USAID
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EDUCATION IN FOCUS

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News and Updates from the USAID, Africa Bureau, Office of Sustainable Development, Education Division

ETHIOPIAN PRESIDENT LAUDS EDUCATION CHAMPIONS

More than 200 education experts and practitioners, diplomats and USAID partners from 22 countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa, participated in the Africa Regional Education Workshop (AREW) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 14-18. The workshop focused on sharing lessons learned and best practices. It also focused on the challenges of the partners' groundbreaking work: to change the way education is delivered in Africa and ensure that every African child has the opportunity to learn.

During the opening ceremony, His Excellency Girma Woldegiorgis, President of Ethiopia, expressed his gratitude toward the United States for the assistance given through the Africa Education Initiative (AEI). During the workshop, the Textbook and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) delivered more than 1.6 million textbooks to Ethiopia (see TLMP story on page 7). President Woldegiorgis told participants that educating the children of Africa is imperative for its stability, growth, security and future development.

"All of you in this room understand the importance of education or you wouldn't be a part of this regional workshop," the President said. "Education is the foundation of development within a country."

President Woldegiorgis reminisced about the strong partnership shared between the two countries for more than 100 years – diplomatic relations started in 1903.

"I am proud that Ethiopia was chosen to host this conference and that you—the leaders transforming education in Africa—are here today," he said. "I am also proud to know that the work you are doing in countries across Africa to improve education is supported by the American people, our partner in development."

President Woldegiorgis said Ethiopia has made great strides in enhancing learning opportunities to its children in the last 15 years. Today, nearly fourteen million children attend primary schools.

"USAID works in partnership with our Ministry of Education to improve the quality of primary education in Ethiopia. For example, the community-school partnership program, supported by USAID, which develops parent-teacher associations has helped primary school improve their quality of learning. And, the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program, focusing on

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YONATHAN HAMBISSA, YOHA INTERNATIONAL TRADING, PLC

Ethiopian President, His Excellency Girma Woldegiorgis, during opening ceremonies.

REFLECTIONS

The last few months have been a whirlwind of activity. The much awaited and anticipated Africa Basic Education Workshop was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 13 – 18. Over 200 "educationalists" from more than 22 countries participated in what was heralded as an incredible opportunity to share best practices and to wrestle with existing challenges of extending access to quality education for the more than 33 million children still not in school in Sub-Saharan Africa.

We were delighted with our all-star line opening line up, which included the President of Ethiopia, Minister of Education, U.S. Ambassadors to both Ethiopia and the African Union, as well as the First Lady of Ethiopia who helped close out the week. As our opening keynote speaker, Dr. Dzangai Mutumbuka, Chair of the Association for the Development in Africa (ADEA), reminded us, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." No truer words have been spoken. All too often we are reminded of the tremendous cost for schooling, but fail to give equal attention to the cost for not doing so.

Recently, I heard a speaker note that breaking intergenerational poverty and creating sustainable and transformative development could only be achieved with higher levels of education—beyond primary and even to some extent secondary.

There has been talk around Washington, D.C., these days about the continuous cycle of education and lifelong learning and the need to ensure a continuous flow between basic and higher education and even the inclusion of vocational and other types of training."

On the heels of the workshop, USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore co-hosted and convened with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings the Higher Education Summit for Global Development in Washington, D.C., followed by a regionally-focused discussion at Howard University hosted by the Africa Bureau. Both events enabled us to explore the collective role of academia, governments, the private sector and foundations in supporting social and economic development and ways of expanding these engagements.

To jumpstart the process, Administrator Fore announced $1million to fund 20 partnership-planning grants to aid facilitate long-term collaborations between African and U.S. institutions of higher education. We look forward to further discussing and moving this agenda forward during an upcoming African Regional Summit to be held on the Continent later this year.

Finally, in this season of commencements, I encourage you to read the article on President

Dr. Sarah Moten

Karume of Zanzibar's visit to South Carolina, where he served as the commencement speaker at South Carolina State University and received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws. When I met with the President, First Lady and Minister of Education in Washington, D.C., they were still reeling from their visit and remarked that it had exceeded their high expectations and how delighted they are with the current partnership with SCSU and excited about future endeavors.

We have quite a bit of good news to share, so please check out the "kudos section." Feel free to share your stories and good news with us. As always, thank you all so very much for your continued interest and support.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Children wave to participants of the Africa Regional Education Workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 14-18. One of the conference's focuses was the challenges of education change: ensuring every African child has the opportunity to learn. Pages 4-8 have more highlights and photos from the conference.

