

ADVANCING PEACEFUL, DEMOCRATIC CHANGE



OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES

MAY 1999



BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cover Photo: Before the March 1997 elections in Liberia, warlords and their faction fighters controlled access to information in rural areas of Liberia. Moreover, the lack of electricity made it difficult or impossible for many Liberians to access accurate and current elections news and other programming. The cover photo shows Liberians holding up one of the wind-up, batteryless radio sets delivered by an OTI-funded NGO as part of an effort to disseminate key voter information through new independent radio programs. (Photo Source: Search for Common Ground)

A CHANGING WORLD

The course of global events since the waning of the Cold War has challenged traditional notions of foreign assistance. Development resources were once channeled without reference to the internal politics of a country, concentrating instead on improving standards of living through projects in agricultural production, infrastructure improvement, education, health, and microenterprise. It has become increasingly clear that this strategy is no longer viable.

The 1990s brought a resurgence of ethnic and religious conflict and a growing number of armed political movements, as well as famines and natural disasters of alarming magnitude. A new term—complex humanitarian emergency—was coined to capture the political and “man-made” components of the ensuing humanitarian crises. A decade ago, response to complex emergencies absorbed only 10% of U.S. disaster assistance funding. Today, that amount has skyrocketed to 90%.

As the number of complex emergencies has multiplied, the gap between humanitarian assistance and development assistance has become glaringly evident. Traditional humanitarian assistance focuses on meeting immediate survival needs: food, shelter, and health. Traditional development assistance takes a longer-term approach to meeting human needs by fostering economic and social development—a process that can take many years. Both approaches lack the ability to respond quickly and effectively to the critical needs of countries undergoing politically charged transitions.

Unresolved political crises can explode, generating huge costs in human lives and obliterating years of economic and social development. Bosnia, Liberia, and Rwanda tragically illustrate the potential enormity of the consequences: brutal ethnic wars, years of civil conflict, even the ultimate horror of genocide. In other countries, as in Indonesia and Nigeria, moments of crisis can give birth to rare opportunities for accelerating movement toward genuine democracy.

The leadership of the United States in response to political crises can make a crucial difference. Transition assistance can potentially pay large dividends by mitigating the need for costly military operations, peacekeeping efforts, and emergency humanitarian relief. It can help countries begin or maintain a strategy of sustainable development that will enable them to become stronger trading partners and allies. And, it enhances global security by helping to enlarge the community of peaceful, stable nations.

RECENT TRENDS IN WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY

- There were 25 major armed conflicts in 1997.
- Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, over 4 million people have been killed in conflicts—over three quarters of them civilians.
- Since the mid-1980's, the number of man-made emergencies requiring a U.S. government response has doubled. Since the Gulf War, the U.S. has mounted 27 military operations, most in response to ethnic conflicts or the collapse of nation states.
- Between 1994 and 1997, the U.S. government expended \$2.8 billion in mounting responses to complex emergencies.
- In 1997, positive developments in peace and security included the signing of a peace accord in Guatemala that ended a 30-year civil war, and reinstatement of a ceasefire in Northern Ireland, which set the stage for the historic peace agreement of 1998.

A NEW RESPONSE

In 1994, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) created a new tool for responding to the challenges of the post-Cold War era: the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Its mandate is to advance peaceful, democratic change in conflict-prone countries of strategic importance and humanitarian concern to the United States.

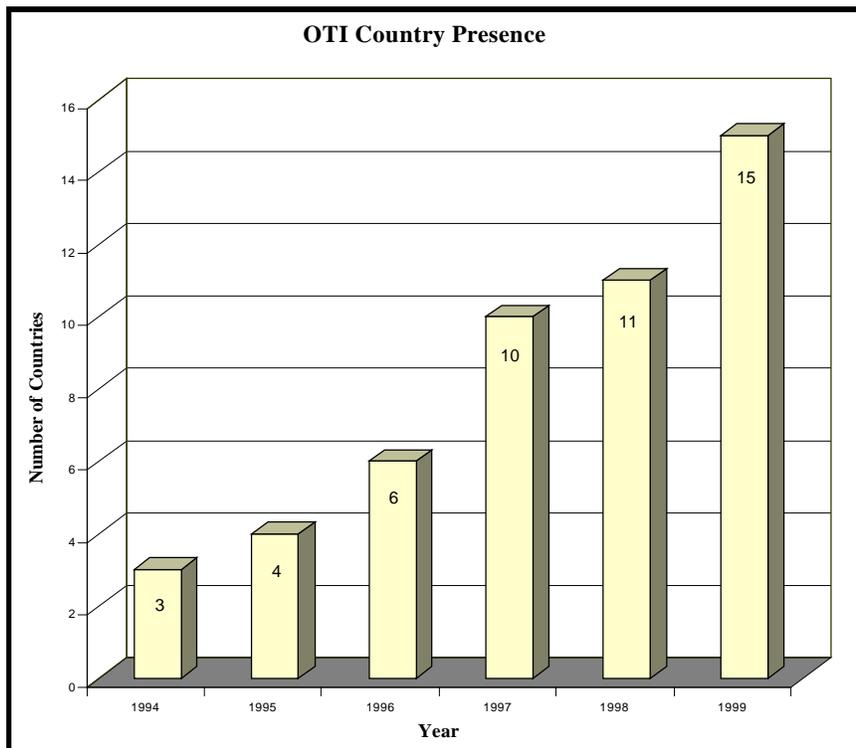
OTI moves quickly to take advantage of critical windows of opportunity in conflict-ridden countries. Its interventions are tied to pivotal transition events such as ceasefires, negotiation of peace accords, the advent of progressive leadership, and economic or humanitarian crises that threaten a state's stability. OTI provides direct assistance to local change agents, supporting people and organizations in their efforts to achieve enduring economic, social, and political progress —and to participate more fully in the governance of their communities and countries.

An “operational donor,” OTI possesses special programming flexibility. It puts staff on the ground swiftly to identify and act on what are often fleeting transitional opportunities. There are no set responses. Near-term, high-impact projects that increase momentum for peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction are identified and implemented. Strategies are tailored to meet the unique needs of each transition country. Typically, they are tested on a small scale and are applied more broadly when it is clear that high impact is being achieved. Changing conditions are quickly reflected in new or modified strategies.

A VITAL TOOL OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

“OTI has shown it is a lean, flexible operation capable of targeting the key bottlenecks that prevent post-crisis societies from moving forward.”

USAID Administrator
J. Brian Atwood
May 27, 1997



In December 1997, at the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Clinton Administration announced its intention to expand OTI's efforts over the next two years.

OTI's choices and resource allocations reflect U.S. foreign policy priorities. In years past, its focus countries included Haiti, Angola, and Bosnia. Recently, more of its resources have been directed to Indonesia, Nigeria, and Kosovo. OTI's goal is to serve as a catalyst during the critical two-year period when countries are most vulnerable to renewed conflict or instability. In some cases, assistance may be provided for longer periods of time because of the exceptional complexity and difficulty of the transitional challenges, as in Rwanda, or additionally because OTI programs are tied to a broader U.S. government effort, as in Bosnia.

While OTI has focused largely on "post-conflict societies," its mandate is evolving. Providing transition assistance *before* politically-charged events lead to state implosion or violent conflict makes good sense. The difficulty of embarking on a path of peaceful change and sustainable development jumps a quantum level when a nation must first recover from the ravages of conflict. More importantly, preventing outbreaks of violence can save thousands, sometimes even millions, of lives.

OTI's transitional assistance can include:

- The training of ex-combatants for reintegration into a society's peacetime work force;
- Community development and political decentralization programs that encourage political participation at the local level;
- The clearing of land mines and support for mine awareness programs;
- Support for alternative media and public information campaigns to encourage peace and reconciliation;
- The training of law enforcement officials and judges;
- Electoral assistance and other support for nascent political systems;
- Technical assistance to new governments, both at the national and local level;
- Building the capacity of civil society organizations to effectively engage government officials in discussions and dialogues;
- Human rights support, such as funding human rights education and monitors; and,
- Support to international tribunals or local commissions examining war crimes.

HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION

After visits to OTI-funded project sites in Guatemala and the Former Yugoslavia, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright observed, "OTI highlights the need to act flexibly when a conflict ends."

In Rwanda, President Bill Clinton met with women survivors of the genocide who are beneficiaries of OTI-funded projects.

In Arusha, Tanzania—site of the Rwanda War Crimes Tribunal—First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton gave a radio address to Rwandans that was made possible by an OTI grantee.

Congressional visits to OTI programs in Bosnia, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia and Rwanda have generated bi-partisan support for practical, timely, and politically-sensitive post-crisis initiatives.

The tangible results of OTI programs have sparked a growing demand for its services. In 1997 the Department of State and the National Security Council asked OTI to assess the potential for transition assistance to several high-priority countries, including Northern Ireland and West Bank and Gaza. USAID missions and other USAID offices have drawn on OTI's expertise and operational capacities in countries around the world, including Georgia, the Philippines, Sudan, and Honduras.

FAST, FLEXIBLE, AND INNOVATIVE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

OTI is uniquely equipped for responding to transitional opportunities. Rapid funding mechanisms, a culture of innovation, staff who combine strong political analysis skills with experience in humanitarian crises, and key lessons learned from its experience in conflict-prone countries have helped OTI become a valuable instrument advancing the U.S. government's goals.

