donor agencies but resist solutions that would enable the many agencies to “gang up” against the government. Part of the problem is that each of the government donors is accountable to its own national systems of public scrutiny and so must conform to different standards. Partly, it is that no donor agency is willing to take leadership from any other. Partly, it is that governments are often genuinely undecided about their own priorities, or they keep their true priorities opaque because they know that donors would not agree with them.

The most sensible solution would probably be to channel more aid through a few multilateral agencies: The best of these agencies have more competence than the bilateral agencies and NGOs and are more detached from political pressures. However, the trend in aid finance is pretty strongly in the opposite direction: more bilateral programs and more NGOs. Hence, the best hope is that the citizens of the developed countries get themselves up to speed on the real priorities and so enable the NGOs and government agencies to move beyond the photogenic. That is why I wrote *The Bottom Billion*. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

The U.S. Foreign Assistance Spectrum

Steven Radelet

U.S. foreign assistance comes in many forms, including cash, commodities, and technical expertise, and through public, quasi-public, and private sources and initiatives. Steven Radelet is a senior fellow at the Center for Global

Development, where he works on issues related to foreign aid, developing country debt, economic growth, and trade between rich and poor countries. He was deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury for Africa, the Middle East, and Asia from January 2000 through June 2002.

U.S. foreign assistance as we know it today traces its roots to the post-World War II Marshall Plan and to the founding of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, known today as part of the World Bank Group. These two efforts were fundamental in rebuilding Europe and establishing the foundation for peace, prosperity, and freedom in the aftermath of World War II.

The objectives and techniques of U.S. foreign aid programs have broadened substantially since that time. Today's programs sustain diverse activities in areas of vital importance, among them agriculture, health, education, infrastructure, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, democracy, governance, volunteer programs, and humanitarian assistance during emergencies. In 2006, the U.S. government provided more than \$26 billion in foreign assistance to some 120 countries and territories around the world.

U.S. foreign assistance comes in many forms, including cash support, commodities such as food or drugs, debt relief, and technical expertise. But the U.S. government is only one part of the story: The people of the United States provide even more through private charities, foundations, faith-based organizations, and individual efforts.

A hallmark of U.S. foreign assistance is that it supports not only governments but also nongovernmental agencies, faith-based organizations, advocacy groups, research institutions, and small-scale private businesses

and entrepreneurs. This broad effort reflects the belief of most Americans that societal progress depends not only on government or private-sector efforts, but also on the joint endeavors of the public sector, private businesses, nonprofit groups, and individual initiatives. Around the world, it is not unusual to find U.S. agencies supporting economic research organizations; faith-based groups running schools or clinics; microfinance initiatives helping small private entrepreneurs, universities, and training institutions; and nongovernmental organizations involved in environmental awareness and human rights campaigns.



Two boys from Montecillos, Honduras, enjoy the fresh water piped in through a new water system built with the help of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Courtesy of USAID

U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Most people associate U.S. foreign assistance primarily with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Established in 1961, USAID is the largest and



UNICEF supports the feeding program that helps this woman feed her malnourished child. They are sitting under a mosquito net at a nutrition center run by the international NGO *Action contre la faim* in Darfur.

© UNICEF/HQ06-0575/Shehzad Noorani

most diverse U.S. government foreign assistance agency. It has stood at the forefront of efforts such as the Green Revolution, which helped feed millions of people by developing and distributing new varieties of rice, wheat, and other grains; immunization programs; maternal health; literacy training; the development of oral rehydration therapy to fight diarrhea; microfinance; and numerous other efforts. Today it operates a full range of development activities in countries around the world.

While USAID is at the center of U.S. foreign assistance efforts, it is joined by programs from the Departments of State, the Treasury, Agriculture, Defense, and Health and Human Services; the Centers for Disease Control; the Peace Corps; the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC); the African Development Foundation; the Inter-American Foundation, and several other organizations. In addition to these bilateral efforts, the United States ranks as the largest, or among the largest, contributors to critical multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

Five programs in particular illustrate the range of U.S. government foreign assistance initiatives beyond USAID's development programs: humanitarian relief, debt relief, the Peace Corps, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and

the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Humanitarian Relief:

The American people are at their best in helping others respond to emergencies and humanitarian crises. Like most people around the world, Americans believe deeply in providing a helping hand to those in need. Primarily through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the United States was among the first to respond to the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1997. U.S. troops were quickly on the scene to provide food and emergency

supplies after a tsunami struck Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and other countries in December 2004. Indeed, whenever earthquakes, floods, or famines strike, or wherever a refugee crisis emerges, the U.S. government, private agencies, and faith-based organizations all are typically found at the forefront of the international response.

Debt Relief: Since the late 1990s, The U.S. Treasury Department has helped lead the global movement to relieve the poorest countries from often-crippling debts. A breakthrough came in 1997 when the United States and other shareholders of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other multilateral institutions agreed to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. While the HIPC initiative called for substantial debt relief, it did not call for total debt relief — at least initially. That began to change in early 2000, when the United States became the first country to announce that it would forgive 100 percent of the debts owed to it by low-income countries qualifying under the initiative.

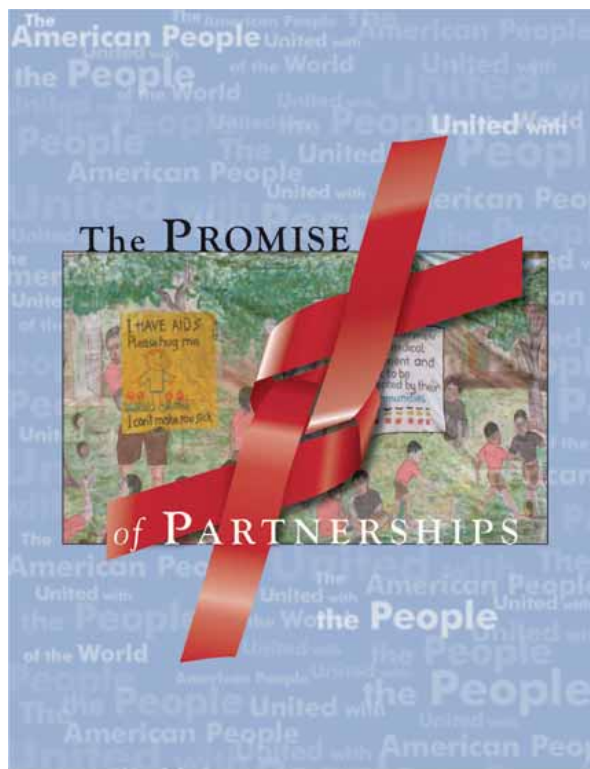
Peace Corps: Perhaps the signature U.S. assistance program is the Peace Corps. Most Americans subscribe to an ideal of individuals working hard, rolling up their sleeves, and pitching in to help others. The Peace Corps embodies all of those values. Over the past 45 years, more than 187,000 Americans have lived this ideal by serving as

Peace Corps volunteers in 139 countries. Volunteers teach in local schools, support HIV public awareness campaigns, assist in agriculture extension activities, dispense business advice to small entrepreneurs, and help out with countless other activities. For millions of people around the world, their first opportunity to get to know an American is by meeting a local Peace Corps volunteer. And, importantly, Peace Corps volunteers return to the United States with a much greater appreciation for and understanding of the world's peoples, and gladly share their experiences with other Americans.