JOHN CHANDLER, TOTAL SERVICE SOLUTIONS

ZANZIBAR PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT COMMENCEMENT

South Carolina State University's graduates received a special gift with their diplomas. Graduates were greeted by the Honorable Amani Abeid Karume, President of Zanzibar, at their spring commencement ceremony on May 9 at the Oliver C. Dawson Stadium on campus.

President Karume delivered the keynote address to more than 460 students; which was the first time in the history of the University that a head of state delivered the commencement address. During the address he charged the graduates to meet the challenges of the world with a 'new state of mind'. He also stated that they were fortunate to be graduates of such a great institution that has prepared them for the challenges of the future.

Also during the ceremony, SC State presented President Karume with an honorary doctorate of laws for being an outstanding statesman and furthering progress in Zanzibar's economy, education, poverty eradication and health.

ROLONDO DAVIS, SC STATE UNIVERSITY

His Excellency Amani Abeid Karume delivers the keynote address at South Carolina State University's Spring 2008 Commencement Ceremony. More than 465 students received degrees, and SC State University bestowed the Honorary Doctorate of Laws upon President Karume.

During his visit, he noted that there are many similarities between Zanzibar and South Carolina. In addition to the similarities between cultures, President Karume said he is very pleased with the three-year relationship between his country and SC State.

The relationship began in October 2005 when SC State was awarded a $3 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to partner with the government of Zanzibar through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training to develop science (biology, chemistry, physics) and mathematics textbooks and learning materials for secondary education. The Textbooks and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) is one component of President George W. Bush's Africa Education Initiative. In September 2007, USAID awarded SC State an additional $2 million to expand TLMP activities.

The partnership strengthened further in 2006 when the University awarded presidential scholarships to two outstanding students from Zanzibar. The students, Daudi Muhamed and Sakina Alawy, both 'A' students, began their educational careers at the University in the Fall of 2007. They will begin their second year at SC State in August 2008, and they are doing quite well.

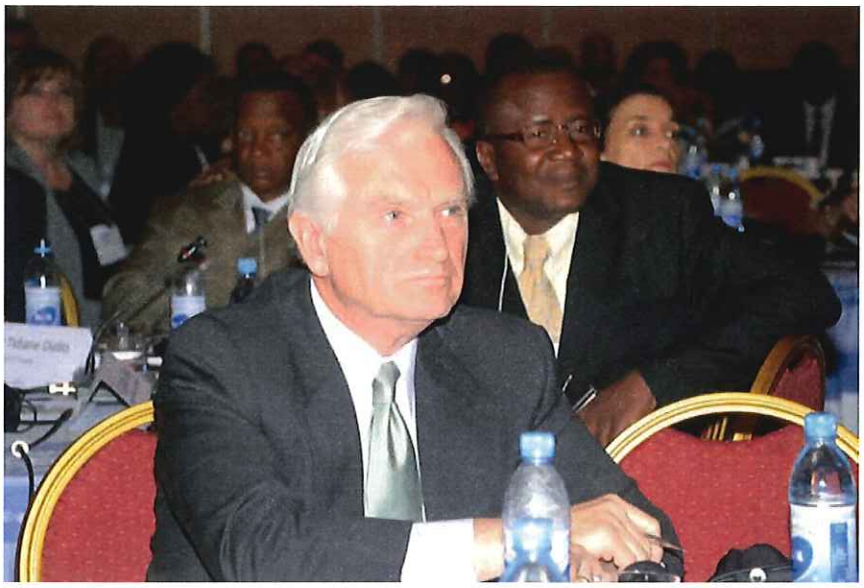
In total, the University has received $5 million to write and publish the textbooks and learning materials. At the program's conclusion in September 2008, SC State and its partners will have provided more than 1 million textbooks and learning materials in the areas of science and mathematics at the secondary level. Collaborative teams of writers from SC State and Zanzibar wrote these textbooks.

Zanzibar officials say the donation is a milestone for the country in that it is the first time in three decades that the student-to-textbook ratio is 1 to 1. "My visit is a testimony of the continuing relationship between Zanzibar and South Carolina State University," he said, noting that the collaboration is in many ways historic. "It is something that has never been done before."

SC State's commitment to the program went beyond just writing textbooks. The University also conducted several workshops, teacher training sessions and conferences to assist teachers. President Karume said he is grateful for the work done for the students and for his country. "Our students have started using [textbooks]," President Karume said. "They think they are terrific. The students are quite happy there and our people are quite happy."