Rapid Funding Mechanisms Allow Fast, Flexible Response

Special funding mechanisms contribute significantly to OTI's ability to respond quickly and flexibly. OTI draws from USAID's International Disaster Assistance account, and thus is able to react quickly to highly time-sensitive transition opportunities. OTI follows standard USAID procurement procedures for routine matters, but uses expedited procedures when rapid response is required.

In September 1998, OTI created an implementing mechanism known as SWIFT (Support Which Implements Fast Transitions) to speedily establish a presence for new country programs. SWIFT partners can provide communications, security, administrative and logistic support for rapid assessments; establish or enhance operational field offices; hire and manage local and expatriate personnel; set up regional operations; advise on program interventions; and implement small grants programs. It is presently in use in Indonesia, Nigeria and the Philippines. While OTI manages the contract, SWIFT services can be used by any USAID office or mission, and even by other government agencies and donors.

A Culture of Innovation

Countries often reach transitional crossroads because of long-standing weaknesses in their political systems. Moving beyond the status quo requires advancing new approaches, talent, and societal attitudes. So transition assistance must also move beyond the "tried and true" modes of humanitarian response or development assistance.



OTI's efforts have helped empower returning refugee families that fled Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. (Photo Source: UNHCR / P. Moutzis)

...special funding mechanisms contribute significantly to OTI's ability to respond quickly and flexibly.

Embracing innovation and experimentation, OTI brings a distinctive optic to transition programs. The very nature of transitions involves both risk and possibility—there are no blueprints for success. OTI invents creative and practical responses to unprecedented challenges and pursues new solutions for perennial problems:

- In Rwanda, the genocide left a legacy of ethnic suspicion, a citizenry deeply distrustful of government, and a significantly larger number of households headed by single women. OTI forged an unusual partnership with the Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family to help women play new leadership roles in local governance. This project is a powerful force for reconciliation at the community level. It is also helping to increase Rwandans' confidence in participatory decision-making processes and is strengthening the capacity of the ministry.
- In the Balkans, hardline nationalist sentiments continued to thrive after signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. OTI launched a ground-breaking media campaign that directly challenges demagoguery and nationalist propaganda. The campaign seeks to generate policy debate and shift public opinion.
- Whether a transition involves going from war to peace or a transfer of political power, spoilers can radically undermine the process. Too often, this issue is ignored and a stable peace proves elusive. In the Philippines and Guatemala, OTI helped reinforce peace agreements by working to create new economic opportunities for ex-combatants who might have otherwise become spoilers.

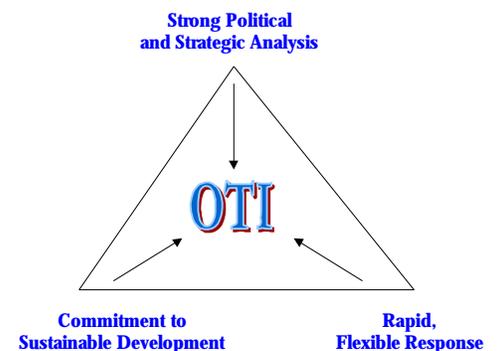
These examples illustrate OTI's agility in formulating responses to transitional challenges. It is constantly researching and developing new approaches to enhance its effectiveness. OTI is currently exploring new program areas in improving civil-military relations and anti-corruption.

Intellectual Capital for Transitions

Building peace and promoting democracy in transition environments requires a unique set of skills. OTI's successes are due in large part to its staff, who combine expertise in political and strategic analysis with an understanding of the need for rapid response and a commitment to sustainable development. A diversity of backgrounds – from humanitarian response to democracy and governance programming – and experience in a broad range of conflict-prone countries ensures that OTI program strategies are based on a rich mix of perspectives.

“OTI has been very successful in its efforts to build peace and democracy in [Bosnia]. Its proactive policies have reached into many areas where no other international humanitarian organization has dared to venture.”

Maureen Taylor, Ph.D.
Rutgers University
April 1999



OTI's staff combine strength in political analysis with experience in humanitarian response and a commitment to sustainable development.

In addition, OTI maintains a roster of country and sectoral experts who are on “stand-by” alert. When new transition opportunities arise, they are able to engage quickly and assist in mounting fast, adept responses.

OTI staff also provide incisive and timely “on-the-ground” analyses. In Sierra Leone, such analysis helped focus the U.S. government response to the renewed violence. In the Former Yugoslavia, OTI’s close relationship with media and civil society organizations enabled it to provide crucial information and analysis to the Office of the Special Representative. And, OTI staff in east Congo provided critical information on cross-border issues that was used to develop a U.S. Government strategy for the region.

*Incorporating Lessons Learned,
Setting the Stage for Future Successes*

After five years of pioneering transition response, OTI has gained critical experience in transition countries and achieved some notable successes. But it works in some of the most unstable environments in the world, and there have also been a few failures. In some cases, OTI’s efforts to advance peace were negated by macro-level conditions beyond its control, most notably a lack of political will for change, as in Angola. In other cases – Sri Lanka, Liberia, and Sierra Leone – programs were initiated before the momentum for peace gathered sufficient critical mass.

Lessons learned from both its successes and failures have helped OTI build better responses and expand its capabilities. Following is a summary of some of those lessons:

1. A timely “good” response achieves more than a too-late “perfect” response.
2. Small amounts of strategic assistance in the early days of a transition can have tremendous impact.
3. Politically-oriented interventions are necessary because political weakness often underlies the unraveling of societies.
4. To help break the cycle of crisis common to many countries in transition, programs must emphasize change. New structures and systems must be initiated.
5. Building local capacity is essential to sustaining momentum for change.
6. Testing strategies by implementing small pilot projects can help identify the most effective ways to achieve high impact.

7. New actors who can help the populace engage in fresh democratic behaviors must be brought to the fore. People invested in the status quo are unlikely to foment change.
8. Strong partnerships are crucial for success.
9. An urban, capital city bias undermines the impact of transition activities; programs must also reach out to rural areas.
10. Program interventions must respond to the specific realities, needs and opportunities of the country in transition. Generic responses are largely unsuccessful.

During its brief existence, OTI has tested many new approaches and learned a great deal about what works in transitions.

PARTNERSHIPS IN TRANSITIONS

U.S. Government

OTI collaborates closely with the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the NSC, the United States Information Agency, and many USAID offices to develop coherent and appropriate strategies for transitions. Within USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Response, OTI works in tandem with the Office of Food for Peace (FFP) and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Their work involves providing food and other assistance to groups made vulnerable by natural disaster, civil conflict, or other crises. Together, FFP, OFDA, and OTI consider how to integrate their program strategies, as well as ways to facilitate transitions out of relief assistance. Given its mission to advance peaceful democratic change, OTI has a special relationship with USAID's Global Bureau, Center for Democracy and Governance (G/DG). OTI and G/DG collaborate on assessment tools and program design. OTI also teams with USAID bureaus, missions, and G/DG in the development of country strategies, and almost all field assessments are conducted in partnership with other USAID offices.

Other Donor Organizations

Increasingly, other donors have become aware of the importance of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. They are channeling more of their resources to these areas and working to build technical expertise. The British, Canadian, Dutch, German, and Swiss governments have also been actively involved in responding to states in conflict. Some have created new units similar to OTI while others have strengthened existing units within their humanitarian assistance agencies or foreign ministries. The World Bank has also established a post-conflict unit. These organizations are struggling with how they can make a difference in supporting transitions and are coordinating their efforts with other like-minded donors. In 1997, OTI hosted the first-ever donor conference on implementing transitions, and it continues to explore new methods of joint action.

Collaboration and joint leadership can accomplish more in transition environments. OTI is usually one of the first donors on the ground, and its pilot projects often lead others to invest in its program framework or engage in complementary activities. In some countries, other donors or USAID offices have initiated activities that are achieving good results, and OTI builds on their successes. This cooperative approach helps leverage limited funding and maximizes program impact.

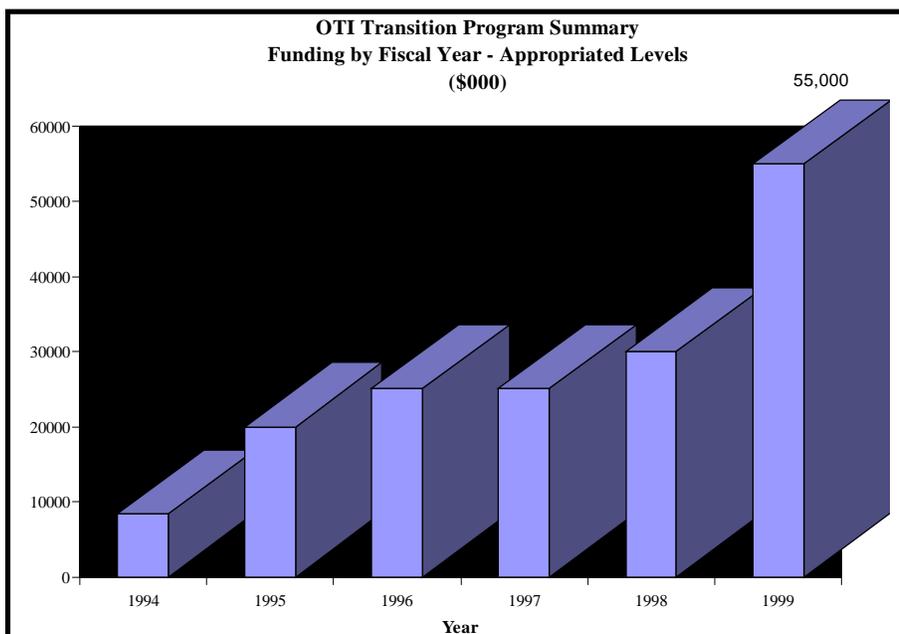
NGOs, PVOs, and Others

OTI works in partnership with a wide array of organizations, including local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international and U.S. private voluntary organizations, U.N. agencies, intergovernmental bodies, consulting firms, for-profit organizations, and others. It places a special emphasis on partnership with local NGOs. While these groups are often overlooked or underestimated, USAID and other donors are finding that strong local ownership is one of the essential ingredients for ensuring the sustainability of efforts to advance peaceful democratic change. OTI aggressively seeks out local groups – both well-established and nascent – and provides them with the tools to take on increasingly important roles within their communities.