MCC: One of the newest U.S. government foreign assistance programs is the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). Established in 2004, the MCA is implemented through a new agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and it works differently than most other assistance programs. MCA is based on the idea that government assistance works best when it supports well-governed countries that are committed to effective policies to fight poverty and accelerate development. Thus, the MCC selects countries to receive assistance based on their proven commitment to good governance, fighting corruption, investing in health and education, and establishing sensible economic policies. Once recipient countries have been selected, the MCC puts these countries in the driver's seat, giving them the flexibility and responsibility to identify their highest priorities and to design and implement programs to fit their needs. So far, many countries have focused on road networks and other infrastructure projects, agriculture, and rural development. Programs are crafted to stimulate economic activity, to entice new investment, and to create jobs, and thus, in turn, to accelerate the pace of economic progress and reduce poverty. To date, the MCC has designated 25 countries as eligible for its main programs and has signed

compacts with 14 others. It has also agreed to "threshold" programs with another 15 countries that have not yet met MCC eligibility standards but are on the threshold of doing so.

PEPFAR: Over the last several years, the United States has become the global leader in fighting HIV/AIDS



Courtesy of PEPFAR



www.PEPFAR.gov

around the world, mainly through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and through contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Established in 2003, PEPFAR provides significant assistance to 15 focus countries, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, and has other programs in dozens more. In its first four years, PEPFAR programs have helped extend the lives of more than 1.1 million people through antiretroviral treatment, averted more than 100,000 infant HIV infections by preventing mother-to-child transmission, and offered care to more than 4 million people affected by the epidemic. PEPFAR also has funded prevention activities

reaching some 60 million people and provided support for more than 18 million counseling and testing sessions. In tandem with these bilateral programs, the United States has contributed about 30 percent of the funding for the Global Fund, which has become the leading contributor to programs fighting malaria and tuberculosis and the second largest funder of HIV programs worldwide. Unfortunately, the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to spread, but in the last few years the United States has led the charge to try to fight the disease.

PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Over and above these U.S. government contributions, American charitable groups, faith-based organizations,

and individuals have a long history of providing support and assistance to organizations around the world. Many Americans feel most comfortable in channeling their assistance through private agencies, foundations, and churches. Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, CARE, the American Red Cross, Save the Children, Oxfam America, and many similar organizations have worked for decades to assist development efforts throughout the world. To offer but one example, Rotary International, with support from its members in the United States and around the world, has led the charge to eradicate polio.

The last decade has witnessed significant contributions from several new, innovative private foundations. U.S. foundations have combated poverty for many years — in the 1950s and 1960s, the Ford and Rockefeller foundations were among the largest assistance organizations in the world, and they continue to provide support today. But several new foundations have emerged on the scene in recent years. The largest by far is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which disburses more than \$1.5 billion each year, more than the total amount of foreign assistance provided by many individual donor countries.

Other new foundations include the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Omidyar Network, Google.org, the Nike Foundation, and Malaria No More. These organizations offer their own entrepreneurial spirit, technical know-how, and intense commitment to organizations and governments already working to solve some of the most pressing development challenges.

FACING FACTS

Of course, U.S. foreign assistance programs are not above criticism. Many commentators acknowledge that the United States is the largest single donor, but they observe that as a share of total income, U.S. assistance lags behind that of other countries even after including private and charitable contributions. And U.S. government programs suffer from their share of bureaucratic delays and high administrative costs. These issues are beginning to be more widely addressed within the United States, and some important changes have been made. For example, U.S.

government direct foreign assistance has increased by more than 150 percent since 1997. Some efforts have already been made to reduce bureaucratic costs, particularly through the MCC, and other reforms are under way.

Today, there is a renewed sense among many Americans of the urgent need to fight poverty, battle endemic

diseases, and accelerate development among the poorest nations. The American people are engaged at many levels in meeting these challenges — through their government, private foundations, and faith-based groups, and as individual volunteers — in the hopes of fighting poverty and disease and creating a more open and prosperous world for all. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.



Children line up for food provided by CARE in Zimbabwe. CARE's approach combines immediate distribution of food along with seeds, tools, and training for long-term food security.

Courtesy of Jesse Moore/CARE

A New Assistance Landscape

Carol C. Adelman



© AP Images/David Guttenfelder

At an orphanage for Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, former heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali greets the crowd upon his arrival on a visit to donate food, wheelchairs, and medicine.

Private capital plays an increasingly important role in assisting the world's poor, and in spurring development.

Carol Adelman is a senior fellow and director of Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity specializing in international development and public policy, private giving to developing countries, foreign aid, and global health policy.

Even as rock stars and G8 leaders identify increased government aid as the key to assisting the world's poor, such assistance continues to decline in importance for the developing world. Private capital flows and private philanthropy — including remittances from immigrants sent back to their countries of origin — that address traditional needs such as education, housing, and health care now dwarf official government assistance. In addition, imaginative public-private partnerships, the dramatic growth of Internet giving, and

new technologies together have shaped a new assistance landscape. Governments must understand this and tailor their contributions accordingly to help the poor more effectively.

The 2007 *Index of Global Philanthropy*, prepared by Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity, shows that in 2005 (the latest available complete data) Americans gave \$95 billion to the developing world through the private sector, including foundations, corporations, private and voluntary organizations, colleges and universities, and religious institutions, as well as through volunteer time and remittances. [<http://gpr.hudson.org/files/publications/IndexGlobalPhilanthropy2007.pdf>] This is nearly three and one-half times U.S. official aid. American companies invested and lent another \$69 billion in private capital. These private efforts constituted some 86 percent of U.S. total economic flows to developing countries.



© AP Images/Elaine Thompson

These twin brothers in Mercer Island, Washington, used this sign in their campaign to raise money for victims of the December 2004 tsunami. They donated nearly \$6,000 to World Vision.

The magnitude of this private-sector engagement and the documented success of private-sector approaches and innovative public-private partnerships suggest that traditional foreign aid models need a fresh look. Marshall Plan-era programs that deliver assistance primarily through host governments, often through expensive consultants and cumbersome administrative infrastructures, are outdated and often inefficient. These traditional foreign aid programs were devised for a world in which private investments in and private international philanthropy toward the developing world were minimal.

Measuring U.S. international assistance solely by government aid thus distorts the quantity and the effectiveness of American generosity to poor nations. When we add our private giving to our government's official foreign aid, we can better understand the true dimensions of U.S. assistance. When we examine the nature and substance of private-sector assistance, we see approaches that frequently work better — by capitalizing on global markets, by employing technology linking

private donors directly with needy people, by cutting the cost of delivering assistance, and by improving the quality of what is delivered.

