

**STRATEGY OUTLINE  
FOR THE  
AGENCY CENTER FOR UNIVERSITY COOPERATION IN DEVELOPMENT**

**THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Agency Center for University Cooperation in Development became active during 1991. Experience confirms that there is great potential in this new A.I.D. approach to higher education institutions in the U.S. and abroad. The initiative has become even more valuable, given the broadened development goals and new substantive and regional initiatives which shape the Agency's post-Cold War efforts -- including attaining more open political and economic systems, greater productivity and improved human welfare.

Establishment of the University Center affirms that A.I.D. has decided to address higher education in this new development context and in ways which also reflect new interests in U.S. higher education. This paper sets forth the basis on which the University Center is proceeding. It suggests the factors influencing a new generation of university relations and the Center's projected contributions to meet Agency needs.

The efforts of the University Center will be based on four important, verifiable conditions:

**1. THE DEVELOPING COUNTRY UNIVERSITY IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.** The University is an indispensable generator of a nation's future public and private sector leadership and can contribute in multiple ways to positive change. No single institution contributes more, both directly and indirectly, to increased productivity, improved human conditions, economic systems, and democratic governance. Nor is it surpassed in its impact on the full range of sectors -- health, education, agriculture, public and private sector management -- which comprise the heartland of development efforts. Although the university's role differs in various cultures and stages of development, it is more than just another useful institution. It is an essential component in the mix of ingredients leading to development. Developing countries can use foreign institutions to educate their future leaders and capable professionals, but only at high cost and for a limited time.

**2. AMERICAN SOCIETY AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, FREQUENTLY LED BY A.I.D., HAVE INVESTED SIGNIFICANTLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES.** A.I.D., with the help of U.S. institutions, brought many developing country universities through their initial years or provided important support to build a college of agriculture, education or business. For various reasons, these kinds of investments have declined. While developing country universities are contributing to development, they have not been able to keep abreast of advances in the sciences and other

fields. Complex domestic and international forces have left many behind, clearly short of contributing fully to development. Many are isolated, uncertain about their mission, seeking added quality and struggling for even minimal support.

3. **AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION IS WIDELY RESPECTED IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS A GREAT ASSET.** Hundreds of thousands from abroad study at American universities and colleges each year, making higher education a \$5 billion export industry. U.S. higher education is known and widely emulated for its general quality, particularly at advanced levels, and for its broad societal concerns and alliances with agriculture, private industry and community organizations. American colleges and universities, both public and private, have been essential contributors to development in this country, and are frequently allies of those seeking improvement in the developing world.

4. **A.I.D. HAS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON PREVIOUS INVESTMENTS.** Since developing country universities sooner or later are essential to development, the Agency will be derelict if it fails to seek cost-effective means to capitalize on previous investments and strengthen the effectiveness of higher education in developing countries. Furthermore, a wide range of U.S. colleges and universities, in shaping their own roles in a global society and market place, are now more ready than ever to participate in the effort. They seek to form long-lasting, mutually supportive ties with the developing world, ties between people and institutions which will serve American society well in the decades ahead.

These four conditions form the logic implicit in the Agency's creation of the University Center and should provide the basis for A.I.D.'s relations with higher education in the U.S. and developing countries in the decades ahead.

### **THE NEXT GENERATION OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS**

The first generation of aid program investments to strengthen developing country universities began in 1950 and continued well into the early 1970s, mostly on the basis of institution-building contracts engaging U.S. institutions in the process. A.I.D. invested almost \$1 billion in 51 countries in these activities from 1950-1970. The product is seen in the form of new and improved institutions contributing with varying degrees of success to their nations' progress. Some of these developing country universities were used in succeeding decades by A.I.D. to help implement development projects. Since its founding in 1976, the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development and Economic Cooperation has been allied with A.I.D. in encouraging these efforts, including the creation of the University Center.

The era of widespread A.I.D. funding of institution-building activities, which characterized the earlier generation of U.S. support for higher education, is largely behind us. Although there are still some countries where A.I.D. missions may help to establish new higher education institutions directly or strengthen parts of them, that will not be the case in most country situations. Instead, the factors which most likely will characterize A.I.D. relations with developing country and U.S. universities in this new era are the following:

1. **CONTINUED UNIVERSITY SERVICES.** A.I.D. will continue to use research, technical assistance and analytical services at home and abroad as needed and as available from colleges and universities. Universities will continue to be the largest available pool of needed scientific, technical, and professional talent. The Center is seeking ways to expand the pool and make it more accessible to serve development.