CONCLUSION

The international community continues to grapple with the proliferation of countries experiencing civil conflict or hovering near a state of war. At the most basic level, advancing peaceful democratic change means convincing people — often those who have never known either peace or democracy — that they can create a different future, that investing in change is worthwhile. Through its programs, OTI seeks to provide impetus for hope and expanded possibilities. This is vital work—and the need for it has never been greater.

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Building Foundations for Freedom: OTI Country Programs

There is a hush in the streets. The sounds of war—the bark of machine guns, the whistle of artillery, and the rumbling of tanks—are gone for now. Peace has been declared, and the people are cautiously optimistic. Perhaps food will be easier to get. Perhaps they will have, for the first time, a government that works for them, not against them. But already there are rumors that a faction of the former rebel army refuses to accept the settlement. They are mostly young soldiers who have known war all their lives; they are afraid of change. Can the new government really bring peace and stability?

Years of civil conflict, corrupt and autocratic rule, and social and economic instability—these feature prominently in the countries where OTI works. The transitional challenges faced by these nations are enormous and will take years to overcome. OTI's objective is to serve as a catalyst in this process. It helps to make seemingly impossible issues addressable, kick-starting progress toward sustainable development, a more vibrant civil society, and democratic governance.

Transitions can be dangerous times. Expectations tend to skyrocket, and there are almost always groups or individuals who feel their interests are not adequately addressed or are actually threatened by a new regime. Unless a newly-formed government can quickly demonstrate its effectiveness and ability to provide immediate improvements to citizens' quality of life, public discontent can set the stage for further instability and renewed conflict. If they are able to harness enough discontent, spoilers can destroy a hard-won peace and derail a fledgling government.

Yet windows of opportunity for positive change are also more numerous during transitions. New choices can be made, new policies formulated, and new economic opportunities created. OTI quickly assesses the rhythm of a transition and the scale of the challenges. It develops activities that create momentum for change and increase confidence so that peace and democratic progress can be sustained. It works to strengthen basic freedoms: the ability of citizens to speak out, to gather together, to enjoy freedom of movement.

Countries can move toward a path of political and socioeconomic development that will transform their societies. This will entail journeying through unfamiliar, sometimes arduous political terrain. It is a journey that can only be completed by the leaders and citizens of a nation, but it is OTI's privilege to help during the first critical steps.

OTI COUNTRY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>PROGRAM GOALS AND ACTIVITIES</i>	<i>FY 1997 Funds obligated (\$000)¹</i>	<i>FY 1998 Funds obligated (\$000)¹</i>
ANGOLA	FY 1994 - 1999	<p>Introduce a measure of hope and stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing mine accidents through mine action programs for 2 million Angolans • Promoting 540 local self-help projects in over 300 communities • Enabling the flow of objective news and information by supporting VOA programming for Angolans 		\$5,118
COLOMBIA	FY 1999	<p>Provide crucial support to advance peace process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring confidence in the government by providing municipal-level resources to neglected communities • Helping local governments and communities identify and implement projects that respond to citizens' needs 	\$0 ²	\$0 ²
DROC (CONGO)	FY 1997 -	<p>Assist the transition from an authoritarian regime toward democratic governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting participatory decision-making processes at the local level with over 70 grants worth \$1.6 million • Supporting dialogues on national reconciliation at 5 provincial reconstruction conferences 	\$1,069	\$7,207
FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	FY 1995 -	<p>Stimulate democratic change in attitudes and behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting 150 civil society organizations with 500 grants to promote democratic practices • Disseminating objective information by supporting 3 independent newswire services, 31 independent newspapers and news magazines, 55 independent TV and radio stations • Rebuilding local infrastructure through participatory action 	\$11,120	\$10,917
GUATEMALA	FY 1997 - 1999	<p>Assist the peace process by helping to reduce the army and demobilize and incorporate the rebel forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting the planning, design, and equipping of 8 demobilization camps • Funding literacy, civic education, and vocational training for 2,940 rebel ex-combatants and 953 military ex-combatants • Providing training scholarships for 2,466 ex-combatants • Supporting economic integration activities for rebel ex-combatants 	\$4,706	\$2,031
HAITI	FY 1994 - 1997	<p>Support the post-conflict transition toward democratic governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding vocational training for 4,867 former members of the armed forces • Funding 2,363 quick impact projects in 122 communities • Providing training to 1,500 newly elected municipal and local representatives 	\$1	\$0
HONDURAS	FY 1999	<p>Provide critical resources to the USG relief and reconstruction efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding an emergency housing project for 2,000 flood-victim families • Repairing rural infrastructure in strategic areas • Initiating an anti-corruption effort between donors and the government of Honduras 	\$0 ²	\$0 ²

OTI COUNTRY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

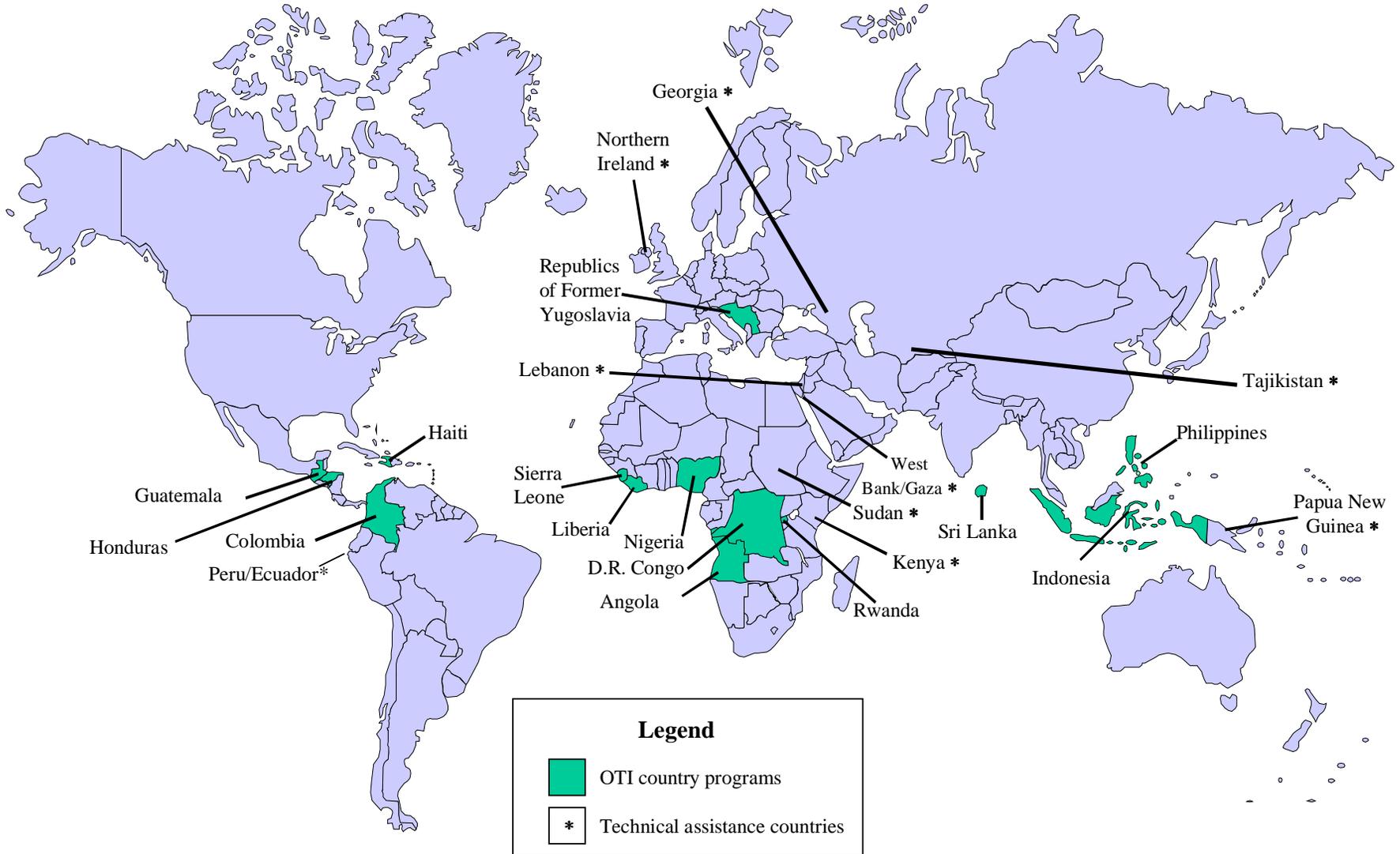
COUNTRY	DATE	PROGRAM GOALS AND ACTIVITIES	FY 1997 Funds obligated (\$000) ¹	FY 1998 Funds obligated (\$000) ¹
INDONESIA	FY 1998 –	<p>Advance the debate on the political transition process toward genuine democratic governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the participation of grassroots organizations in the voter education process (21 elections-related grants) • Supporting the capacity of 23 civil society organizations to mobilize peaceful political participation • Increasing capacity of media to cover political process by training 50 radio stations and producing 12 PSAs (18 media-related grants) • Improving relations between civilian and military organizations 	\$0	\$4,799
LIBERIA	FY 1996 – 1999	<p>Enhance security and democratic processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the demobilization and reintegration of ex-fighters through creation of 10,000 jobs • Creating alternative news outlets and supporting objective information on 8 radio stations; 2,640 wind-up radios distributed • Supporting economic reform efforts by funding national bank audit 	\$1,715	\$419
NIGERIA	FY 1998 –	<p>Sustain the current transition toward national reconciliation and a democratic government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for 10,300 recently elected political representatives • Providing seed capital for a development fund in the Delta region • Engaging civil society and the government on civil-military reform issues 	\$0	\$39 ²
PHILIPPINES	FY 1997 –	<p>Reinforce a struggling peace process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting the reintegration of 4,000 ex-combatants and their families through economic and social development projects • Providing training on ways to enhance community participation 	\$867	\$1,566
RWANDA	FY 1994 – 1999	<p>Assist processes to build confidence and trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing post-genocide justice issues by sponsoring a conference on genocide law and funding U.N. War Crimes Tribunal activities • Encouraging increased participation of women's associations in community decisions with 1,600 grants to over 1,450 associations • Assisting efforts to empower local government structures 	\$3,798	\$1,223
SIERRA LEONE	FY 1996 –	<p>Promote political and economic reform and reconciliation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting civil society and government to build consensus on key issues (410 local leaders participated in reconciliation workshops; 76 village peace committees met on reconciliation) • Engaging civil society participation in advancing a negotiated end to war, and creating an enabling environment for reconciliation and reintegration of fighters 	\$2,774	\$114
SRI LANKA	FY 1997 – 1998	<p>Assist in the transition toward development in a key area of conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the re-equipment of Jaffna Technical College, benefiting over 600 students 	\$220	\$253