President Karume said he is optimistic that the relationship between SC State and Zanzibar will be strong well into the future. "I believe it can go a long way because we in Zanzibar have initiatives ... for education programs for our students. Education is a big key to development. Education development will be given the first priority." To strengthen the relationship between Zanzibar and SC State University, President Karume said he is committed to continue the partnership between Zanzibar and SC State.

President Karume has worked tirelessly to develop economic and social programs to reduce poverty and strengthen education and health programs. Under his leadership Zanzibar has launched an Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy with emphasis on education development. His administration also adopted a Universal Primary Education policy where 100 percent of school aged children are enrolled in primary classes. President Karume was accompanied to South Carolina by the First Lady of Zanzibar Mrs. Shadya Karume, Zanzibar Minister of Education and Vocational Training, Hon. Haroun Suleiman and senior staff from the departments of Education, Health and Social Services and the State University of Zanzibar.



Dr. Thomas Corts, United States Coordinator for Basic Education, listens as Dr. Sarah Moten, chief, USAID Africa Bureau, speaks at the AREW workshop. Photo: Joe Kitts, USAID

Students from Ambassador's Girls Scholarship program receive technology demonstration from John Chandler, Total Service Solutions. Photo: Benjamin Jones, SAIC

Dr. Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, Deputy Minister of Education, Namibia. Photo: Benjamin Jones, SAIC

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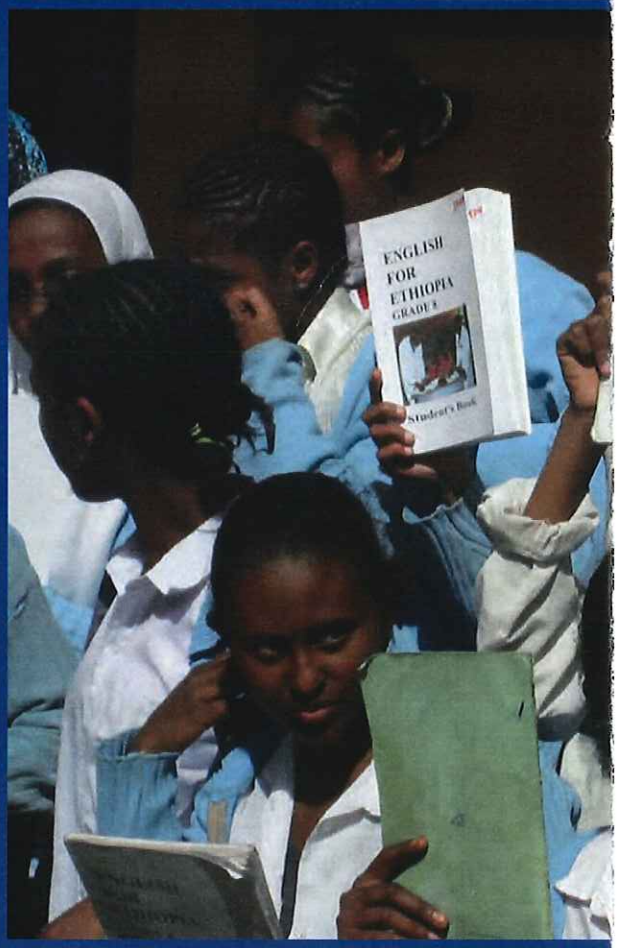

(Above) Children hold up textbooks during a Textbook Le dler, Total Service Solutions; (Below) Children sing at the million texbooks and teacher's guides. Photo: Benjamin J

ORKSHOP
Children of Africa

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icha Bah Diallo
irector, UNESCO

arning Materials Program ceremony. Photo: John Chan-
Benaneh Zare Primary School, where AEI donated 1.6
ones, SAIC

Student at school for children with special needs. Photo: Benjamin Jones, SAIC

(Left) Primary school with the focus on technology. Photo: Yonathan Hambissa of Yoha International Trading, PLC; (Right) Students welcome AREW participants at Benaneh Zare Primary School. Photo: Benjamin Jones, SAIC

Recipients of Girls Scholarship program perform at AREW conference. Photo: Joe Kitts, USAID

CHAMPIONS

From page 1

secondary school girls, has been a great success at providing access to school for older girls," he said.

Participants were treated to topics ranging from the importance of evaluating programs and having measurable outcomes to the importance of public private partnerships, how to increase access to learning for marginalized populations, teacher training models that are working and many more.

Dr. Sintayehu Woldemichael, Minister of Education, Ethiopia, congratulated USAID for bringing together education leaders to share stories of successes and challenges, noting that fortifying leadership in education is essential to transformation and sustainability. "We have made significant strides in education in Ethiopia and we are strengthening the quality of leadership," said Dr. Woldemichael.