2. **WEAKNESS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES.** If developing country universities are to contribute increasingly to development, they will need assistance. Multilateral funding institutions and foundations will be of help. A.I.D., allied with U.S. higher education, also can be supportive in new and sustainable ways which leverage the larger investments of others.

3. **CHANGED RESOURCE OPTIONS.** Available A.I.D. resources will rarely permit the types of institution-building investments which characterized the earlier era. While the World Bank and others may well continue such investments, A.I.D. will be seeking effective, lower-cost ways to strengthen selected developing country universities and colleges, including ways to build on the past and to leverage these new investments as much as possible.

4. **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION.** U.S. universities and colleges will seek increasingly to deepen their international dimensions on campus and to expand mutually useful collaboration abroad. Many are investing their own resources in this task. Some are relating to developing and transitional countries and addressing goals that are important to both A.I.D. and universities. The mutual benefits of such activities will justify collaboration between A.I.D. and universities -- that is, joint planning, managing, and funding of development activities -- thus enhancing their sustainability, reducing costs to A.I.D. and leveraging new investments.

***THE UNIVERSITY CENTER***  
***WITHIN AN AGENCY APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION***

The creation of the University Center recognized universities and colleges as an "extraordinary national asset," and affirmed A.I.D.'s decision to work closely with higher education to meet changing circumstances. What should the University Center do to assist in the process?

A number of functions to be carried out by the Center will broadly serve Agency needs. Center activities will:

1. **SEEK AGENCY-WIDE COOPERATION AND COMMITMENT** to build on the first generation of higher education investment. As a result of Center action, the Agency as a whole should be made aware of this opportunity and of the essential nature and role of universities in development.

2. **DEVISE COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS TO IMPROVE HIGHER EDUCATION** in developing countries and its capability to address development needs on a well targeted basis. In the process, the Center will draw on U.S. institutions as much as possible and in ways which strengthen their competence to deal with development topics, as now broadly defined, and their interest in developing world problems. For U.S. university relations in developing countries to extend beyond A.I.D. involvement, institutions will want their continuing investments to serve their needs, be cost-effective and financially sustainable.

3. **BRING NEW ATTENTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS** which otherwise might be ignored in a mission's drive to focus attention on only a few priorities. Universities, while usually viewed as useful and important, do not normally fall within an A.I.D. mission's top two or three investment priorities. This can be seen in the virtual absence of universities as such in current regional bureau and mission strategies. The Center will help fill this gap by designing and managing projects which provide the Agency with cost-effective means to enhance the performance of higher education and its contribution to development.

4. **IMPROVE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION** about development needs and opportunities among U.S. higher education institutions and A.I.D. The Center will become an expert source of easily accessible information about higher education. Among other things, it will be positioned to brief key mission personnel about higher education in their assigned countries and its relationships with U.S. higher education. Many of these ongoing university relations, while important assets to long-term development, may have grown out of sources other than A.I.D.

5. **ENCOURAGE A COLLABORATIVE STYLE** in designing and implementing projects with universities abroad. Collaboration between U.S. and developing country universities, rather than the traditional one-way flow of aid, will be increasingly important because elements of higher education in some countries are stronger than they were ten years ago. Many of their leaders have been educated at U.S. institutions. As a result, collaboration offers the best promise of joint action serving specific development purposes and long-term, self-sustained strengthening of institutions abroad.

In this process, the Center will draw heavily on the interests and dedication of those in the U.S. higher education community who are prepared to establish sustainable, jointly beneficial endeavors with some developing world institutions. The University Center will encourage these ties, including networks targeted on jointly defined development needs, exchanges to strengthen institutional capacity, and other efforts related to cooperation and jointly managed problem-solving activities.

The University Center has started two projects which are within these strategic lines and meet Agency-wide needs -- the University Development Linkages project, now in its third year, and the proposed Higher Education and Development project. Both reflect emphasis on sustainable cooperation and mutuality -- the basis for genuine collaboration -- as befits the new era.

These and other new initiatives are intended to build toward long-term U.S. and developing country university cooperation. While initially geared to meet A.I.D.'s development goals, these higher education institution relationships will contribute to positive U.S. relations with developing country public and private sector leaders far into the future. In this respect, the A.I.D. second generation university program also will serve broader American goals, such as those related to strengthened U.S. competitiveness, widespread acceptance of the economic and political values of open societies, expanded trade and commerce, and broadened respect for pluralism and human rights.

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