¹ Amounts shown include current year appropriated funds carried over from prior fiscal years and resources transferred to OTI from other parts of USAID or other U.S. government agencies.

² FY 1999 New Country Program.

³ Close to \$2 million is being de-obligated because renewed fighting prevented implementation of some activities.

OTI at a Glance: Country Activities Worldwide



SEIZING WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY: OTI COUNTRY SELECTION PROCESS

Before engaging in a country or region, OTI considers whether it can play a pivotal role in the transition. Funding levels are relatively modest, so programs must be carefully targeted for high impact. OTI poses five questions in determining whether to engage:

- ***Is the country significant to U.S. national interests?*** OTI programs are aligned with foreign policy objectives and priorities set by the secretary of state. Though many transitions might benefit from OTI's assistance, funding constraints require that we focus on countries of strategic importance to the United States. Humanitarian concerns also play an important role in engagement decisions.
- ***Is the situation ripe for OTI assistance?*** This question considers whether a country is in a phase of transition where OTI programming can help forward peaceful change. Typically, an event has occurred—an election, a peace accord, or some other settlement—that signals movement away from conflict or instability and toward more stable, democratic governance.
- ***Is the operating environment stable enough for OTI's programs to be effective?*** All conflict-prone environments present significant safety risks, but a modicum of security must exist for OTI to work effectively. When security conditions threaten the safety of reform-minded citizens or field staff, OTI will not engage until a more conducive security environment is established.
- ***Can OTI address the key political development issues of a transition?*** Countries enter transitions from many different starting points. OTI analyzes the political context to determine whether windows of opportunity exist for accelerating progress toward peace and stability. It asks whether its core programming strengths—promoting democracy and enhancing security—can help address the root causes of conflict or instability.
- ***How likely is it that program implementation will result in a successful outcome?*** Most transitions are volatile. Post-conflict environments can be especially unpredictable, sometimes shifting suddenly in a direction that makes implementing programs difficult or impossible. OTI carefully considers the myriad factors and forces that might affect its activities, and decides to invest based on the likelihood of progress.

In answering these questions, OTI elicits information from a wide range of sources. It draws on the knowledge of country experts, non-governmental organizations, other donors, and U.S. government intelligence sources. It also conducts an extensive review of academic journals, books, reports, and studies.

Additional perspectives inform the final decision. OTI confers with other offices within USAID, including regional bureaus, missions, and the offices of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace. Discussions are also held with other parts of the U.S. government, such as the National Security Council, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense.

As part of the decision-making process, OTI conducts an in-depth field assessment as a basis for potential program strategy and design. Part of this assessment involves taking an inventory of all available in-country resources: Is there a USAID mission? Are American troops present? Is there an international peacekeeping force? Are other donors either interested in or actively implementing programs? What kind of local organizations and capacities exist?

Immediately upon entering a country, OTI begins formulating an exit strategy, an important component of which involves forging partnerships and creating synergies with other donor programs. This not only leverages funding and magnifies program impact, it also lays the groundwork for “handing-off” OTI-initiated activities to other investors—both local and international—to maintain the momentum for change.

ANGOLA—Supporting the *Lusaka Protocol*

In November 1994, after twenty years of civil war, the government of the Republic of Angola and representatives of the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) signed the historic *Lusaka Protocol* peace agreement. The years of conflict had devastated the country’s infrastructure, internally displaced more than a million people, and resulted in the exodus of several hundred thousand others who found refuge in neighboring states. Much of Angola’s fertile agricultural zones were littered with anti-personnel land mines, severely impeding resettlement and economic recovery.

OTI’s goal of advancing the peace agenda in Angola started with the provision of technical assistance to the United Nations during the drafting of the *Lusaka Protocol* agreement. Simultaneously, it identified immediate interventions to support the agreement and bring a measure of hope and stability to the country.

OTI’s programs focus on: 1) increasing freedom of movement; 2) promoting self-help activities identified by Angolan communities; 3) enabling the flow of accurate, unbiased news and information; and 4) responding to windows of opportunity in other areas, such as macroeconomic policy reform.

Nearly 2 million Angolans have been reached by OTI-supported mine awareness activities, and more than 750 others have received training in mine removal techniques. As a result, mine accidents have been significantly reduced and key areas of the countryside have been re-opened for commerce, agriculture, and the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons. By improving security, these activities have also facilitated the provision of over \$200 million in additional disaster relief, transition, and development activities benefiting several million Angolans.



Millions of land mines litter the Angolan countryside, severely impeding resettlement and recovery efforts. Through an OTI-funded program, this Angolan de-miner marks mines for removal or detonation. (Photo Source: Catherine Haberland)

OTI’s Angola program incorporates high levels of community participation and contributions of local resources. In FY 1996, OTI initiated 22 community projects that helped key communities in conflict zones identify and address their own high-priority needs. By the end of FY 1998, 542 projects had been implemented in some 300 communities. These projects included reconstruction and repair of schools, health clinics, markets, roads and bridges, as well as microenterprise development and agricultural support.

Because media can play a critical role in helping a culture of peace take root, OTI helped to start Voice of America (VOA) daily news programming. VOA is the nation’s only station offering programming for, by and about Angolans. Its objective radio reporting has made it the most listened to VOA program in the world, with a listenership of 4 million Angolans.

In addition, OTI has supported the training of Angolan journalists in an effort to increase the flow of accurate, uncensored news to the public – and increase awareness of the importance of press freedom.

In July 1995, OTI began awarding grants and contracts to implement major demobilization activities. These activities focused on quartering, civic training, and education for almost 9,500 ex-combatants, including approximately 200 child soldiers.

Despite individual successes, a larger commitment to peaceful change has not taken hold in Angola. In late 1998, both UNITA and the government stepped up military recruitment, and fighting has escalated. A lack of political will on the part of Angola’s long-warring leadership remains the obstacle.

OTI’s operating partners in Angola have included: Creative Associates, Inc., Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, Search for Common Ground, Africare, CARE, Save the Children, Mine Advisory Group, Norwegian People’s Fund, the United Nations Assistance Coordination Group, UNICEF, USAID/Angola, and VOA. OTI’s funding partners have included the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and USAID/Angola. Discussions are currently underway with the World Bank, the government of Angola, and U.S. oil companies for additional funding.

OTI Assistance in FY 1997.....	\$5,768,000
OTI Assistance in FY 1998.....	\$5,118,000*
Total OTI Assistance to Date (FY 94-98).....	\$28,539,000

**Includes resources transferred from other government agencies.*

For more information on OTI’s activities in Angola, contact Marc Scott, 202-712-0735, mscott@usaid.gov.