Opening day speakers included, Dr. Cindy Courville, U.S. Ambassador, Africa Union; Dr. Thomas Corts, U.S. Coordinator for Basic Education, Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance; H.E. Donald Yamamoto, U.S. Ambassador, Ethiopia; Nancy Estes, Deputy Director, USAID Mission/Ethiopia and Dr. Dzingai Mutumbuka, Chair, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

BENJAMIN JONES, SAIC

Dr. Sarah Moten and Nancy Estes, Deputy Director, USAID Mission/ Ethiopia welcome participants to AREW.

AREW WORKSHOP A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Distinguished educators from throughout sub-Saharan Africa took center stage in Addis Ababa to discuss what's working, what's not, the formidable challenges and to share lessons learned and best practices as individually and collectively they shape the future of education for African children. "This is one of the most successful exchanges of educational information that I've ever participated in," said Dr. Pape M. Sow, Education Team Leader, USAID/Senegal.

As the architect of the Zimbabwean education system just after independence until the late 1980s, and currently chair for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA),

Dr. Dzingai Mutumbuka told an energized audience that a new set of operating rules are required to keep pace with educational and technical advances. "More emphasis must be placed on critical thinking skills and less on memorization," he said. Dr. Mutumbuka reflected on the progress and the challenges in sub-Saharan Africa's social and economic development as technology continues to drive the global marketplace.

"For the first time in history," he noted, "most African countries are experiencing growth and will need people with different skills to sustain their progress." He said that more routine jobs are being replaced by technology. "Africa faces significant challenges in order to strengthen math and science education, two subjects where studies have found students tested more than 200 points below international averages," he said.

Dr. Aicha Bah Diallo, former assistant director general for education, UNESCO, reported on the progress of the Education for All (EFA) global initiative. She said more work is needed to improve educational opportunities at all levels, especially for girls, children in rural areas, special groups and disadvantaged youth.

Dr. Diallo noted that adult literacy has declined across sub-Saharan Africa, and that gender disparities have decreased as well.

She pointed out in particular that progress was impressive in Benin, Ethiopia, and Guinea, among other countries. As an example, she said, Madagascar has mapped out a reform strategy that will remove school fees, increase central funding for education, recruit new teachers for rural schools, and raise compulsory school attendance from five to seven years.

U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia H.E. Donald Yamamoto, students from Sefere Selam Primary School, Dr. Mary Spor and Dr. Sarah Moten celebrate AEI's donation of 1.6 million textbooks and teacher's guides, April 2008.

USAID DELIVERS 1.6 MILLION TEXTBOOKS

During the Africa Regional Education Workshop (AREW), AEI gifted more than 1.6 million textbooks and teacher's guides to Ethiopia. More than 1,000 cheering students and teachers greeted USAID officials and diplomats in a hand-over ceremony at the Sefere Selam Primary School.

The English-language textbooks were developed by Alabama A & M and Ethiopia's Ministry of Education for grades 6, 7, and 8 in schools throughout the country. The final draft of the grade 1 English books was recently completed.

The textbook development process began in November, 2005 with a needs assessment.

"From then until now we have written textbooks and teacher's guides shoulder-to-shoulder with our Ethiopian partners—teachers, English experts, and curriculum experts from the Ministry of Education. We have field tested these learning materials in seven rural and urban schools and used the data to revise the content of the books," said Dr. Mary Spor, project leader, Alabama A& M University, one of the six minority-serving institutions engaged in the program.

Dr. Spor said that several workshops have already been conducted, and a cadre of teachers anxious to conduct teacher training for grades 6, 7, and 8 throughout Ethiopia, is slated to attend training in the summer.

So far, more than 1.6 million English for Ethiopia textbooks and teacher's guides have been printed in Addis and are now in students' and teachers' hands in grades 6,7,and 8.

"In early April grade 1 student books and teacher's guides were completed. These materials match the newly revised curriculum and the student book will be in color which is a first for Ethiopia," Dr. Spor said.

The books are culturally relevant and reflect the curriculum and authentic illustrations by an Ethiopian artist, while incorporating the latest and most effective methodology for teaching English to second and sometimes third language learners. According to Dr. Spor, the books are communicative, strategic, and motivational.

The books build upon what the children know which leads them to understand the unknown. To quote Gerawork Getgachew who has been using the grade 8 textbook in his classroom and has done an analysis of the content for university class, "The grade 8 textbook stimulates emotional engagement of the learner with the lesson. The short term goal is to develop speaking, writing, reading and listening skills. The long term goal should satisfy the needs of the learner in their future careers. This book accomplishes this."

TLMP has produced unprecedented collaborations and successes between minority-serving institutions and their African partners. Dr. Leonard McIntyre, interim President, South Carolina State University, said their partnership with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Zanzibar will have produced, delivered, and distributed more than 1 million textbooks and 100,000 supplemental materials by the end of the fiscal year.

Pape Momar Sow, USAID/Senegal also stressed the importance of building relationships.

"We're all on the same page with our partners," he says. And, because of those strong alliances, Senegal will have produced almost two million books by the end of the year with its partner, Elizabeth City State University.

The process between Ghana and Chicago State University has produced a team of teachers who are actually writing the text. The University of Texas, San Antonio and their partners in South Africa are successfully navigating through a government sanctioned education system which mandates that textbooks must be written in 11 official languages.

AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZES LITERACY FOR AFRICA'S FUTURE

Ambassador Cindy L. Courville, U.S. Mission to the African Union, says that in order to ensure Africa's past and future, children must be taught about the power of written and spoken words. The Ambassador told participants at AREW that they are the true instruments of learning and literacy must be emphasized to change minds, preserve cultures and traditions, and influence the future.

"Reading is more than calling words out loud. Reading is analyzing; it's understanding. It's positioning words and that's why I talk abut the politics of reading and writing because they shape everyday life. It's that policy that's written in government and the change of one word or repositioning of a sentence that affects your lives," she said.

In her work with the African Union, she said there is a large amount of historical records in danger of being lost because of a lack of preservation resources. The records include the writings and voices of important figures in Africa's colonial and post-colonial periods, including Nkrumah, Nasser and Toure.

"Can you imagine the loss of such great men, and such great voices and writings? Can you imagine what's going on day-to-day that moves us from 1963 and decolonization and the start of the African Union the prospect of a United States of Africa? That is history."

KUDOS

Dr. Moten Receives Honorary Degree for International service

Dr. Sarah Moten received a Doctor of Humane Letters Honoris Causa from The University of Massachusetts/Boston in recognition of her long and distinguished international service.

Sullivan Presented Award

Julie H. Sullivan, Ph.D., President and CEO of the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), was presented the Yunus Humanitarian Award at the Millennium Development Goals 2008 Micro for Macro Summit May 1.

The award is named in honor of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Muhammad Yunus. The Summit focused on identifying and addressing the challenges encountered toward the attainment of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals of 2015.

Shortly after receiving the Yunus Award, Sullivan spoke to summit participants on the importance of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals and how IFESH's mission to support African nations to eradicate poverty, disease and inequity through self-help partnership programs has proven to be an effective model. "IFESH has never lost its focus and the people of Africa are better for it. What does it take to make a difference?" she asked. "It takes collaboration with other forward thinking organizations that are willing to engage people on the ground in sustainable efforts."

She gave examples of how IFESH is partnering with communities, local government authorities, major corporations and non-governmental organizations to improve the livelihoods of the marginalized populations of sub-Saharan Africa.

Kamara Earns Degree

Baï Kamara who served as a student intern for the Africa Education Initiative received a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with a Political Science focus and Minor in Africana Studies from Wellesley College in May. "I am looking forward to receiving my Masters in Sustainable International Development at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management," she said. Baï plans to work in the field of development in Africa and the Caribbean.

LANGUAGES IMPERATIVE FOR EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT

Language is the most important factor in the transfer of knowledge and skills and therefore critical to any meaningful discourse on social and economic development in Africa.

Dr. Becky R.K. Ndjoze-Ojo, Deputy Minister of Education, Namibia said, "Quality education in Africa occurs when schoolchildren are instructed in their 'mother tongue.'"

The presence of many different languages throughout Africa has been historically viewed with disdain. But Dr. Ndjoze-Ojo added that multilingualism is the key to relevant and quality education. She noted that of the 6,000 languages spoken worldwide, about 2,000 are in Africa.

Mothei J. Mpuang described South Africa's progress in overcoming the legacy of apartheid which diminished the use of indigenous languages, especially in school. South Africa's constitution acknowledges cultural diversity and promotes multilingualism, which is reflected in a national curriculum that recognizes the importance of mother-tongue instruction.

"African children must... first be educated through the media of African languages if their endless and seamless journey is to be genuinely relevant, qualitative, innovative and productive to contribute to sustainable development of the African continent," said Dr. Ndjoze-Ojo.

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