A GET-IT-DONE APPROACH

Case studies of these private-sector and other “new model” efforts reveal practical expressions of the American ideals of personal responsibility, localized and commonsense solutions, and the individual as change agent. Today's donors are hands-on and results-driven. They want measurable outcomes accomplished with local partners; they are impatient with arcane criteria that get in the way of actually helping people. “Hometown associations” of immigrants who pool their money to assist directly their former communities are having a direct and dramatic impact. Colleges and universities across the United States provide scholarship assistance that dwarfs government-funded programs. Business schools are teaching venture philanthropy models in which nonprofit organizations are helping people in developing countries start businesses, create jobs, and make a profit. Pharmaceutical companies and medical products manufacturers provide billions annually in medical training programs and in-kind assistance to the developing world. New foundations and charities are taking a fresh look at administrative infrastructure, decision making, and assessment of results

The *Index's* review of U.S. private-sector giving confirms that Americans continue to be both innovative and practical as they aid the world's poor through individual and communal efforts, through nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies, and through a kaleidoscope of new platforms and relationships.

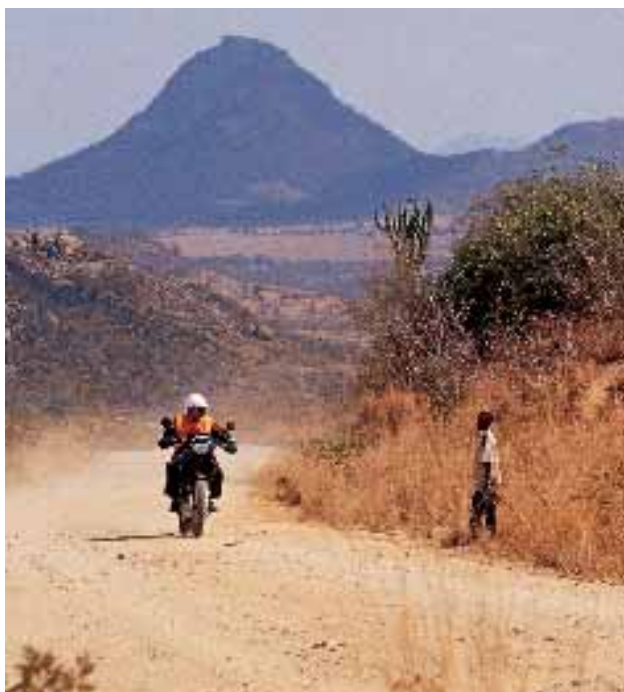
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation exemplifies the new approach. In 2005, the foundation — the world's largest philanthropic institution — increased its giving for global health, including more than \$436 million in grants through its Grand Challenges in Global Health. This public-private partnership supports research projects involving scientists in 33 countries to create deliverable technologies for the developing world: health technology that is easy to transport, easy to use, and effective. Grand Challenges is a partnership between the Gates Foundation and the U.S. government's National Institutes of Health. In addition, the British Wellcome Trust provided \$27 million and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research provided \$4.5 million. Grand Challenges illustrates an ideal international public-private

partnership: It leverages public and private funds, and it brings together each sector's unique talents and skills and applies them to critical global development needs.

To achieve its goal "... that all people — no matter where they live — get the chance to live a healthy, productive life," the Gates Foundation has adopted a practical, get-it-done approach. Where government-based one-size-fits-all efforts fail, the foundation instead assembles the right partners and the specific expertise required to solve a given problem. Depending on the issue, the foundation might work with governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, or individuals — whatever is necessary to get the job done. These efforts have created new incentives for corporate involvement and redefined traditional public-private boundaries, all in the name of having "the greatest impact for the most people." [<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/AboutUs/Announcements/Announce-070109.htm>]

BREAKING DOWN BORDERS

Over the past two decades, new kinds of international and institutional relationships have emerged to help the needy in the developing world, breaking down borders between donor countries and recipients and boundaries



This motorcyclist for Riders for Health is delivering medicine to patients in the Binga District, one of the poorest regions of Zimbabwe.

Courtesy of Riders for Health

between nonprofit and business models. In rural Africa, transporting the sick to appropriate medical facilities can be a serious issue. Official assistance programs had spent significant amounts purchasing vehicles for this purpose, but trained drivers were lacking and the vehicles were either underutilized or failing for want of required maintenance.

Enter California native Randy Mamola, a Grand Prix motorcycle racing star, and his colleagues Andrea and Barry Coleman. Examining carefully local needs and circumstances, and often working with local public health officials and national governments, the trio founded the U.K.-based Riders for Health. The organization raised private donations to fund training for drivers and other necessary experts in Uganda, Gambia, and Lesotho. Today, Riders for Health is managed completely by African teams, and it maintains two- and four-wheeled vehicles that deliver health care services to nearly 11 million people across Africa.

An AIDS patient from the Makoni district in Zimbabwe explains how the Uhuru — a special motorcycle developed by Riders for Health to function on all types of off-road terrain — made life easier for him and his family: "Before the Uhuru, it used to be a nightmare to get to the hospital. My family had to go and hire a vehicle to pick me up from home and transport me to the hospital. ..."

The Uhuru has also allowed medical teams to deliver substantive aid to treat preventable diseases. One study, conducted by Riders for Health and local public health officials in Zimbabwe, documented a 20 percent decrease in new malaria cases in the Binga District, where Riders was active. Binga's neighboring districts continued to suffer from increasing rates of infection.

THE TECHNOLOGY ADVANTAGE

Applied technology is another area in which new approaches and partnerships are having a profound effect on assistance to the developing world, including delivery and use of remittances. These payments from immigrants to their families in their home countries help enormously in lifting people in the developing world from poverty. New technologies are allowing more of every remitted dollar to reach its intended recipient by reducing transmission costs, channeling more remittances into investment, and "banking the unbanked" — integrating poor people into the financial sector through savings and credit accounts.



In 2006, tapping into consumers' desires to do good deeds with their purchasing dollars, retailer Gap began donating half of the profits from its (PRODUCT) RED™ items to the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

© AP Images/Noah Berger

out to publicize needs and to attract new donors. With secure means to use credit cards, donors can give directly to their preferred causes. Donors, potential volunteers, and recipient organizations can browse gateway sites such as change.org, dosomething.org, and firstgiving.com to identify worthy causes for their donations and for volunteering opportunities, or to list their projects for potential donors.

A CLOSER PARTNERSHIP

These are just a few examples of how private-sector efficiency helps create prosperity in the developing world. Government foreign aid should, to the greatest extent possible, merge with private projects and local institutions, particularly the growing number of community foundations in the developing world. These increased

Cross-border electronic payment systems are among the increasing number of options to avoid the relatively high costs of funds transfers. The U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, for instance, now links its automated transfer system with its Mexican counterpart under the U.S.-Mexican Partnership for Prosperity. Fees for electronic money transfers between the United States and Mexico have dropped to \$0.67 per transaction. Remittance services encourage senders and receivers to move from cash-to-cash to account-to-account transactions, allowing senders and recipients to accumulate capital, earn interest, and take out loans for business investment.

Americans often emphasize individual initiative, independence, and personal responsibility as core values. We see these values at work as Americans employ the Internet to reinvent global philanthropy. Potential donors and recipients find one another through blogs and social networking sites, where low-cost and no-cost direct links are plentiful and publicity is “viral,” spreading rapidly through the World Wide Web. Virtual volunteers reach

more than 25 percent between 2000 and 2005. Vajiraya Buasari, the head of a local philanthropy in Thailand, says that his organization can tackle problems successfully because “we are a nongovernmental organization, take quick action, spend wisely, and are accountable.”