COLOMBIA—Forging New Partnerships for Change

After a 50-year civil war that resulted in over 300,000 deaths and more than a million displaced persons, there is hope that Colombia is moving toward peace. With strong support from civil society and the general public, Colombia’s recently elected president has initiated a peace process with armed insurgent groups.

The complexity of the violence in Colombia—the large number of actors, the strong position of the insurgents, and emerging paramilitary forces—militate against a quick negotiated settlement. The US government’s support for the peace process is sought by President Pastrana.

Prior to the initiation of peace talks, OTI financed a workshop that brought together local authorities from the five municipalities identified as “peace laboratories,” civil society leaders and national government authorities. For the first time, people from the conflict areas and high-level government negotiators met to design a strategy for the newly created Peace Investment Fund.

Since then, working closely with the USAID regional bureau, the USAID mission and the U.S. Embassy, OTI has identified three openings to facilitate the peace process: (1) strengthening the capacity of the government’s High Commission for Peace to negotiate with the insurgents; (2) supporting civil society’s ability to sustain pressure on all actors to continue discussions; and (3) supporting the peace process at the municipal level.

OTI’s current initiatives predominantly address municipal-level issues, supporting and creating new partnerships between civil society groups and municipal governments. It is supporting a new initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross that creates a “Peace Fund”. Resources from this fund will be channeled to NGOs working in collaboration with municipal governments to deliver critical services to long-neglected communities devastated by years of conflict.

In addition, OTI is partnering with the Salesian Mission in the jungle area of Meta. The Salesian Mission, a presence in Colombia for over a century, has launched a program that helps local governments and communities identify and implement projects that respond to their immediate recovery needs, as well as the needs of displaced persons fleeing from violence.

Together, the ICRC and the Salesian Mission programs reach a large portion of the population most affected by conflict, in locations where public investment historically has been marginal, municipal governments have been fragile, and civil society has lacked the resources to build basic social infrastructures. These programs create exciting new partnerships and enhance the ability of both civil society and local government to respond to community needs.

In doing so, OTI and its partners hope to create and strengthen alternative institutions to guerrilla organizations, instill a sense of hope in the populace, and create confidence in the peace process.

New Country Program

Estimated OTI Assistance FY1999.....\$1,000,000

For more information on OTI’s activities in Colombia, contact Bob Kramer, 202-712-5886, HKramer@usaid.gov.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO—Moving Past Dictatorship

In May 1997, a brief rebellion overturned the corrupt reign of longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, offering hope to the country’s citizens for the first time in decades. Soon after, Laurent Kabila assumed the presidency and the country was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC). With its vast natural resources and the third largest population in Africa, the Congo is key to the stability and economic prosperity of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region.

In light of the country’s importance to the continent and the window of opportunity for change that emerged in 1997, OTI quickly established offices in the capital and three provinces. Its goals are to assist the DROC in the transition from an authoritarian regime toward democratic governance by a) promoting local solutions to local problems; and b) providing immediate, tangible, community-wide benefits.

In January 1998, OTI began funding Political Transition Grants (PTGs). These grants bring together diverse groups of people from local government, NGOs and civil society to partner in activities they have agreed are priorities for their communities. Activities funded by OTI have included support for human rights, regional reconciliation conferences, infrastructure repair, public sanitation and erosion control.



OTI supports participatory decision-making processes that help communities identify and act upon their most urgent rehabilitation needs. After decades of neglect, road reconstruction is often their highest priority. This damaged highway between Kananga and Mbuji Mayi is one of the few paved rural roads in the country. (Photo Source: Roger Conrad)



Hopes for rapid and peaceful democratic change were dashed in August 1998, when a new round of violence broke out, and numerous African countries joined in the fighting. OTI closed its Bukavu office due to insecurity. Offices in Kinshasa, Kananga and Lubumbashi remain open and continue activities at a reduced level. OTI is carefully considering its program options in light of the shifting political and military developments.

OTI’s operating partners in the Congo are the USAID mission, Development Alternatives, Inc., local Congolese government offices, NGOs, the World Bank, and the American Red Cross.

OTI Assistance in FY 97.....	\$1,069,000
OTI Assistance in FY 98.....	\$7,207,000
Total OTI Assistance to Date (FY 97-98).....	\$8,276,000

For more information on OTI’s program in the Congo, contact Roger Conrad, 202-712-5261, rconrad@usaid.gov.

GUATEMALA—Bringing the Peace to Life

In December 1996, thirty years of violent turmoil in Guatemala ended with the signing of a peace accord that established immediate plans for the demobilization and initial incorporation of the rebel forces—the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG)—and reduction of the Guatemalan army. OTI’s objective was to provide emergency support to facilitate completion of the demobilization process within the tight timeframe set up by the accords.

Between the signing of the peace accords and the end of the program in December 1998, OTI invested \$6.7 million in Guatemala. Most of that funding supported the demobilization and integration of 2,940 rebel URNG military cadre into civilian society. OTI funded demobilization camps and infrastructure, literacy and civic education programs, vocational training, scholarships, and other integration-related activities. OTI also supported economic integration activities for URNG rebels throughout the country, including agricultural production on three cooperative farms owned by ex-combatants.

OTI, through USAID, was also one of the first donors to pledge support for an ambitious re-training program for 1,722 ex-combatants of the Guatemalan government’s Mobile Military Police units—as part of the downsizing of the national military. As a result of OTI’s \$730,000 contribution and its ability to leverage additional support, the \$3.4 million project is now fully funded.



Reductions in the size of the Guatemalan military could have been disastrous if training programs had not offered legitimate alternative employment opportunities. These former military combatants are learning how to become tailors. (Photo Source: Heather McHugh)

Alternatives to Crime

Demobilization processes are often accompanied by sharp increases in crime. For this reason, careful attention has been paid to criminal activities of ex-combatants, both former government soldiers and ex-rebels. When OTI closed its program in support of initial integration in Guatemala, none of the ex-combatants trained by its programs had been implicated in criminal activities. Possibly as a result of this relatively stable process of incorporation, Guatemala has thus far successfully avoided retaliation against ex-combatants.

OTI, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the European Union divided costs and responsibilities for a coordinated, collaborative response to demobilization and incorporation needs. This agreement covered the construction of the demobilization camps and was extended to include coverage of other activities, including microenterprise grants to ex-combatants.

In addition, OTI funding helped resettle families who had been internally displaced deep into the mountains, due to fighting between the army and the guerrillas. OTI also provided small infrastructure improvements on the lands where these families were being settled.

Significant collaboration occurred with the International Organization of Migration, UNDP, the government of Guatemala, URNG, the Organization of American States, USAID/Guatemala, the World Bank, and the European Union.

OTI Assistance FY 1997.....	\$4,706,000
OTI Assistance FY 1998.....	\$2,031,000
Total OTI Assistance (FY 97-98).....	\$6,737,000

OTI closed its Guatemala program in December 1998.

For more information on OTI’s work in Guatemala, contact Catherine Haberland, 202-712-4458, chaherland@usaid.gov.

HONDURAS—Helping to Rebuild

Hurricane Mitch swept through Honduras in October 1998, devastating the country. Helping Hondurans recover from the severe damage caused by the hurricane will require an extraordinary relief effort and large-scale reconstruction assistance. The dire nature of the situation is dramatically illustrated by the hundreds of families living in temporary shelters like the Honduran Olympic Stadium, where they live below bleachers, in changing rooms, and in tents on the playing fields.

In the capital, where the largest number of people were left homeless, OTI is working closely with the local government to find a permanent housing solution for families who lost their homes in storm flooding. OTI is coordinating donor and NGO meetings and providing technical assistance and funding to overcome hurdles that might otherwise impede replacement housing activities.

OTI funded a national evaluation of short-term employment needs in the worst-hit areas outside the capital. Analysis showed that immediate repairs of key rural roads and bridges would restore private investment and replace lost jobs. OTI is now funding the initial implementation plan for that activity.

In April 1999, an innovative, hybrid voucher/grant program was initiated by OTI, in cooperation with USAID/Honduras and the International Organization for Migration, to help 2,000 displaced families living in “macro-shelters” like the Olympic Stadium. Beneficiaries of this program will receive a voucher for an amount of money that can be applied toward a more permanent housing solution. The amount is insufficient to pay for a complete solution, but will motivate NGOs with housing programs to prioritize shelter for voucher recipients. The NGOs will “cash-in” the vouchers and use the funding to improve their projects and infrastructure.

OTI and the mission are also working with other multilateral donors to design an effective oversight mechanism to identify and report on potential misuse, abuse, and fraud associated with reconstruction activities. Finalization of this program is still under discussion with the government of Honduras.

New Country Program

Estimated OTI Assistance FY 1999 \$5,000,000

For more information on OTI's Honduras project, contact Catherine Haberland, 202-712-4458, chaberland@usaid.gov.



INDONESIA—Bolstering Reform

In late 1997, a devastating economic crisis and a series of natural disasters crippled Indonesia's capacity to provide for even the most basic needs of millions of its citizens. The country suddenly faced rampant food shortages, massive unemployment, and skyrocketing crime. Endemic cronyism favoring members of President Suharto's family and well-connected businessmen had long been a source of popular discontent, but in the face of widespread economic hardship, it provoked outrage and civil violence.

Several months of peaceful demonstrations erupted into violent rioting when security forces killed four unarmed students. Much of the ensuing violence was directed at ethnic-Chinese Indonesians. In May 1998, after 32 years of rule, President Suharto resigned, transferring the presidency to his vice president, B.J. Habibie. National elections are scheduled to occur June 7, 1999.

These are precarious times for Indonesia. Significant demands for rapid political change are being made and the dangers of social violence are great. OTI activities seek to advance the national debate on the political transition towards genuine democratic governance.

Faced with a country of 210 million people dispersed across thousands of islands, OTI has supported a broad-scale national media campaign to accelerate the democratic transition and to reinforce peaceful reform messages. Polling conducted on public service announcements, produced as part of the campaign, indicates that Indonesian viewers understand the messages and are thinking about them.

Building a strategy focused on core reform issues, OTI works to:

- Increase the participation of grassroots organizations in the voter education process;
- Support the capacity of civil society organizations to mobilize for peaceful political participation;
- Increase the capacity of media to cover political processes; and,
- Improve relations between military and civil organizations.



The crew of prominent Indonesian director Garin Nugroho beginning production of OTI-funded television public service announcements on non-violence. (Photo Source: Garin Nugroho Art staff member)

OTI's partners in Indonesia include the USAID mission, the U.S. Embassy, the Asia Foundation, Internews, PACT, and a local NGO (Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial). OTI's cooperative agreements with these organizations were designed to give local non-governmental organizations the flexibility to respond rapidly to the changing needs and opportunities for democratic reform. Additionally, OTI is directly supporting many other reform-minded local organizations. Operational support is provided by Development Alternatives, Inc. through the SWIFT mechanism.

New Country Program

OTI Estimated Assistance FY1998..... \$4,799,000
OTI Estimated Assistance FY1999..... \$15,000,000

For more information on OTI's program in Indonesia, contact Jim Lehman, 202-712-5603, jlehman@usaid.gov; or Chris Phillips, 202-712-0959, cphillips@usaid.gov.

LIBERIA—Giving Peace a Chance

Seven years of brutal conflict in Liberia left 200,000 dead and 40% of the population displaced. After 13 failed peace accords, and nearly \$1 billion of humanitarian assistance from the United States, Liberian warlords agreed to a ceasefire and a national election that brought Charles Taylor to power in 1997.

In a country where institutional capacity and physical infrastructure have been severely diminished, OTI moved quickly to enhance stability and democratic processes by: (1) supporting the demobilization and reintegration of ex-fighters through quick, temporary employment opportunities; (2) creating alternative news outlets and supporting dissemination of objective information; and (3) supporting economic reform efforts.

Immediately following demobilization, OTI funded civil reconstruction teams, coordinated by the United Nations Development Program, which provided temporary jobs for approximately 10,000 ex-fighters. Job activities included clearing or repairing urban and rural roads, and refurbishing schools and clinics. These employment opportunities helped keep ex-fighters productively engaged in the reconstruction process while other Liberian citizens were able to feel more secure.

OTI initiated media activities in Liberia in 1997 when it co-funded STAR Radio with USAID’s Africa Bureau. STAR Radio was created as a new independent short wave and FM radio station serving all of Liberia and the border regions. A respected source of information for all Liberians, it has raised standards of news reporting and become an important test-case for freedom of the press. After closing the radio station in 1998, the Liberian government allowed it back on the air in response to pressure from Liberian civic organizations, the donor community and the U.S. Embassy.

Also in 1997, OTI partnered with the Dutch government in support of a Liberian media production facility, Talking Drum Studio. This studio produced voter information and civic education programs that were aired on eight Liberian radio stations, as well as live community drama shows.

To inform Liberians about the rapidly changing election process, OTI provided a grant to purchase 2,640 wind-up (no



Talking Drum Studio journalist Barbara Koffa conducting an interview. (Photo Source: Search for Common Ground)

batteries or electricity needed) short-wave AM/FM radios for distribution to electoral polling sites and community groups.

In an effort to establish base-line information from which to build sound economic policy, OTI funded a monetary audit of the National Bank of Liberia. This work is coordinated with the World Bank and IMF, who financed a fiscal audit.

Most recently, in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy, OTI fielded a human rights expert to monitor treason trials and assess the progress of rule of law in Liberia. This activity contributed to the formulation of U.S. foreign policy in post-conflict Liberia.

All aspects of OTI’s activities have involved close collaboration with other donors and partners, including the Dutch government, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Foundation Hironnelle, Search for Common Ground, UNDP, and the European Union.

OTI Assistance FY 1997	\$1,715,000
OTI Assistance FY 1998	\$419,000
Total OTI Assistance (FY96–FY98)	\$2,210,000

For more information on OTI’s program in Liberia, contact Sylvia Fletcher, 202-712-5755, sfletcher@usaid.gov; or Rob Jenkins, 202-712-0914, rjenkins@usaid.gov.

NIGERIA—A Window for Change

The June 1998 death of Nigerian head of state Sani Abacha unleashed unexpected and extraordinary opportunities for a transition to civilian rule and democracy. Retired General Olesgun Obasanjo won Nigeria’s February 1999 presidential elections and takes office in May 1999, ending 15 years of military rule. Given its vast size and wealth in natural resources and human capital, a democratic Nigeria could be a force for stabilization and an engine of economic growth for much of the continent. The challenges are great, however, with long-standing religious and ethnic tensions, endemic corruption, a weak economy, and an unpredictable military being among the factors that make this transition extremely fragile.

Working in concert with other parts of USAID and the U.S. government, OTI has quickly developed a program designed to sustain the current momentum toward national reconciliation and a democratically elected government. Its primary objectives are (1) to prevent military obstruction of the transition to civilian rule; and (2) to support the Nigerian movement for structural economic and political reform. OTI has established a central office in the Lagos-based USAID mission and regional offices in Port Harcourt, Abuja and Kano.

OTI’s initial activities are targeted in the following areas:

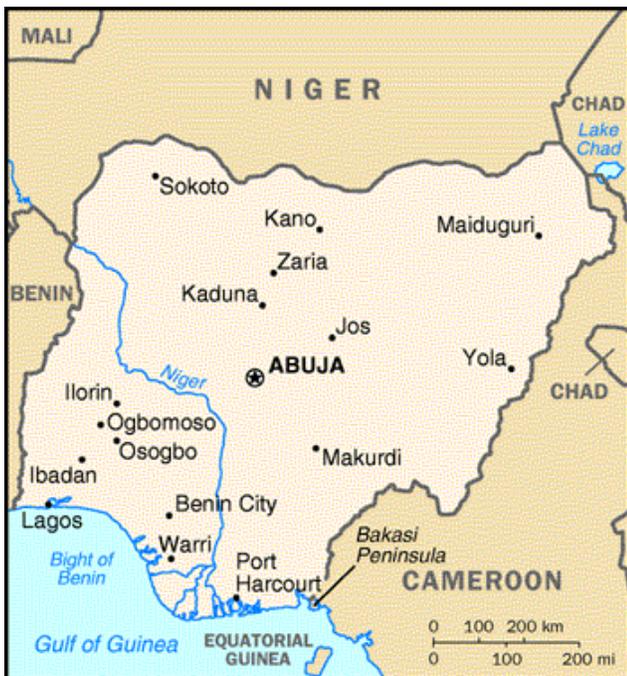
- *Training for Good Governance:* OTI is joining forces with the USAID mission to train election winners and losers in areas including constituency building, transparency, structural reform and local capacity building.
- *Delta Pilot Projects:* OTI is working in the conflict-prone and strategic Delta region and other potentially volatile areas to facilitate partnerships among local communities, the private sector and local governments. OTI will provide seed capital for a development fund with a tripartite management from civil society, oil companies and local government representatives for targeted microenterprises and public services.
- *Coalitions for Reform:* OTI is working to mobilize national consensus on key issues, and develop key constituencies in favor of economic and political reform.
- *Civil-Military Affairs:* OTI is working with the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the NSC to facilitate early engagement with the government and civil society on issues of civil-military reform.

OTI’s partners in Nigeria also include the USAID mission, U.S. Embassy, U.S. Information Service, and implementing contractor Louis Berger International. It expects to be working extensively with national and local government representatives, civil society, and the private sector.

New Country Program

OTI Assistance FY1998.....\$39,000
OTI Estimated Assistance FY1999.....\$5-7,000,000

For more information on OTI’s program in Nigeria, contact Sylvia Fletcher, 202-712-5755, sfletcher@usaid.gov; or Rob Jenkins, 202-712-0914, rjenkins@usaid.gov.



PHILIPPINES—Tangible Benefits of Peace

In the fall of 1996 the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) signed a groundbreaking peace agreement with the government of the Philippines. For years, the rebels had protested the political, economic, and social marginalization of Filipino Muslims by waging guerilla war. The peace agreement contained provisions for Muslim political autonomy, but also placed great emphasis on economic development for the Muslims in Mindanao. By the summer of 1997, the government’s failure to deliver on the promise of peace fueled restlessness on the part of former fighters.