By partnering more directly with local institutions in the developing world, the United States and other government donors subject their efforts to a crucial market test. Publicly funded projects that attract private funds and volunteers are more likely to produce solid results and to prove sustainable. Such partnerships can provide aid that reaches people directly, builds peer-to-peer relationships, and creates lasting institutions with the greatest potential to address the daunting challenges of world poverty, health, the environment, and individual rights. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Transforming Diplomacy — and Lives



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice gestures while speaking on "Transformational Diplomacy: Meeting the Challenge of the 21st Century" at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Speaking at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in January 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice observed that modern technologies “were collapsing the distance that once clearly separated right here from over there.” As a result, she said, security interests, democratic ideals, and development efforts increasingly blended together. No longer could diplomacy be, as historians used to assert, “what one clerk wrote another,” or as the Austrian writer Karl Krauss once deemed it, “a game of chess.”

Secretary Rice called for a new “transformational diplomacy,” one in which assistance to other peoples and nations would play a prominent role. Under her leadership, the goal of the new strategic framework for U.S. foreign assistance is “to help build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.”

The Secretary’s address sparked a transformation of this nation’s diplomatic and foreign assistance institutions. Localized “presence posts” bring American diplomats to key regional population centers, and in contact with more people. Within the Department of State, a new Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization coordinates efforts to help societies recover from conflict or civil strife. Rapid response teams assist nations combating avian flu and other diseases. Agencies have been consolidated to better deliver aid where and when it is needed. The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) now serves also as the State Department’s Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, and is charged with coordinating overall U.S. foreign aid strategy.

New and creative initiatives like the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and others described in this journal further transformational diplomacy by crafting carefully tailored relief programs and by helping nations create the conditions in which those programs can work.

Of course, people-to-people contact can be the most transformative diplomacy of all. “Citizen diplomats,” Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes has said, are among the nation’s greatest diplomatic assets.

The pages that follow depict a cross-section of public, private, and public-private partnership efforts to assist peoples in need—transformational diplomacy at work, throughout the world, every day.

Heart Fund Saves Children's Lives

Technical Sergeant Jack West

MANAS AIR BASE, Kyrgyzstan — Since its inception in 2003, the Manas Air Base Outreach Society (MABOS) through the Children's Heart Fund has saved 76 children born with holes in their hearts. Sixteen children alone have been saved since January.

"It's a great help," said Gula Tolkonbek, mother of 10-year-old heart surgery patient Nazik Tolkonbek.

"We spent all of our money on the treatments before the surgery. We tried to find money many different places. This was the last chance. Thank you," she said.

The most common condition the children are born with is called Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO). All babies have a hole in their heart septum during development, but it closes in 80 percent of people before birth.

For people with PFO, the hole does not close and blood flows directly from the right side of the heart to the left side of the heart without ever going to the lungs for oxygen.

The unoxygenated blood is then pushed out to the body resulting in a condition called hypoxia. Because the blood is not oxygenated, the body's cells are not receiving the oxygen they need and the person appears to have a blue color and very little energy.

PFO is a birth defect not a disease. Its cause is not yet fully understood, but it's known to be a congenital problem (passed down through genetics) and believed to be caused in this area by prenatal living at high altitudes.

Most of the heart patients MABOS supports are children whose mothers lived at high altitudes while pregnant.

PFO is not only a problem here, but also in high-altitude places in the United States such as Colorado.

"This is a common problem, but you don't hear about it much in the States because it gets taken care of fairly quickly," said Dr. Ryan Lewis, 376th

Expeditionary Medical Group. "Here they just don't have the resources."

The patients are brought to the attention of MABOS by James Carney, Children's Heart Fund liaison to MABOS.

Carney, who is originally from Montana, lives in Bishkek with his wife and family.

The facility where the surgeries are done, the Heart Surgery and Organ Transplant Research Institute in Bishkek, notifies Carney of a family in need. He checks out the situation to make sure the family really does have a need and then notifies the MABOS chairman.

MABOS pays \$560 per surgery to repair the hole in the heart for a part called an oxygenator.

During surgery, the patient's blood is diverted from the patient's heart and lungs to machines to allow surgeons to work on the hole.

The oxygenator paid for by MABOS serves as a mechanical lung.

"The patients look better immediately after the surgery because their cells are getting the oxygen they were not getting before the surgery," said Dr. Samudin Esenbekovich Shabyratier of the Research Institute.

Unfortunately, until a sure cause is identified and the defect is eliminated, the need for the Children's Heart Fund will always be there.

As long as a need exists, MABOS will be there to do its part. ■

— *Sergeant Jack West is a chaplain's assistant with the U.S. Air Force. This article originally appeared on the Web site of the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW), Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan. It is in the public domain; there are no republication restrictions.*



Photo Story

A Guatemala Connection

(All photos courtesy of Vale United Methodist Church)



This group from Oakton, Virginia, spent a week working in the highlands of Guatemala to help Mayan villagers improve their lives.

Members of Vale United Methodist Church, a small congregation in a rural suburb of Washington, D.C., support programs to assist those in need both locally and overseas. Through the Highland Support Project (HSP), the Vale church is working to build relationships with Mayan women in the highlands of Guatemala to encourage these women to take charge of their lives and improve their communities. A group from the church travels to Guatemala each summer to help construct houses and stoves and to teach the villagers new skills. The stoves they build are particularly important because they replace old unventilated stoves and open fires that cause eye problems and upper respiratory conditions, the major cause of death for highland children. The new three-burner stoves also reduce the workload of the women and greatly reduce wood consumption in an area that suffers from mudslides and floods because of deforestation.

A volunteer who celebrated her 70th birthday during the Guatemala trip in 2006 and returned in 2007 summed up the experience: "By no means is it about the giver feeling good. We need to give what they want, not what we think they need. We were intent on building a relationship, not just a house." Other comments from volunteers appear throughout the story.



A Photo Story



A volunteer is building a stove that will be ventilated to reduce the smoke inside a house.

“It was heartwarming to see the excitement and hear all the laughter among the women deciding where to position their new stove.”



These Mayan women are knitting items, some of which will be sold in an international craft market and others used by their families.



Once completed, simple stoves such as this will dramatically improve the lives of Mayan families.



Before the Vale team departed, the women who had received stoves prepared a meal for them and presented them with flowers wrapped in fabric that they had woven.

“I had felt we couldn't make a difference with so few people ... I was wrong ... we did !!!”



A Photo Story

“For the fund-raising event, they had several ‘rooms’ for which we paid admission. One showed native costumes which we were allowed to try on for \$1.00; one had the children presenting folk dances; one had children’s artwork (some for sale); and one had woven products that we could purchase.”



On the final day of the trip, the Mayans held a special celebration that also became a fund-raising event. Several of the Virginia volunteers enjoyed learning a new dance.



The Vale team organized activities for the children — making paper airplanes, a sack race, jump rope, and doing “the limbo,” a dance in which the dancers bend over backwards and pass repeatedly under a pole.



“It was difficult driving away from the village for the last time as all the children crowded around the bus waving good-bye.”

“We visited the classrooms, had our faces painted, tried on the Mayan clothing, had photos taken, and bought some of the items the women had woven. They made several hundred dollars, and the day was a big success. It was very evident with all the bright smiles, they were pleased with their efforts.”

U.S. Heads Public-Private Fund to Aid Refugee Women and Children

David Anthony Denny



Women sing together in a refugee camp in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

The State Department has created a new fund, to which private citizens and businesses can donate, to address the critical needs of refugee women and children.

Launched on June 20, World Refugee Day 2007, the International Fund for Refugee Women and Children is a partnership between the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the private sector. It aims to deliver critical assistance to women and children refugees since they make up the majority of refugees fleeing violence and civil unrest.

The U.S. government has its own funds to help refugees. It has appropriated \$500 million annually to help refugees survive, and an average of \$300 million annually to help resettle refugees permanently in the United States. But government funding is devoted to the immediate survival needs of refugees, and often the long-term needs are overlooked in the competition for limited resources. U.S. government funds are targeted especially toward the critical first 90 days of a refugee-causing crisis. That is when the basic necessities for survival — shelter, food, and water — are most vital, and local conditions frequently chaotic. But most crises continue beyond 90 days.

Assistant Secretary Ellen Sauerbrey, who manages the State Department's PRM Bureau and who conceived of the fund for private donations, said: "Refugees have typically been driven out of their homeland, lost their homes and beloved family members; they shouldn't also have to lose their future and their children's future." Education will be a key component of fund activities, she said.

Because of civil unrest and turmoil, many refugees are illiterate, and their children cannot go to school either. This fund will seek projects that address basic education and vocational training.

A SAFE, EFFICIENT WAY TO BE GENEROUS

The fund offers individuals, corporations, and foundations a safe, easy, and efficient way to give money. The State Department knows what and where the needs are for refugees, and especially where the gaps are in providing essential aid. The department also has extensive experience in humanitarian aid, and it has the wherewithal to monitor and evaluate an assistance project. Funds collected will go to PRM's regular implementing partners, such as Save the Children, World Vision, and other respected humanitarian assistance organizations that are already on the ground. PRM officials envision making these new, private funds add-ons to existing agreements, eliminating an additional administrative cost.

The new fund is intended to address refugee plight after the first 90 days. For instance: Are the children in school? Are the women safe from further violence, and are they being given useful skills to help them care for their families now and to help support their families after the crisis ends? Too often, refugees spend years in camps outside their homeland before they can return home.

There are examples of past efforts in this area. The International Rescue Committee, partnering with the State Department, organized teacher training for Liberian refugees while they were in refugee camps in Guinea and Sierra Leone. After 14 years of civil conflict, refugees now are returning home. Among the first to return are the teachers trained by the Rescue Committee, whose task will be to help build a bright future for Liberia's children.

FUND PRIORITIES

This new fund targets three priorities for refugee women and children:

- **Protection:** Women and girl refugees are frequently at risk for rape or capture into slavery. For example, women refugees in Darfur are often raped while outside their camps seeking firewood.
- **Education:** Teaching refugee children to read, write, and count creates a generation of literate people capable of leading recovery and rebuilding efforts in their homelands. In the immediate term, it makes children less vulnerable to combatants who frequently seek to recruit boys as soldiers and to those who seek girls to rape and exploit.
- **Useful Skills:** Literate mothers have the skills to continue their children's education when they are not in school and to learn better methods for caring for their families' health, hygiene, and nutrition. Widows and single mothers, especially, need useful, work-related skills to support their families. Educating mothers allows their whole families to have a hopeful future. ■

— *David Anthony Denny is a staff writer for the U.S. Department of State. This article originally appeared on usinfo.state.gov.*

Arsenic Filter for Water Offers Hope to Millions

Jeffrey Thomas



Courtesy of Evan Cantwell, George Mason University

Dr. Abul Hussam (left) and a graduate student at George Mason University demonstrate the SONO filter.

The winner of a prestigious engineering prize is working hard to ensure that needy communities around the world benefit from his invention, which removes arsenic and other impurities from water drawn from tube wells.

Abul Hussam, a chemistry professor at George Mason University in Virginia, has devoted most of the \$1 million he was awarded as winner of the 2007 Grainger Challenge Prize to distributing his inexpensive water filtration system to the poor in countries such as his native Bangladesh, where between 77 million and 95 million people are drinking water contaminated with arsenic. The remainder of the prize money was

donated to the university or set aside for more research.

Arsenic contamination is a serious problem in tube wells in Bangladesh, eastern India, Nepal, and several other countries. Arsenic is poisonous and, even in low concentrations, can cause skin ailments, nerve damage, fatal cancers, organ failure, and the loss of arms and legs, as well as death.

Hussam first became involved professionally in working on the arsenic problem when his brother, a physician in Kushtia, Bangladesh, asked him to develop a technique for precise arsenic measurement. As part of his research at George Mason University, Hussam developed an electrochemical analyzer and utilized it

to develop a measurement protocol. “The first sample we measured was our home tube well, and we found 160 to 190 parts per billion [ppb] — 50 ppb is the limit — arsenic. We then decided to develop a water filter,” he said.

Hussam found that the entire neighborhood in which he grew up and 60 percent of Kushtia’s 400,000 residents were drinking arsenic-contaminated water. While he and his siblings did not develop symptoms of arsenic poisoning, others in his community did.

Hussam’s water filter is simple, inexpensive, and made with readily available materials.

The Grainger Challenge Prize was created by the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) with support from the Grainger Foundation. NAE challenged the U.S. engineering community to develop a water treatment system that would significantly lower the arsenic content in groundwater from tube wells in developing countries. The challenge stipulated that the winning system be low cost, technically robust, reliable, and maintainable; be socially acceptable and affordable; be manufacturable and serviceable in a developing country; and not degrade other water quality characteristics or create a toxic waste disposal hazard.

Hussam’s SONO filter, as he calls it, was one of 75 entries. It was tested in a laboratory of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and analyzed by each of the 10 members of the prize selection committee, according to the committee’s chairman, Charles O’Melia of Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, who called Hussam’s invention “innovative.”

The SONO filter works without electricity, using three stacked buckets. The top bucket is filled with coarse river sand and a composite iron matrix, which serves as the active arsenic removal component. The middle bucket contains coarse river sand and wood charcoal to remove organic impurities. The bottom bucket contains fine river sand and brick chips to remove fine particles and stabilize water flow. The SONO filter is manufactured in Bangladesh,

using local raw materials, at a cost of \$35 to \$40. It produces 20 liters of clean water per hour, requires little maintenance, and lasts a minimum of five years. It is also “green,” in the sense that it does not produce any hazardous waste.

Hussam says he has distributed 32,500 of the filters in Bangladesh, including to more than 1,000 schools. “We are beginning to see the effect of drinking clean water on patients being cured of melanosis and keratosis [skin ailments], and most people feel better,” he said. People are also more aware of the importance of clean, potable water.

“We have plans to distribute the filter in India and Nepal,” Hussam said.

Hussam’s work on arsenic contamination and his collaboration with others to create an environmental research laboratory in Bangladesh illustrate the synergy that can develop between U.S. institutions and those in other countries as a result of a single individual’s education.

Hussam came to the United States as a graduate student in 1978, joining George Mason University’s Chemistry Department after completing his doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and doing postdoctoral research at the University of Minnesota. “Since 1983, I have been in touch with my physician brother, who was trying to develop a clinical diagnostic lab in my hometown, Kushtia. I was also helping my professors in Dhaka University to develop an electrochemistry lab and lecturing in different institutions,” he said.

“The experience in the United States was of immense value,” said Hussam, who became a U.S. citizen in 1978. “I must say that I had excellent colleagues here and abroad who were receptive and helpful.” ■

— Jeffrey Thomas is a staff writer for the Bureau of International Information Programs. This article originally appeared on usinfo.state.gov.

Ethiopian Diaspora Supports Health Care Back Home

Jim Fisher-Thompson



© AP Images/Karel Prinsloo

Through the Ethiopian Health Support Foundation, members of the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States seek to help the poor in their homeland, such as this child who is begging for money in Addis Ababa.

International aid by the United States now totals more than \$26 billion a year, but philanthropic giving by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like the Ethiopian Health Support Foundation also is making significant contributions toward meeting the development and humanitarian needs of poorer countries.

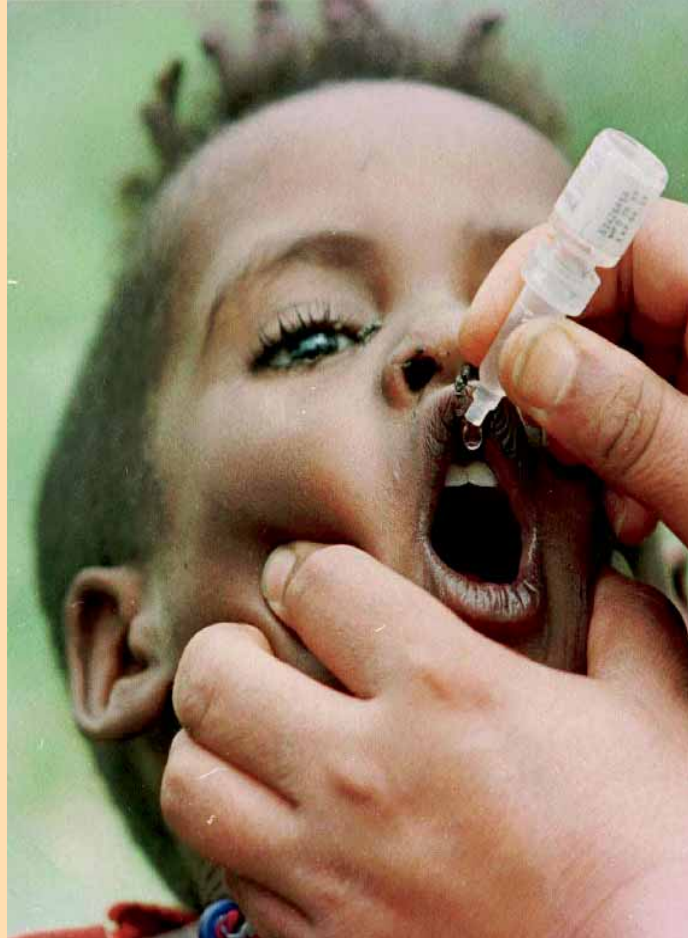
The foundation, established and operated by members of the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States, helped set up the Saint Yared Higher Clinic in Addis Ababa in 2006 and plans to build a general hospital with 100 to 200 beds in the near future.

The foundation's activities and the challenges of providing health care in Ethiopia were the subject of

an address by former U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia David Shinn, who spoke to the group on May 19, 2007, in Kansas City, Missouri.

"For all of its beauty and hard-working people, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world," Shinn said. The country has only about three physicians per 100,000 people, and life expectancy at birth is 49 for males and 51 for females, he added.

Ethiopia's almost nonexistent health care system is strained by an annual birth rate of 2.3 percent, which increases the population by 2 million every year, said Shinn, who is now an adjunct professor at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.



© AP Images

An Ethiopian child receives an oral polio vaccine near Butajira south of the capital, Addis Ababa.

The Saint Yared Higher Clinic in Addis Ababa is popular, Shinn said, because it has an active program of visiting doctors and nurses, including a team from Missouri, who provide health care services at the clinic and training at the nursing school. In addition, the clinic provides voluntary comprehensive health services to an orphanage that serves 200 children.

Currently, the Ethiopian Health Support Foundation is seeking financial support to keep the clinic operating, build the planned general hospital, and pay transportation costs for shipping in-kind donations of medical equipment to Ethiopia, Shinn said.

As a long-term goal, the foundation is helping to develop the Saint Yared Health Maintenance Plan, which is designed to play a role in revolutionizing the health care system in Ethiopia, he added.

Like many U.S. philanthropic NGOs, the Ethiopian Health Support Foundation has no paid staff members. All of its workers are volunteers, and every dollar donated goes directly to support health care facilities in Ethiopia. ■

— *Jim Fisher-Thompson is a staff writer for the Bureau of International Information Programs. This article originally appeared on usinfo.state.gov.*

Panamanian Children Benefit From U.S. Hospital Ship Visit

David Shelby



© AP Images/Ariana Cubillos

A doctor pushes a patient to a recovery room after she underwent surgery aboard the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS *Comfort* off the coast of Haiti. The floating hospital provides free vaccinations, eye examinations, dental treatment, and surgical procedures for local residents.

Colón, Panama — Yukeicha Newell knows exactly what she wants to do when she finishes school. Her dream is to open a beauty salon. But for the past two years, this 15-year-old Panamanian girl has felt anything but beautiful. A large cyst on her neck has been an endless source of harassment and embarrassment.

Yukeicha's mother took her to numerous local doctors, but none had the materials to remove the cyst. They also feared that the delicate operation might damage the girl's voice permanently.

When one of Yukeicha's doctors heard that the

U.S. Navy hospital ship *Comfort* was scheduled to call at the port of Colón, Panama, he recommended the girl visit the ship's surgeons to see if they could do something for her. A brief stay in the ship's operating room changed Yukeicha's appearance and offered her the promise of a more normal life.

The *Comfort* is carrying more than 500 medical professionals on a four-month tour of 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries with a mission to provide primary health care services, minor surgeries, clinic rehabilitations, medical equipment repairs, and medical training for the local health care workers.



Off the coast of Nicaragua, a local resident (right) receives a new pair of glasses on board the hospital ship USNS *Comfort*.

“She was so happy. This is going to have a lasting impact on this woman’s life,” Speranza said. “It changes the way she looks. She feels better about herself.”

She said the surgeon’s initiative proves you do not need an expensive operating room to change lives. “Where there’s a will, there’s a way,” she said.

Navy hospital corpsman Mark Andrews works as an optician at the *Comfort’s* community clinics. He tells of one young man who entered the clinic with severe cataracts leaving him with only blurry light perception in one eye and completely blind in the other. After surgery aboard

the ship, the boy’s vision was restored, allowing him to return to an entirely normal life.

Although that one boy’s life transformation was dramatic, Andrews also finds fulfillment in his ability to touch lives in smaller ways. During their five days in Colón, Andrews and his team provided eyeglasses to hundreds of children. He said he takes great satisfaction in knowing that these eyeglasses will enable the children to read books and blackboards in school over the next 10 years.

He said the children’s smiles when they clearly see their parents’ faces for the first time in years makes his job entirely worthwhile.

“Those expressions are the best part of the job,” he said. “I’ve gotten back 10 times what I’ve put into this.”

After passing through the Panama Canal, the *Comfort* moves on to Nicaragua, where it repeats the exercise. Andrews, Speranza and the rest of the ship’s medical staff look to see how many more lives they can improve with a simple operation or a simple pair of glasses. ■

— David Shelby is head of Democracy and Global Issues for the Bureau of International Information Programs. This article originally appeared on usinfo.state.gov.

Of the thousands of physical and dental examinations performed by the ship’s personnel in Colón, a handful turned up life-threatening problems that might otherwise have gone undetected, and as the commanding officer of the ship’s medical corps, Bruce Boynton, said, even an abscessed tooth can kill someone if left untreated. Many other exams only served to ease minor aches and pains. However, a few of *Comfort’s* procedures change people’s lives dramatically.

Nurse Diane Speranza, a volunteer aboard ship with the nongovernmental organization Project Hope, works in triage at community clinics set up by the ship’s personnel at each port. In an interview she told of a woman who arrived at the clinic in Colón with a large sebaceous cyst over her eye. Normally, such a case would be referred to the ship’s operating rooms for surgery, but the operating room schedules were already full at that point.

A Project Hope volunteer surgeon at the clinic refused to turn the woman away, however. He scraped together one pair of sterile gloves and one scalpel. Using disposable diapers as padding around the point of incision, he operated on the cyst.

Speranza said the team gave the woman a mirror after the operation, and she was amazed at her appearance without the large growth over her eye.

Peace Corps Adapts to a Changing World

Lauren Monsen



Courtesy of Peace Corps

Peace Corps volunteer Eduardo Gonzales with some children in Panama, where he helped to start a school garden to provide food for the children and a source of fund-raising.

Since its founding in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the U.S. Peace Corps has sent volunteers to developing nations not only to help provide essential services, but to promote a better understanding between Americans and people of other cultures.

Kennedy hoped the Peace Corps would advance the cause of world peace and friendship, said Ronald Tschetter, the agency's current director. Today's Peace Corps has adapted to a changing world while remaining true to its mission, he told reporters recently in New York City on the Peace Corps' 46th anniversary.

From the beginning, Peace Corps volunteers have lived and worked alongside citizens of host countries, teaching sustainable skills while respecting the local culture. The Peace Corps has served in 139 countries, and projects are designed to meet "host country needs," said Tschetter.

The largest Peace Corps program is education — including English-language teaching — followed by health programs such as immunization and health education. "The largest single area of our health work is HIV/AIDS prevention, primarily in Africa," Tschetter said. There are also programs to support small business development, protect the environment, promote advances in agriculture, and counsel young people.

The average age of a Peace Corps volunteer is 27, Tschetter said, "but right now, the oldest volunteer is an 81-year-old woman serving in Thailand." There are only two requirements to be eligible to join the Peace Corps: A candidate must be at least 18 years of age and be a U.S. citizen.

He said the agency is trying to attract more of the Baby Boom generation — people born between 1946 and 1964. Volunteers in their 50s already may have 30 years of professional experience and can bring



Mercedes Anderson, an 80-year-old Peace Corps volunteer, plays with children at a center for children with disabilities in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

© AP Images/Pablo Anelli

a tremendous amount of expertise and skill to the countries in which they serve, he said.

Volunteers are given a place to live in the host country and a living allowance, plus a small stipend when they return from their two-year assignments. They are provided with transportation and medical care while in the Peace Corps.

Although not enriching in a monetary sense, Peace Corps service is deeply rewarding, Tschetter said. Volunteers often describe their service as a life-changing event.

“They teach skills at the grassroots level, they share American values with others around the world, and since they live among the people they serve, they become a part of the local infrastructure,” he said.

Many volunteers extend their assignments for a third year, and sometimes return to the Corps after decades of absence, said Tschetter.

Volunteers frequently report that they feel entirely at home and secure in their host communities, he said. “One young woman serving in a predominantly Muslim country said that if she’s gone for two months from her apartment in California, no one would miss her, but if she’s gone from her adopted village for two hours, people come knocking at her door, asking if she’s all right,” Tschetter recalled.

Tschetter told a reporter from Cameroon that there are now about 140 volunteers in that country. In Cameroon, the Peace Corps’ environmental programs are important because of deforestation and

lack of clean drinking water, Tschetter said. “These programs have transformed local villages.”

The Peace Corps is making a difference elsewhere in Africa, he said, citing an active health campaign in Botswana that is helping that country make “good progress against HIV/AIDS.”

The agency has adapted to a rapidly changing world, Tschetter said. “The biggest change is technology. Its impact has been felt even in small villages in India and Africa. Today, almost all of our volunteers have cell phones to facilitate their work and keep in touch with their families.”

However, such changes do not alter the Peace Corps’ fundamental mission, “and as far as I can see into the future, the need for what we’re doing at the grassroots level will always be there,” he said.

Ukraine now hosts the largest contingent of volunteers, between 375 and 400, but “we’ll probably phase down as development continues,” Tschetter said.

The Peace Corps had to leave Ethiopia because of political instability, but it was “recently invited to come back, and we will return in 2007,” Tschetter said. “We will establish an exclusively HIV/AIDS program there, and we may eventually expand into other areas. We’re greatly looking forward to serving the people of Ethiopia again.”

Americans increasingly are aware of the need for greater engagement with the outside world, said Tschetter, and the Peace Corps has been attracting more and more volunteers. After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, “our applications shot up, and they’ve stayed up,” he said.

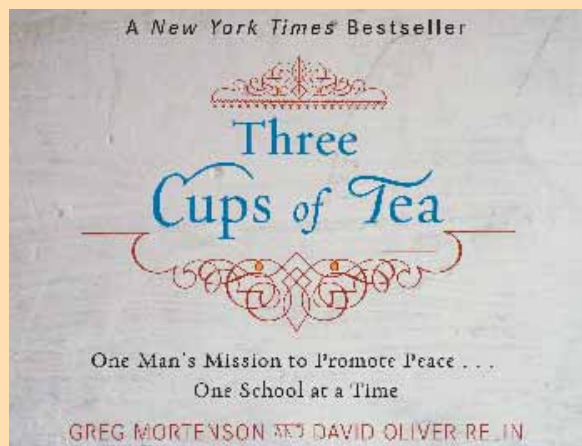
Tschetter stressed that the Peace Corps has a presence only in countries that invite it, and that the agency is not part of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus.

“We don’t report to the U.S. State Department; we report directly to the White House,” he said. “It’s important for us to present the real face of America to the countries we serve in.” ■

— Lauren Monsen is a staff writer for the Bureau of International Information Programs. This article originally appeared on usinfo.state.gov.

U.S. Mountaineer Builds Schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan

Afzal Khan



Courtesy of Greg Mortenson

The best-selling book *Three Cups of Tea* recounts how Greg Mortenson worked with local leaders to build the first school in the Pakistani village of Korphe. His Central Asia Institute has now constructed dozens of schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

An American mountain climber, whose life was saved by villagers in Pakistan's Karakoram Mountains during a failed attempt to scale the world's second highest peak, is returning the kindness by building schools in northern Pakistan and northeastern Afghanistan.

Greg Mortenson wandered hungry and lost on the Baltoro glacier in 1993 after failing to reach the summit of the 8,611-meter high Mount Godwin-Austen, or K2, the world's second highest mountain.

He was found by villagers in the village of Korphe and nursed back to health. During that assault on the summit, the team of 12 climbers lost five members during the descent. Two climbers made it to the top. Mortenson had to turn back 600 meters short of the top. Because of its steepness, Mount Godwin-Austen is more difficult to climb than Mount Everest, the world's highest peak.

While recuperating in Korphe, Mortenson noticed that the village had no school, and children did their lessons by scratching twigs in the sand on a mountain ridge. The teacher split his time between Korphe and a

neighboring village because the Korphe residents alone could not afford to pay his salary, the equivalent of one dollar a day.

After he recovered his health, Mortenson told the village chief that he would return to Korphe one day and build a school for the children. He fulfilled his promise in 1996 and has gone on to build 54 more schools in northern Pakistan and northeastern Afghanistan that employ 527 teachers and have more than 22,000 students.

Following the massive earthquake that struck the Kashmir region in October 2005, Mortenson has helped build more than 30 tent schools. The 55 schools that Mortenson built earlier were not touched by the quake.

Mortenson's story of mountaineering, his brush with death, and his educational philanthropy is recounted in his book *Three Cups of Tea*, which has become a best seller in the United States.

Mortenson is a former U.S. military nurse who served in Germany and is the son of Christian missionaries who worked in Tanzania. The first contribution for the Korphe school, \$100, came from former TV newsman Tom Brokaw, who, like Mortenson, attended the University of South Dakota and played football there under the same coach as Mortenson. A second donation came from students at an elementary school in Wisconsin where Mortenson's mother was principal. They contributed \$623.45 in a "Pennies for Pakistan" drive.

The first big break in funding came when Swiss-American scientist-philanthropist Jean Hoerni gave \$12,000. Hoerni, who played a pioneering role in the early years of information technology and was an avid climber in the Himalayan and Karakoram ranges, later bequeathed \$1 million to a nonprofit organization, the Central Asia Institute, at the time of his death in 1997. Hoerni established the institute, and Mortenson today runs it.



Courtesy of Greg Mortenson

The Central Asia Institute was among the many public and private groups responding to the October 2005 earthquake in Kashmir.

A cover story about Mortenson's educational work in *Parade* magazine helped to raise more than \$1 million from readers for the Central Asia Institute. These funds got the school projects going in full swing, with the institute hiring local personnel in the region.

Mortenson has become a hero in Baltistan, where villagers call him "doctor" because he often uses his nursing skills to attend to the sick. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, village women brought him precious handfuls of eggs and requested that he take them back to their sisters in the "village" of New York.

Despite his school building efforts, Mortenson has not been welcomed by all.

On one occasion, a Shiite cleric from a Baltistan village issued a fatwa, or religious edict, branding Mortenson an infidel, unfit to teach the children — especially girls. However, a senior Shiite cleric from another village intervened by sending the fatwa for final review to Qom, the center of Shi'a religious scholarship in Iran.

Several months later the answer came back in a red velvet box. When a council of Shiite clerics in Baltistan opened the box, the scroll of parchment proclaimed that Qom did not see anything wrong in Mortenson providing education to children — including girls. The proclamation went on to say that education for both boys and girls is encouraged in Islam and that the Quran does not prohibit a non-

Muslim from providing such noble assistance.

Since then, Mortenson said he has felt entirely safe and welcome in the region. He has ventured farther afield into the remote Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan's northeastern province of Badakhshan, where he has built eight schools.

Although warned by the U.S. Embassy that it was unsafe to travel in those regions after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Mortenson has been regularly visiting the area from the headquarters of the Central Asia Institute in Bozeman, Montana. Even his wife and young daughter once accompanied him to Korphe, where the village women treated them like a "queen" and "princess," he said.



Courtesy of Greg Mortenson

Central Asia Institute schools, such as the Khanday community school in the Karakoram Mountains of Northern Pakistan, are often the first schools established in isolated, remote villages deprived of education and literacy.

Mortenson currently is touring the United States promoting *Three Cups of Tea*. The title comes from a conversation he had with a village chief years ago.

"The first time you share tea [green tea with salt and yak butter] with a Balti, you are a stranger. The second time you take tea, you are an honored guest. The third time you share a cup of tea, you become part of the family," Mortenson recalls the villager as saying. ■

— Afzal Khan is a special correspondent for the Bureau of International Information Programs. This article originally appeared on usinfo.state.gov.

Internet Resources

African Development Bank

<http://www.afdb.org/>

African Development Foundation

<http://www.adf.gov/>

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/>

Asian Development Bank

<http://www.adb.org/>

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/>

British Wellcome Trust

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/>

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/193.html>

CARE

<http://www.care.org/>

Catholic Relief Services

<http://crs.org/>

Center for Global Development

<http://www.cgdev.org/>

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Central Asia Institute

<http://www.ikat.org/>

Children's Heart Fund

<http://www.childrensheartfund.net/>

Ethiopian Health Support Foundation

<http://ethiopiahealthsupportfoundation.org/index.html>

Ford Foundation

<http://www.fordfound.org/>

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

<http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/>

Google.org

<http://www.google.org/>

Grainger Challenge

<http://www.graingerchallenge.org/>

Grainger Foundation

<http://www.ee.washington.edu/energy/apt/granger/>

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative

<http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hipc.htm>

Hudson Institute Center for Global Prosperity

<http://gpr.hudson.org/>

Inter-American Development Bank

<http://www.iadb.org/>

Inter-American Foundation

<http://www.iaf.gov/>

International Fund for Refugee Women and Children

<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/hth/index.htm>

Malaria No More

<http://www.malarianomore.org/>

Millennium Challenge Corporation

<http://www.mcc.gov/>

National Institutes of Health

<http://www.nih.gov/>

Nike Foundation

<http://www.nikefoundation.org/>

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/

Omidyar Network

<http://www.omidyar.net/>

Oxfam International

<http://www.oxfam.org/>

Peace Corps

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

<http://www.pepfar.gov/>

Riders for Health

<http://www.riders.org/>

Rockefeller Foundation

<http://www.rockfound.org/>

Rotary International

<http://www.rotary.org/>

Save the Children

<http://www.savethechildren.org/>

U.S. Agency for International Development

<http://www.usaid.gov/>

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/>

USNS Comfort

<http://www.comfort.navy.mil/>

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

<http://www.hewlett.org/>

The World Bank

<http://www.worldbank.org/>

World Vision

<http://www.worldvision.org/>



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