OTI’s objective is to bring tangible benefits to potential spoilers. Its programs reintegrate ex-combatants through the Emergency Livelihood Assistance Program (ELAP)—part of USAID’s Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) project.

Operating in 11 MNLF state areas, with up to 380 participants per area, the program gives ex-fighters agricultural production inputs, training, and technical assistance. They are then asked to repay the value of the production inputs into a local community fund, which is used to mobilize savings and leverage bank services for future loans. OTI has also provided training to representatives of the Bangsamoro Women’s Foundation for Peace and Development on enhancing community participation, to assist them in developing the community funds.



MNLF ex-fighter plows a cornfield as part of an OTI-funded reintegration project in Mindanao. (Photo Source: Paul Randolph)

Oversight for OTI’s program is provided by a management committee that includes representatives from USAID, the National Economic Development Authority, the Bangsamoro

Women’s Foundation (ELAP’s local NGO partner) and is chaired by the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development. At the local level, ELAP is guided by community committees composed of the MNLF state chairman and representatives from the Bangsamoro Women’s Foundation and the MNLF National Unit Command.

In April 1999, OTI launched a second program, the Transition Assistance Grants (TAG) Initiative, to promote cooperation between the MNLF, the government, and Christians, and empower citizens and civil society organizations in the poorest areas of Mindanao. TAGs aim to improve socioeconomic conditions by linking village-based infrastructure and agriculture projects to the broader development objectives of the Philippines government and other donors. The projects are designed to prevent MNLF groups from reverting to armed conflict with the government by creating new opportunities for collaboration and enhancing indigenous leadership capability.

Testing Peace in Mindanao: *Though the MNLF has signed a peace agreement with the government, more extreme Muslim organizations continue to seek independence from the Philippines. One such group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), rejected the 1996 peace process. Though MILF is currently in dialogue with the government, negotiations could be jeopardized if the economic development provisions of government’s agreement with MNLF are not met. In addition, if MNLF supporters lose faith in the government’s willingness and ability to redress their grievances, they could again resort to violence. OTI programs have bolstered the peace by giving the government breathing space to launch development programs.*

Operational support for the TAG initiative is provided by Development Alternatives, Inc., a SWIFT contractor. OTI also coordinates with other donors funding programs in Mindanao, including Great Britain, Canada, Australia, UNDP, and the World Bank.

OTI Assistance FY 1997.....	\$867,000
OTI Assistance FY 1998.....	\$1,566,000
Total OTI Assistance to Date (FY97-98).....	\$2,433,000

For more information on OTI’s Philippines project, contact Jim Lehman, 202-712-0113, jlehman@usaid.gov; or Chris O’Donnell, 202-712-0174, codonnell@usaid.gov.

RWANDA—Moving Past Genocide

The world watched in shock in 1994 as over half a million people at all levels of Rwandan society were killed in a matter of weeks. Where safety and trust were scarce, OTI began building basic security and community partnerships by supporting human rights monitors, the International Criminal Tribunal and by working with women’s groups to rebuild community infrastructure and improve local governance capacities.

Those initial efforts expanded to include technical support to the Ministry of Justice for the drafting of a genocide law, radio broadcast coverage of the proceedings of the Tribunal, and assistance to the Ministry of the Interior to increase citizen participation in decision-making processes.

The Women in Transition (WIT) project has become a model for participatory programs focused on women. OTI has provided 1,600 grants to 1,450 women’s associations in 85 communes and 11 of the 12 prefectures in Rwanda. WIT grants are used for shelter, livestock, income generation, and other activities identified by association members, improving the lives of over 163,000 beneficiaries.

With USAID’s Rwanda mission, OTI also assisted in the elections process for local citizens’ development councils and facilitated dissemination of information on the War Crimes Tribunal. These efforts, though discreet, proved effective in helping to increase Rwandans’ confidence in peace and democracy.



A women’s association in Rwanda constructs a house for an association member, providing their own labor and using OTI funds to buy roofs, doors, and windows. These kinds of activities often break traditional taboos, which demonstrate to Rwandan communities that women can play a new role in reconstructing their country. (Photo Source: Heather McHugh, OTI)

OTI’s partners in Rwanda include the USAID mission; the Department of State; USIA; the U.S. Department of Justice; the United Nations; Internews; the International Rescue Committee; Africare; the Rwandan ministries of Gender, Justice, and the Interior; the Rwandan Development Organization; Radio Rwanda; a number of local workers’ associations; and hundreds of Rwandan women’s associations.



Members of a women’s association in Kigali-Rural demonstrate pot-making. OTI is funding income-generating activities like this to help women participate more fully in the Rwandan economy. (Photo Source: Heather McHugh, OTI)

Working with Local Partners: It is not always necessary to work with international NGOs/PVOs as implementing partners in a conflict-prone country. Local organizations and Rwanda’s government, though new and inexperienced, can be viable partners for USAID. This approach allows local partners to have a stronger voice in setting project goals, establishes an open line of communication between USAID and local organizations, saves money, and builds capacity in local institutions.

OTI Assistance FY 1997.....	\$3,798,000
OTI Assistance FY 1998	\$1,223,000
Total OTI Assistance (FY95-98).....	\$8,991,000

For more information on OTI’s project in Rwanda, contact Roger Conrad, 202-712-5261, rconrad@usaid.gov; or Heather McHugh, 202-712-1224, hmchugh@usaid.gov.

SIERRA LEONE—Fostering Hope

Sierra Leone suffered a vicious civil war for over eight years, but in 1996 its people created a moment of hope and new possibilities. Led by women’s groups, they mobilized protest against decades of governmental mismanagement, corruption, and political instability. This movement culminated in 1996 with a massive voter turn-out for the first fair election since 1967. Even brutal atrocities committed by rebel forces failed to discourage or intimidate the populace.

Shortly after the elections, OTI began a program focused on promoting political and economic reform and reconciliation. Assistance to citizens’ groups, at both the national and grassroots levels, laid the foundation for reconciliation of former combatants and also increased citizen participation in post-conflict governance.

In May 1997, before a formal demobilization process could begin, the tenuous peace was shattered by an army coup. The democratically elected government fled the country, the international community evacuated all personnel, and OTI’s program was suspended.

In March 1998, President Ahmed Tejan Kabba was returned to power after nine months in exile. The coup leaders were defeated and driven out of the capital city of Freetown. OTI’s flexible programming capabilities enabled it to re-engage in July 1998.

When assistance resumed, OTI objectives were: (1) to provide technical assistance to senior officials and key ministries in the government, focusing on civil-military relations and the development of post-conflict security systems and structures; and (2) support civil society’s engagement with the government to promote reconciliation and promote debate and development of consensus on key national issues.

Despite joint efforts by government, ECOMOG, and community-organized civil defense forces, the rebels made dramatic advances in December 1998 and January 1999. Heavy fighting reached Freetown. OTI’s technical assistance to the government was temporarily suspended, pending resumption of normal U.S. Embassy operations. However, support to civil society continues with an emphasis on



Kamajor Civil Defense Forces patrolling a road in Pujehan District. The fragile peace was broken by renewed insurgency, but OTI continues its civil society programs. (Photo Source: Sylvia Fletcher)

engaging the government to develop consensus on a program of dialogue with the rebels.

OTI’s program partners in Sierra Leone have included Africare, CARE, and World Vision. World Vision works in concert with UNICEF, the government of Sierra Leone, George Mason University, and Management Systems International. Smaller grants were made to the International Crisis Group and Florida International University. Additionally, OTI collaborates with UNDP, UN/DHA, British DFID, the World Bank, the U.S. Embassy, and within USAID, the Office of Food for Peace and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Africa Bureau, and the Global Bureau.

OTI funding FY 1997.....	\$2,774,000*
OTI funding FY 1998.....	\$114,000
Total OTI Assistance (FY96-98).....	\$2,966,000

** Close to \$2 million is being deobligated because renewed fighting prevented implementation of some planned activities.*

For more information on OTI’s program in Sierra Leone, contact Sylvia Fletcher, 202-712-5755, sfletcher@usaid.gov; or Rob Jenkins, 202-712-0914, rjenkins@usaid.gov.

SRI LANKA—Breaking a Cycle of Conflict

For the past 15 years, the government of Sri Lanka has been fighting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an insurgent organization demanding a separate state for the country’s Tamil minority. Over 50,000 people have died in the conflict, and hundreds of thousands have been internally displaced. In 1996, the government made important military gains, extending control over previously rebel-held territory in the Jaffna Peninsula. While affirming its interest in peace, the government requested donor assistance for urgently-needed resettlement and rehabilitation activities.

OTI cautiously responded in 1997 with plans for small pilot projects. Proposed projects included 1) the provision of technical assistance to the Human Rights Commission, 2) the funding of a pilot capitalization project to stimulate micro-enterprise, and 3) support to the Jaffna Technical College.



Tamil woman reports missing husband to Human Rights Commission officer in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. (Photo Source: K. Lively)



OTI found that the narrow window of opportunity to help break the cycle of conflict in Sri Lanka closed quickly. Ongoing fighting impedes movement in and out of the Jaffna Peninsula, and human rights abuses by both parties to the conflict abound. In 1998, through intimidation and a campaign of killing, the LTTE undermined the work of local government bodies in Jaffna, whose members had been elected in free and fair elections. It assassinated the newly elected mayor of Jaffna in May and the succeeding mayor in September 1998.

OTI suspended its Sri Lanka program because of the poor security environment.

OTI Assistance FY97.....\$220,000
OTI Assistance FY98..... \$253,000
Total OTI Assistance to Date (1997 – 1998).... \$473,000

For more information on OTI’s activities in Sri Lanka, contact Jim Lehman at 202-712-0113, jlehman@usaid.gov.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA—Supporting Change Agents

With the outbreak of conflict in the Former Yugoslavia in 1993 came mass executions, the use of rape as an instrument of war, torture, and ethnic cleansing. The United States played a leading role in brokering the Dayton Peace Accords signed in December 1995, and continues to support reconstruction, democracy, and self-governance in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

OTI has helped to stimulate change by aiding indigenous organizations, supporting non-governmental media and civil society groups in their efforts to: (1) reshape hard-line attitudes and perceptions; (2) promote democracy, human rights, and basic freedoms; and (3) disseminate more objective information.

Independent Media

OTI helps to expand the publication and distribution of newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets that provide objective, factual information. It also funds production of informative radio and television broadcasts, such as public service announcements, investigative reports, and documentaries.

Four-and-a-half million newspapers and magazines featuring unbiased reporting have reached readers throughout the Former Yugoslavia as a result of OTI funding. Since April 1996, OTI has supported the expansion, development, and survival of three independent newswire services and 31 independent newspapers and news magazines.

Additionally, OTI has backed 55 independent television and radio stations, and sponsored more than 100 locally produced documentaries and roundtable discussions on a wide variety of issues of concern in the Balkans: human rights, the return and reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, domestic violence, independent journalism, the Dayton Peace Accords, economic and political reform, and public elections.

Civic Society Organizations

OTI supports civil society organizations in their efforts to promote democratic practices by both challenging and informing the public. Examples of such activities include: (a) organizing public forums, debates, petition drives, and peaceful demonstrations, and (b) publishing and distributing pamphlets and other written materials. OTI field staff have also worked to ensure that these organizations receive appropriate strategic and management advice, as well as legal assistance when required. To date, OTI has awarded 500 direct grants to more than 150 civil society groups in the Former Yugoslavia. For the May 1998 parliamentary elections in Montenegro, OTI

developed a comprehensive package of assistance to NGOs supporting a reform agenda in the election. These NGOs actively contributed to the electoral debates and had a direct impact on the success of Montenegrin President Djukanovic's governing coalition. Since their victory, the Djukanovic government has aggressively pursued democratic reforms despite increasing pressure from the Yugoslav federal authorities. In the wake of the NATO action in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the continuing neutral stance of the Montenegrin government is truly heroic.

Community Improvement Efforts

Rebuilding local infrastructure is a critical need in many communities, and OTI has funded a number of local improvement projects. OTI helped to provide electricity in the Brcko region for Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. Additionally, the lessons learned from two 1995 OTI pilot projects on emergency shelter helped launch a much larger \$25 million USAID emergency shelter program in 1996.

Partners

OTI has partnered with over 250 local NGO/PVOs, advocacy groups, and media providers. OTI's procurement agent, RONCO, has contributed significantly to the program's smooth operation. Since early 1996, OTI has supported several international groups, including World Learning, Search for Common Ground, and World Vision.

Note: *As this report goes to press, the NATO bombing of Serbia and Kosovo has caused OTI to close its offices in Serbia and the Bosnian entity of Republika Srpska.*

OTI Assistance FY 1997.....	\$11,983,000
OTI Assistance FY 1998.....	\$10,917,000
Total OTI Assistance to date (FY95-98) ..	\$28,381,000

For more information on OTI's activities in the Former Yugoslavia, contact David Costello, 202-712-5231, dcostello@usaid.gov.

KOSOVO—Post-Conflict Rapid Response

In March 1999, NATO forces initiated a bombing campaign in Serbia and Kosovo in an effort to draw Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic back to the negotiating table with the Kosovar Albanians. Milosevic's Serbian government has refused to sign a peace agreement that would end its brutal cleansing of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and restore Kosovo's autonomy, which was revoked by the Milosevic government in 1989. The outcome of the bombing campaign is not known as this report goes to press.

OTI's previous transition assistance experience—especially its three years of work in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia—along with its fast and flexible programming approaches, make it uniquely suited to engage in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo should ongoing military operations give way to civilian-led reconstruction efforts.

In response to a (now failed) October 1998 U.S.-brokered peace accord, OTI immediately opened a field office in Pristina, identified three additional field offices, and hired staff. In concert with USAID's regional and global bureaus, it defined a series of potential reconstruction efforts that could engage Kosovo citizens in rebuilding their communities and provide momentum for a move toward peace. Building on its existing Balkans program, it undertook a series of media-related activities that gave voice to moderates seeking non-violent solutions in Kosovo. (The Pristina office was closed and activities were suspended with the advent of NATO bombings.)

OTI's October 1998 Kosovo strategy may still be relevant if post-bombing opportunities for civilian reconstruction efforts emerge. Built on a foundation of democratic and participatory processes, it focused on: (1) refurbishing and repairing homes, schools, community centers, and clinics; (2) restoring and improving public services; (3) strengthening moderate voices and leadership; (4) empowering ordinary citizens; and (5) fostering participatory decision-making at the local level.

OTI retains staff in the region, continues to monitor the situation closely, and is initiating small-scale activities in Macedonia and Albania to support the refugees and their host communities.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSITIONS

Increasingly, OTI is called upon to provide technical assistance to USAID missions, U.S. embassies, other U.S. government agencies, and multilateral and bilateral aid organizations. OTI's experience and creative approach to promoting peace and democracy in conflict-prone countries enable it to provide useful insights in transition contexts. Moreover, this technical assistance can leverage non-OTI resources to implement transition activities in situations not ripe for a complete OTI country program.

To date, OTI's technical assistance experience has focused on: (1) providing information, program options, and lessons learned to U.S. negotiation teams; (2) organizing and funding public and private fora for community, business, and public sector leaders to come together to discuss issues related to advancing peace and democracy; (3) conducting field assessments to provide recommendations on potential peace- and confidence-building activities; and (4) participating on other assessment teams to examine potential transition activities that might be linked to disaster assistance.

OTI has provided technical assistance in the following countries:

- **Lebanon** (March 1999)
- **Peru/Ecuador** (February 1999)
- **Honduras** (December 1998)
- **Georgia** (October 1998)
- **Papua New Guinea** (September 1998)
- **Nigeria** (August - September 1998)
- **Sudan** (April - May 1998)
- **Kenya** (April - May 1998)
- **West Bank/Gaza** (February 1998)
- **Northern Ireland** (November 1997, April 1998)
- **Tajikistan** (1997)
- **Philippines** (1997)
- **Guatemala** (November 1996)
- **Angola** (April 1994)

MAKING TRANSITIONS WORK BETTER

The success of OTI and its projects relies heavily on innovation and creativity. New ideas from a wide range of sources are sought and welcomed. To share your thoughts on how OTI can best advance peaceful, democratic change, to find out more about OTI's work in specific regions or project areas, and for information on upcoming publications or presentations, please contact the OTI staff (below):

Rick Barton, Director
Chris Phillips, Deputy Director

Central/Southern Africa

Marc Scott, Team Leader
Roger Conrad

West Africa/GHAI

Sylvia Fletcher, Team Leader
Rob Jenkins

East Asia

Jim Lehman, Team Leader
Chris O'Donnell
Eileen Wickstrom

Americas

Catherine Haberland
Bob Kramer

C. Asia/Near East

Elizabeth Kvitashvili

Balkans

David Costello, Team Leader
Albert Cevallos

Program Development

Dina Esposito, Co-Team Leader
Heather McHugh, Co-Team Leader
Cheryl Kim
Anne Lee

Administrative Management

Juanita Jones
Philomena Thomas
Betty Ryner
Linda Paluan

OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES
U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Humanitarian Response
Ronald Reagan Building, 8.06-076
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523-8602
Tel. 202-712-5603
Fax. 202-216-3043
E-mail: oti@usaid.gov

http://www.info.usaid.gov/hum_response/oti (summer '99)

Office of Transition Initiative
Offices

HEADQUARTERS

Ronald Reagan Building, 8.06-076
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523-8602

BOSNIA

Sarajevo (main office)
Banja Luka
Brcko*
Tuzla
Zenica*

DROC (CONGO)

Kinshasa (main office)
Kananga
Lubumbashi
Bukavu*

CROATIA

Osijek
Split
Zagreb

HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa

INDONESIA

Jakarta (main office)
Medan
Surabaya

MACEDONIA

Skopje

NIGERIA

Lagos (main office)
Abuja
Kano
Port Harcourt

PHILIPPINES - Mindanao

Davao
Cotabato
Lligan City
General Santos City

RWANDA

Kigali

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

Belgrade (main office)*
Nis*
Podgorica
Pristina*

* Office evacuated or closed (as of May 1999).

In addition, the following OTI country programs are managed from Washington, D.C.:

ANGOLA
COLOMBIA
LIBERIA
SIERRA LEONE
SRI LANKA

OTI has completed programs in the following countries:

GUATEMALA
HAITI



BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT