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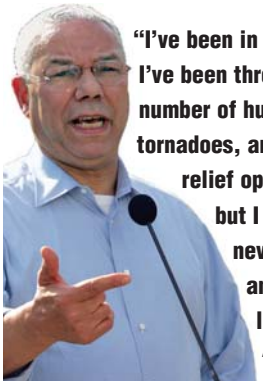
JANUARY 2005



"I've been in war, and I've been through a number of hurricanes, tornadoes, and other relief operations, but I have never seen anything like this."

AP/World Wide Photos

COLIN L. POWELL, SECRETARY OF STATE

Remarks during tour of areas ravaged by the post-Christmas tsunami, Banda Aceh, Indonesia
January 5, 2005

Asian Tidal Wave Kills 150,000

A post-Christmas earthquake and tidal wave killed at least 150,000, injured 500,000, and left millions homeless in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand, setting off an immediate USAID relief effort.

Within hours of the tidal waves, the Agency set up and dispatched a 21-member Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to quickly assess needs and help with sanitation, health, and other kinds of relief supplies. The DART soon added 20 search and rescue specialists from Los Angeles and Fairfax, Va. county fire departments.

The Agency also drew upon pre-positioned supplies of food and shelter in the Philippines and Dubai.

The damage from the tsunamis may have the biggest impact of any natural disaster in five decades, said Jan Egeland, head of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"Many billions of dollars" and years of effort will be needed to bury the dead, battle disease, and rebuild the damage, he said.

President Bush said the United States would give $350 million in humanitarian aid and dispatched U.S. navy ships from Guam, Diego Garcia, and Hong Kong, including an aircraft carrier whose helicopters provided the first food and water to isolated Western Sumatra, where perhaps 100,000 were killed by the giant waves of the tsunami.

Total aid from donor governments reached $2 billion within a week, led by Japan, which pledged $500 million. More aid was given by private citizens to CARE, World Vision, and other relief groups.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, President Bush's brother, Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida, and Administrator Natsios traveled together to the affected countries January 2 to express concern, view the damage, and check on relief.

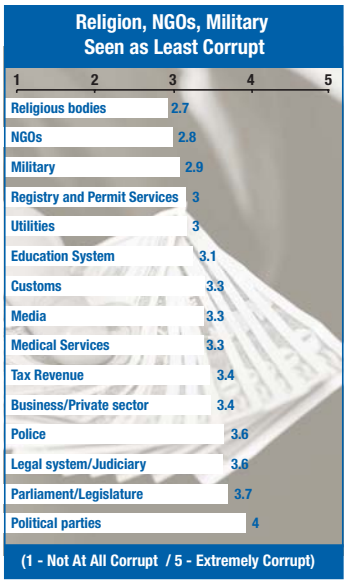
"We have water cans, bladders, and things of that nature, Assistant Administrator Ed Fox told a State Department news conference. "The first important thing will be to help in the removal of debris and disaster and to help the people, not only those tragically killed, but the million or more who are also going to be displaced and will need

▼ SEE TIDAL WAVE ON PAGE 13

U.S. SENDS RELIEF TO TSUNAMI VICTIMS

AP/World Wide Photos

U.S. Navy personnel load a helicopter with relief supplies in Indonesia.



From 2004 Transparency International Survey of 50,000 people in 64 countries by Gallup International.

▼ SEE PAGE 4

Ukraine Elects

KIEV—After massive demonstrations against an election deemed unfair by international observers, Ukrainians voted again Dec. 26, and opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko defeated Prime Minister ViktorYanukovych 52–44, according to the Central Election Commission.

USAID supplied $14 million to assist the elections and the broader democratic process in Ukraine, including sending 19 staffers and $3.6 million to observe and monitor the second election, held after the Supreme Court rejected the Nov. 21 vote.

The Agency is forbidden to take sides or support political parties that do not support peaceful, democratic means to obtain power;

▼ SEE UKRAINE ON PAGE 16

Iraq To Vote in January

BAGHDAD—Iraq prepared for its first democratic election in modern history Jan. 30, supported by $86 million in U.S. assistance for voter registration, education, and monitoring.

"This is an emotional turning point for the country," Administrator Andrew S. Natsios told *The Washington Times* newspaper during a visit to Baghdad Dec 11. "It will give legitimacy to the new government."

Natsios predicted that a majority of Sunnis would take part in the vote in spite of a threatened boycott.

USAID provided $40 million to help Iraq's Independent Election Commission organize the elections and another grant worth up to $50 million to educate voters about the election and encourage them to vote.

The Iraq interim government has committed about $100 million to the election and hired 350,000 election workers. A U.N. fund has raised around $80 million more.

Registration of the estimated 15 million eligible voters was built on the public distribution system used under the Saddam regime for food rationing, said Adam Schmidt of the Democracy and Governance office.

Each head of household received a form with the November food distribution asking

▼ SEE IRAQ ON PAGE 16

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ZAMBIAN FARMERS STORE GRAIN FOR CREDIT

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Voice of America and USAID Team Up to Beam Programming Worldwide

Radio listeners in Angola, a country recovering from a long-running civil war that ended in 2002, have been getting news and information about their country for nearly a decade from the studios of Voice of America (VOA) headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A few doors away in the same building near the Capitol, Josephine Kamara, wearing a spectacular blue scarf and matching African print dress, hosts *Healthy Living,* a television show beamed into Africa that tells how to prevent or treat polio, cholera, malaria, and other diseases.

The support for democracy in Angola and the fight against disease in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been backed by USAID funding for key VOA programs.

"We started funding these broadcasts in the fight against polio some years ago—VOA is a U.S. government broadcaster with an enormous audience that has programs in 44 languages," said Elizabeth Fox of the Bureau for Global Health.

"The people we want to reach listen mainly to radio, so we sponsor good, solid health reporting in Swahili, French, Urdu, Hausa, and other languages.

"This is a national partnership. VOA has a lot of credibility. In Nigeria, for example, it's the second most popular radio, especially in health and science."

Recently polio began spreading in some African countries after leaders in northern Nigeria refused to allow vaccinations, fearing it was a Western plot to sterilize Muslims. VOA and USAID responded with urgent health reporting in Nigeria to better inform people and dispel the false fears about vaccination.

Broadcasts included interviews with senior tribal, Muslim, political, and health officials, discussing all aspects of the issue so as to clear the air. They also aired reports on the decision by the Muslim state governors to finally accept polio vaccine from Indonesia, according to Sunday Dare, head of the VOA Hausa service.

To assure that the volatile Hausa region in Nigeria's north does not become a flashpoint for Muslim unrest, VOA and USAID have opened a Health Reporting Center in Kano—the region's major city—to train journalists, including women journalists. "We want to help journalists learn to cover health issues more effectively and tackle myths about disease," said Joan Mower, head of the development office at the International Broadcasting Bureau, which oversees VOA.

The USAID-VOA partnership in Angola—which officially ended in September 2004 but survives in a new form—is a model of capacity building. During the life of the program, USAID provided about $4.3 million to VOA.

Started in 1995 when Angola was a closed society in the throes of a brutal civil war, USAID's funds allowed VOA to create a daily, 30-minute news magazine show that helped make VOA the leading international broadcaster in a country of 10 million people and the size of Texas.

"When we started, the program concentrated on coverage of the war, but we evolved into a forum for civil society," said Ana Guedes, chief of VOA's Portuguese to Africa service, which runs the program.

The show, broadcast into Angola from São Tomé, covers topics rarely discussed by media in Angola: HIV/AIDS, oil and diamonds, the economy, health, politics, women's issues, and democracy. No subject is off-limits, so long as it is newsworthy.

VOA

Josephine Kamara hosts Healthy Living*, a twice-a-month VOA television show that deals with a variety of health issues. USAID provides funds for the program.*

"Our program tells the truth and allows everyone to hear it. This is our contribution to democracy," said Amelia Mendes, an Angolan journalist who works with the show.

A key element of the partnership was training journalists at the Luanda News Center and correspondents in the provinces. They broadcast information back to Washington, where it is packaged and disseminated.

Today, the Angolan journalists working on the VOA program in Luanda have formed their own news organization, Multipress, with the hope of eventually becoming self-sufficient as the Angola market grows. Multipress has applied for USAID funding in Luanda.

Providing Angolan journalists with training and exposure to fact-based news has been beneficial to the country, said Victor Silva, senior editor.

"Joining the Angola Project was a personal challenge for me," Silva said. "It opened the door to promote the free flow of information in my country. Today it represents more than just a radio program—it is an integral part of the rebuilding of Angola."

Whether supporting democracy or health, USAID's funding of VOA programs seems a far cry from the blankets, beans, and medicines traditionally associated with aid to poor countries.

"VOA supports the mission of development," explains Fox of USAID's Bureau for Global Health. Chris Thomas of the bureau adds: "VOA supports balance on issues where there is misinformation—such as polio—or HIV/AIDS, where there is a lot of stigma."

"We have no editorial oversight over the broadcasts, but give technical briefings to radio staffers."

Research on listeners in Latin America, Asia, and Africa indicates that people do listen to the health programs and "they did something" based on what they heard, such as changed the way they cooked or cleaned or protected themselves from disease.

Shows vary from interviews with leaders and experts, to informative news reports, to documentaries, to soap operas that explain to listeners or viewers how to recognize symptoms of illness and what action to take.

Under the Health Communications Initiative, USAID can provide VOA up to $20 million over five years. So far, $3.4 million has been spent on programs, primarily in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. ★

VOA

Mary Arobaga-Reardon travels to Africa to cover health-related stories for VOA-TV, which broadcasts across the continent to affiliates in Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, and elsewhere.

First Person

Jay Sorensen, USAID/Romania

"Right now I'm working on a national project concerning fruit storage in controlled atmospheres and prevention of spoilage and disease. I'm trying to approach the problem through the prism of what I learned in the U.S."

LUMINITA ZAGRAI, ROMANIA

Young Scientist Program participant holds fruit as she stands with American professor Dr. Paul Domoto.

Romania, once known as the breadbasket of Europe, is now a net importer of agricultural goods. Only 12 percent of the country's gross domestic product comes from agriculture. Since the fall of communism, privatization of state farms has occurred slowly and inefficiently, leading to many fragmented small farms. The irrigation system was damaged, and competitiveness fell far behind other Eastern European countries.

USAID funded the Young Scientist Program, which brings skilled young Romanians to work with U.S. agriculture experts from Iowa State University and University of Wisconsin. Hands-on learning over one month focuses on food safety, biotechnology, livestock genetics, dairy feed and forage, resource management, international trade and policy, and agriculture marketing. So far, 40 scientists have received scholarships to study in the United States.

Mission of the Month

VIETNAM

The Challenge

Vietnam and the United States established diplomatic relations in 1995, two decades after the United States withdrew from South Vietnam and the North invaded and unified the country.

Establishing trade relations allowed Vietnam's reforming command-controlled economy access to U.S. markets and allowed U.S. business interests access to a market of more than 80 million people with relatively high literacy and life expectancy rates.

In December 2001, the two countries ratified a bilateral trade agreement that put into place a process of mutual market opening. The opening was tied to changes in Vietnam's laws, regulations, and practices related to international trade.

Innovative USAID Response

Ensuring the success of the new trade agreement required a strong and coordinated response aimed at helping Vietnam adapt its laws. USAID met this need with two programs, one focusing on trade and law and the other on accelerating reform to allow the private sector in Vietnam to grow.

In partnership with the U. S. Vietnam Trade Council, USAID formed an important bridge to help the Vietnamese government and businesses understand U.S. business practices. The program benefited from the council's connections to multinational corporations and key members of Congress, elevating the profile of reform in Vietnam.

USAID also worked with Vietnamese ministries, agencies, and departments to draft laws and regulations and implement internationally accepted practices through the Support for Trade AcceleRation (STAR) program. STAR placed a highly respected U.S. economist specializing in Southeast Asia in Hanoi to direct a team of local and international lawyers.

Most vital to both USAID's programs was the Vietnamese government's establishment of a steering committee. Former USAID Country Manager Jean Gilson noted that "USAID's design to place the STAR program within and under the purview of the Prime Minister's Office—where no single line ministry could claim sole ownership—was the key to its early and continued success and access, despite the resulting logistical and administrative burden placed on the Office of the Government and the Steering Committee."

The committee gathers and evaluates all requests for technical assistance from any of the 46 government offices in need of reform in order for Vietnam to remain compliant under its trade agreement obligations. Then USAID responds to meet the most pressing requests.

Home accessory companies in Ha Tay province near Hanoi wished to take advantage of new trade opportunities, yet they did not know how to develop and market their products internationally. USAID arranged for Ernie Owens, who has 40 years of industry experience, to help local businesses design, develop, and export their products. Here, Owens examines ceramic vases in Bat Trang village.

Results

Bilateral trade was increased by 400 percent between Vietnam and the United States. Vietnam has changed its legal practices, improving the rule of law, promoting good governance, and protecting property rights.

A new decree on foreign lawyers has improved access to legal services.

The number of laws and regulations published in the *Official Gazette* each year has increased from just 4,200 in 2002 to 16,510 in 2004. Many draft laws and regulations are now posted for public comment.

Training for 400 judges coming from every province and a new civil procedure code have improved court procedures, especially for intellectual property rights disputes.

Revisions to the law governing credit institutions have helped level the playing field for commercial banks. Commercial arbitration procedures have been strengthened, and Vietnam's customs laws now comply with World Trade Organization requirements.

USAID Country Manager Dennis Zvinakis said economic growth could not have been achieved without the help of the Vietnamese.

"Some years back the government made a major policy decision to create a market-driven economy and have carried out that commitment with tenacity and professionalism," he said. "Because they haven't wavered…profound changes can already be seen in day-to-day economic governance." ★

Notes from Natsios

★★★★★★★★★★

The humanitarian catastrophe created by the tidal waves that swept Asia the day after Christmas and killed at least 150,000 has become one of our most important tasks for the coming year—possibly longer—and I am calling on all staff and all offices to join the effort.

USAID has become the lead agency in dealing with the crisis. We will work with the military, State Department, other U.S. and international agencies, and affected governments to provide immediate food, water, shelter, and medicine to survivors, and then transition into rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Millions of people will depend on us. It is also an opportunity for America to demonstrate our generosity and compassion, and for us to show that USAID is this country's and the world's most capable foreign aid organization.

I met with senior staff from every office in the Agency December 30 and called upon everyone to offer help, personnel, advice, information, and other support to this enormous task. The four principal missions affected—Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, and Thailand—are preparing lists of temporary and permanent additional staffing needed to deal with the tsunami. Our Response Management Team in Washington is coordinating our efforts.

Current and retired USAID staff who worked on Hurricane Mitch or other disasters—in Iran, India, Bangladesh, Mozambique, and El Salvador—are being asked to volunteer to help in Asia or to provide lessons learned.

The Global Development Alliance is seeking donations from U.S. corporations or foundations. Already a shipping company has offered to carry our relief supplies from Dubai to Asia.

We are preparing country-specific plans for the relief response that will include all U.S. Government assets, including the military. We expect to work closely with the military in this crisis, where they will play a logistics role rather than the security role they play in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), which is leading our response, will assign staff to coordinate military help to the aid mission. Our OFDA Director, Ken Isaacs, has gone to Asia to review the relief operations.

Other offices will prepare rehabilitation and reconstruction plans, assign procurement officers for rapid contracting, coordinate with other donors, and transfer to Asia tsunami warning technology we helped install in Chile and Peru.

We've just begun a long and difficult task. ★

Fight Against Corruption Becomes Part of Foreign Aid Strategy

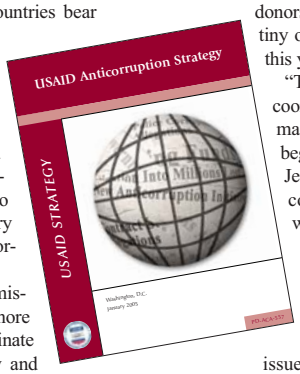
Corruption costs the world about $1.5 trillion a year, reducing countries' growth rates by as much as 1 percent per year, according to the World Bank. Corruption is big business, and the poorest citizens in these countries bear the burden.

To address this problem, USAID recently released an Agency-wide anticorruption strategy that challenges the Agency to think of new and better ways to address corruption. It also urges missions to develop a common vocabulary and a vision of how to address corruption across their programs.

Administrator Natsios urged mission directors to "speak out more visibly on this issue" and "coordinate more closely with the embassy and other donors."

In Cambodia, USAID commissioned a report on corruption that was released to the public in November. U.S. officials have met with high-ranking government officials to discuss the findings—mainly the lack of political will by government elites to tackle the issues of impunity and lack of rule of law in the country.

The issues have been widely discussed in the media. And because of this, international donors have increased scrutiny over aid to Cambodia this year.



"This is the kind of coordinated public diplomacy that we are just beginning to see," said Jerry O'Brien, an anticorruption specialist with USAID.

For years, even talking about corruption was taboo. It was often referred to as a "cultural" issue, and economists argued that "greasing the wheels" through bribes was economically efficient. Citizens everywhere agreed that it is just how things are done in their homelands.

This has changed in the last decade. Transparency International (TI) was born, with a focus on the effect of corruption on development. In 1995, the group released its first *Corruption Perceptions Index*, ranking 41 countries on how corrupt they were perceived to be on a scale of one to ten.

This ranking—which immediately singled out countries like Indonesia and the Philippines as highly corrupt—made corruption a legitimate topic on the agenda in countries and institutions around the world.

"Governments that have sought to brush this debate aside can no longer do so, as the whole world sees how their nations rank," said Peter Eigen, TI's chairman. ★

THE COSTS OF CORRUPTION

- **Corruption and Tax Revenues—Corruption costs many governments as much as 50 percent of their tax revenues.**
- **Corruption and Growth—Corruption can reduce a country's growth rate by 0.5 to 1.0 percentage points per year, according to the World Bank.**
- **Corruption and Per Capita Income—Improving the control of corruption and the rule of law is estimated to have a major improvement on per capita income.**
- **Corruption and Procurement—Studies show that corruption in procurement results in a 20–100 percent increase in the price governments pay for goods and services.**
- **Corruption Dollars Exceed Donor Development Dollars—According to the International Monetary Fund, corrupt leaders steal about $1.5 trillion a year, dwarfing the world's annual contribution of donor development assistance—$68 billion in 2003.**

Source: *USAID Anticorruption Strategy*

More Kids in School but Education Quality Declines, Report Says

While more children are going to school, the quality of the education they receive is faltering, according to a report issued at the Education for All (EFA) conference in Brazil in November.

In one-third of the 160 countries that are part of EFA, more than 25 percent of students never reach grade 5, said the EFA Global Monitoring Report.

"The pace of change…is insufficient to achieve the set goals" of improving the quality of education by 2015—one of the six goals first set out at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000—said the EFA in a statement.

Many classrooms are excessively overcrowded. Elsewhere, teachers are dying of HIV/AIDS faster than they can be replaced. Poorly trained teachers, ill equipped schools, and corruption also add to the misery.

However, the report cited successful efforts to improve education, such as distance learning and multiple-grade classrooms, which are sponsored by the Agency.

"USAID, in addition to being a large funder, has repeatedly been a major source of innovations to assure that quality is not lost with quantity," said Dr. John A. Grayzel, director of USAID's Office of Education.

The Agency also pays five technical advisors at the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), who work to advance EFA goals.

In Burkina Faso, communities built schools at half the cost of a government-built school and maintained them better, said James T. Smith, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade. Students at less costly, community-built and -run schools in Mali had test results as good as students in government schools. Business partners brought a results-oriented culture to schools in Nicaragua and in other countries, USAID supports.

Another innovation is the Global Learning Portal, a pilot public-private effort that allows 6,000 educators from six countries to share strategies and innovations over the web.

The system aims to reach all 32 million educators in developing countries, said Buff Mackenzie, who is also with EGAT's Office of Education. The portal—a growing alliance founded by USAID, the Academy for Educational Development, and Sun Microsystems—plans to invest an additional $1 million to expand the website for Arabic speakers.

For the first time in the four years since EFA was created, several side events ran concurrently, including UNICEF's Girl's Education Initiative, the global Fast Track Initiative, a teacher's parliament, a discussion on child labor, and a session on public-private partnerships hosted by the World Economic Forum.

USAID was the lead agency for the U.S. delegation to the conference, which this year focused on quality.

The Agency has been among the champions of this collaborative approach to finding solutions, said Dr. Gregory P. Loos, team leader for Basic Education and Technical Leadership.

Today, USAID's basic education investment is nearing $300 million, of which $56 million last year leveraged $120 million in partner assets by involving businesses, foundations, and other funding sources.

"It has been working," he said. "I think the message is starting to settle in that nongovernment resources can be found to support basic education." ★

Laura Larrigue, USAID/Guinea

Children in Guinea benefit from having textbooks in the classroom.

EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS

Goal 1: *Early childhood care and education*

Goal 2: *Universal primary education*

Goal 3: *Youth and adult learning*

Goal 4: *Literacy*

Goal 5: *Gender*

Goal 6: *Quality*

Source: *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005*

OTI Rapid Post-Conflict Aid Was Effective, Harvard Study Says

OTI/Afghanistan

Reaching people in outlying regions has been a key objective for the OTI program in Afghanistan.

Initial findings in a Harvard University study of the first 10 years of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) concludes that "overall, OTI has done extremely well," said study director Robert Rotberg at a symposium in Washington, D.C.

The OTI 10-year legacy was examined in the Harvard study of programs in six countries: Sierra Leone, Peru, Kosovo, Macedonia, East Timor, and Indonesia.

The study was funded by OTI.

Professor Rotberg, of the Belfer Center at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, said Dec. 8 that his team of researchers interviewed those who benefited from the OTI programs, host country officials, NGOs, and USAID staff.

Calling the quick-acting OTI the equivalent of USAID's "special forces" for its ability to move swiftly into crises after conflict ends, Rotberg said the primary impact was to involve local officials and stakeholders with civil society to resolve problems.

In Peru, OTI managed to "get the military and civil society together to talk," he said.

In Macedonia, to avert ethnic conflict OTI promoted civic and town meetings to discuss real physical improvements that built confidence.

In Kosovo, OTI discovered that "mixed projects" undertaken by members of different ethnic groups were "less likely to be destroyed" when conflict broke out.

"In all countries [studied], OTI initiated cross-societal and inter-society conversations," Rotberg said. Above all, OTI projects were "run from the field, not the capital," he said.

Since OTI was established in 1994, it has operated in 29 countries as a flexible tool to respond to ethnic tension and post-conflict issues, often working in fragile states. It works to support democracy, rule of law, free media, and civilian rule over the military, and to prevent retribution.

Rotberg said many efforts were successful but others fell flat, sometimes due to the local culture: in Macedonia, OTI had success but in Aceh, Indonesia, much less so.

"In Sierra Leone, OTI brought the parties to the table—there would not have been a successful transition [from conflict to peace] without OTI," Rotberg said.

In Peru, the office successfully trained 25 public defenders; and in East Timor, it had a role in negotiations with Australia on oil rights and helped rebuild schools and roads after pro-Indonesian mobs destroyed 70 percent of the capital, Dili.

"In many countries, OTI tried to fight the good fight against corruption…but achieved little….It was outclassed and out gunned" by corrupt local officials, Rotberg concluded.

The Harvard study group, which has not yet written its report, found that "OTI performed extraordinary service by helping to create newspapers and radio stations, training journalists, and creating broadcast facilities and news agencies," Rotberg said.

"In Sierra Leone, everyone talked about the soap operas on reconciliation" that OTI helped air on the radio, he said.

"OTI has a legacy of which we can all be proud," said Rotberg. ★

Ana Adamovic

Rural communities join together to address common needs in Serbia through OTI-supported activities.

World AIDS Experts Back 'ABC' Strategy in *Lancet* Article

Leading experts on AIDS recently signed a statement in the influential medical journal *The Lancet* in support of the strategy to prevent HIV transmission known as "ABC": Abstain, Be Faithful, and Use Condoms.

USAID is committed to the ABC approach as an effective way to combat HIV/AIDS, which has claimed millions of lives around the globe.

Some critics have doubted it is possible to persuade people to abstain from sex or to be faithful. Others say condoms are not foolproof and may encourage promiscuity.

However, more than 140 experts, advocates, and directors of global institutions—including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, representatives of the World Bank, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and five U.N. agencies—found enough common ground to sign on to the commentary published in the Nov. 27 issue of *The Lancet.*

The "ABC (Abstain, Be faithful/reduce partners, use Condoms) approach can play an important role in reducing the prevalence of HIV in a generalized epidemic, as occurred in Uganda," the statement said.

"All three elements of this approach are essential to reducing HIV incidence, although the emphasis placed on individual elements needs to vary according to the target population," a view held by the U.S. government.

The Lancet authors said: "We call for an end to polarizing debate and urge the international community to unite" to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The commentary focused on preventing sexual transmission of AIDS, the main path of infection.

It said prevention programs should be locally endorsed and culturally relevant to targeted groups. It called for involving religious and other organizations, care groups, health workers, local media, and government leaders to "foster new norms of sexual behavior."

The authors also said new approaches such as microbicides, vaccines, and male circumcision should be continuously explored.

"This is an unprecedented international statement, endorsed by nearly all the leading HIV experts and service organizations, and is very congruent with the official USAID and U.S. government approaches to preventing HIV," said Daniel Halperin, who is with the Agency's Bureau for Global Health.

PSI

A Youth Alert! peer education team visits a secondary school in Malawi and presents a high-energy message stressing abstinence and personal goal setting.

Uganda is one example where ABC has decreased HIV infections rates, and there are other countries—including Thailand, Cambodia, and the Dominican Republic—where the ABC approach has been effective.

UNAIDS executive director Peter Piot and U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias said in an article recently: "We support the 'ABC' prevention strategy—**A**bstain, **B**e Faithful, use **C**ondoms—but know that AIDS cannot be defeated by just these three means alone. Women are getting infected more than men not only because they lack essential AIDS information, but because they lack social and economic power."

According to UNAIDS and the World Health Organization, 39.4 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. New infections in 2004 came to 4.9 million; 3.1 million people died the same year. Globally, women make up almost half of the adults living with HIV/AIDS.

Since 1986, USAID has given more than $3.2 billion to HIV/AIDS programs in nearly 100 countries. In 2003, President Bush announced the $15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, an interagency effort led by the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. ★

TRAINING CLASS FOR FORMER MILITIA FIGHTERS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ben Barber, USAID

Afghans in Mazar-e Sharif learn carpentry at a program training former militia fighters and others in need of jobs. The program, run by the International Organization for Migration and paid for by USAID, offers classes in literacy, carpentry, carpet weaving, agriculture, welding, tailoring, auto mechanics, and other trades. Ex-fighters get $30 per month to sustain their families during training.

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

Loans Let Zambia Farmers Store Grain Till Prices Rise

Chris Ray, USAID

This warehouse on Wangwa Farms, in Central Province, Zambia, is certified by the Zambian Agricultural Commodities Agency. Its clients can get loans using warehouse receipts as collateral.

LUSAKA, Zambia—President Levy Mwanawasa told farmers at a recent meeting that they should take advantage of a U.S.-backed program that allows them to take out loans using grain stored in warehouses as collateral.

Certified, high-quality warehouses give farmers and merchants the opportunity to benefit from higher, off-season prices because they can store grain instead of selling it for a low price during the harvest glut.

Using stored grain as collateral, farmers can borrow the money they need to pay debts and invest in production.

President Mwanawasa praised "the American government for deciding to bring the Development Credit Authority (DCA) facility, through USAID, to Zambia" when he addressed the Zambia National Farmers Union at its October 2004 annual meeting.

The DCA, which is run by the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT), allows USAID to guarantee commercial lending for development goals. Through it, guarantees with four private Zambian banks have been set up.

In the past, Zambian banks would not lend against grain receipts. The Agency's offer to guarantee 40 percent of the principal of loans made against receipts helped convince four commercial banks to invest in such lending.

Combined, the guarantees are worth up to $16.5 million. The ultimate goal is for Zambian banks to gain enough confidence in warehouse receipts as collateral that they will continue to make such loans without sharing the risk with USAID.

Bankable warehouse receipts are issued by the private Zambian Agricultural Commodities Agency (ZACA), which supervises and certifies the commercial warehouses. The four commercial banks helped found ZACA, which is also a USAID Global Development Alliance partner.

The combination of certified warehouses and partial guarantees has increased the purchasing power of farmers, millers, and traders. As President Mwanawasa noted, the program stimulates bank lending for agricultural development.

"This is an excellent example of USAID building capacity in the agricultural sector—by releasing liquidity previously trapped in stored commodities while stimulating private financial institutions," said Dann Griffiths, the mission's senior economic growth officer.

"Clearly, it is not just about financial flows and marketing techniques," he added.

Mwanawasa said he considered agriculture the engine of the country's economy because it has the highest growth potential of all economic sectors.

The Zambia mission also helps farmers' groups through agribusiness management training.

Mwanawasa said he was pleased to see signs of growth in the sector, but remained concerned about small-scale farmers' access to credit from commercial banks, urging the expansion of the receipts program to the country's more remote areas.

The minimum amount of maize needed to qualify for a guarantee is 30 tons, so large-scale growers were the first to take advantage of the loans. Small-scale farmers are combining their harvests to get loans.

"Duplication is the best sign of success," said USAID/Zambia Mission Director Jim Bednar. "In this case, an agricultural association has already consolidated maize from its members to take advantage of the guarantees—only four months after the DCA program started." ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Forestry Alliance Plants 4 Million Trees In Africa and Asia

After farming and illegal logging in the 1980s destroyed 37 million acres of tropical forest in Africa and millions more in Asia, aid groups formed thousands of small groups that taught farmers to plant and care for 4 million new trees so far, in Kenya, Uganda, and India.

Community groups of about 10 farmers plant trees around their houses, along roads, or near their villages under The International Small Group and Tree Planting Alliance (TIST).

It teaches them that trees improve soil fertility, create shade for smaller plant species, provide fruits and nuts, and lead to cleaner air.

TIST, which received $500,000 from the Global Development Alliance (GDA), teaches farmers to plant saplings in holes rather than rows because each hole can create a small pool of water that will nourish the tree through the dry season. If a row is planted, the water simply runs off and the trees die during dry season.

Along with GDA, another $1 million was provided by Dow Chemical Company Foundation, Clean Air Action Corporation, Solar Oven Society, and the Institute for Environmental Innovation.

TIST personnel are trained to use Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to gather reforestation data, which are then uploaded to an online database. This helps identify areas where new trees are needed.

While groups may plant any tree, they are encouraged to plant Neem trees, a native species of India and Myanmar (formerly Burma) that thrives in semiarid climates, reduces pests, and has medicinal value.

To encourage farmers to participate in the program, TIST makes small cash payments for each new tree planting or for tree care.

Since 1999, TIST has expanded from 40 groups in one region of Tanzania to more than 2,000 active groups spanning Kenya, Uganda, and India. TIST plans to plant another 5 million trees in Kenya and Tanzania over the next three years.

Participants in TIST receive health education and learn about their rights as citizens: planting trees in a village is not always as simple as digging a hole and burying a seed.

"Some groups are successful in negotiating with local and regional governments to gain permission to plant trees," said Ben Henneke, president of Clean Air Corporation and founder of TIST. "But other groups didn't even know they were allowed to ask, much less get permission."

The use of GPS technology, a growing trend in forestry, helps individual farmers trained as quantifiers accomplish more than an entire surveyor team.

"TIST empowers local communities to take charge of their own development," said Roopa Karia of GDA. "Members see positive results from planting trees and practicing conservation farming, and spread the word to their family and friends." ★

TIST

The area behind this man, near Kongwa, Tanzania, was once forested. Today it is bare, and although there is a large stack of fuelwood, it had to be brought from elsewhere.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Bolivia's Indians Win Municipal Elections

USAID Office of Transition Initiatives

Aymara woman reads about municipal elections.

EL ALTO, Bolivia—In the wake of December municipal elections in Bolivia, U.S. aid experts encouraged the country's indigenous people to bring their concerns to the national stage.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) led U.S. support for the Dec. 5 elections, in which Indian and peasant groups trounced their competitors, winning every contest in Bolivia's major cities.

Efforts come nearly two years after violent protests by Indians that led to the ouster of President Sánchez de Lozada.

In El Alto, a city perched on a plateau overlooking the capital La Paz, poverty and a sense of exclusion from power drove many to join the protests in October 2003.

OTI estimates it reached a quarter of Bolivia's people with theater groups, candidate debates, and media campaigns. It also helped cover the costs for the Bolivian National Electoral Court to process paperwork for hundreds of candidates.

"If we can get education for our children and jobs for our adults through these elections, no one will throw stones anymore," said one Aymara Indian observer from the highland village of Batallas, while watching a candidate debate forum supported by OTI.

While the observer's preferred candidate did not win an elected office, she and the other 10 candidates in this municipality signed a pledge with the outgoing mayor to support a transparent, smooth transition that respects previous agreements between the population and municipal government.

Many of OTI's election programs have sought to preempt future conflicts that often arise over resources and management.

Support to indigenous groups is a crosscutting theme in USAID/Bolivia's and OTI's activities, which focus on providing natural gas to local schools, engaging youth in the labor market, and helping Bolivians obtain legal documentation. These and other programs aim to promote dialogue and consensus in Bolivian politics.

OTI is also supporting civic education forums in the eastern lowlands and western highlands where many indigenous people live. The series began October 2004 and runs for four months.

Such programs complement USAID/Bolivia's longer-term development efforts that seek to guarantee equal rights for indigenous populations in health services, justice, environmental protection, and economic development.

Bolivia next year will have a constituent assembly, which will expand the national debate on civil and political rights, especially those of the country's long-ignored indigenous people. Among the issues are participation and representation of the indigenous people, who account for half of the country's overall population.

"We try to help people understand that this is a chance to have a voice in shaping a new nation that recognizes the traditions and needs of all Bolivians," said Victor Hugo, executive director of Fundación Brecha, the group organizing civic forums. ★

▼ SEE YOUR VOICE ON PAGE 15

GLOBAL HEALTH

Heart Disease, Stroke, Other Chronic Illness Kill More than AIDS

Recent world attention has focused on HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and diarrhea; however, more people die from chronic illness such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure—areas that have become major public health concerns for the Agency.

"Chronic diseases are the major cause of death and disability worldwide," said Dr. E. Anne Peterson, Assistant Administrator for Global Health, echoing the findings of the 2003 Agency report *Foreign Aid in the National Interest.*

"Sadly, only a few, largely preventable risk factors account for most of the world's disease burden."

The 2003 report found that in all developing countries except those in Africa, the primary health killers were the same diseases that are often prevented or slowed with simple lifestyle changes—eating a more nutritious diet, boosting physical activity, and quitting smoking.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, cancer, and respiratory diseases make up 59 percent of deaths and 46 percent of disease and disability in the world each year.

Cardiovascular disease alone could be cut by half globally by reducing major risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, and smoking, WHO says.

By the time USAID's 2003 report was published, work on the ground was underway. USAID is supporting wellness and prevention programs in Egypt, Russia, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Georgia.

In Egypt, for example, USAID has sponsored antismoking and public education campaigns on the dangers of tobacco use since 1998.

And in Russia in 1999, the Agency worked with the Quality Assurance Project to improve adult hypertension care at the primary care level in Tula Oblast, a region about 100 miles south of Moscow. Over the next four years, the number of people needing to be admitted to hospitals for these conditions dropped substantially.

Some 69 percent of patients were able to stabilize their blood pressure, and "hypertensive crises" dropped 60 percent. There was a corresponding drop in overall costs as well—by 23 percent—since patients were able to get well with primary care instead of more costly hospitalizations.

USAID also supports the American International Health Alliance (AIHA) in its more than 100 partnerships that focus on cardiovascular health.

In one effort in Georgia, AIHA's Mtskheta-Mtianeti/Milwaukee primary healthcare partnership developed a program to detect and control high blood pressure, a leading risk factor in heart attack and stroke. Now, in five districts, the program first developed in 2000 has helped drop systolic and diastolic blood pressure levels by 12 and 10 percent.

A partnership that includes clinicians from Tuzla, a city of 118,000 in northeastern Bosnia, and Buffalo, N.Y., is working to open a cardiac center in Tuzla for advanced care. The collaboration also aims to educate healthcare workers and patients about risk factors and prevention strategies for cardiovascular disease. ★

Zdrav Plus

A group of Uzbek family doctors learn how to interpret EKG results.

Macedonia Calms Ethnic Rift with U.S. Aid

Macedonia, one of five republics that became independent when Yugoslavia disintegrated after 1991, is successfully dealing with conflict between ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian groups, assisted by the USAID mission in Skopje.

The conflict erupted into violence in early 2001 and the mission's U.S. staff was evacuated for six months. When peace was restored, the staff returned and the mission resumed activities full steam.

"We have moved from being concerned about security to focusing on things like decentralization, court reform, and economic development," said Mission Director Dick Goldman.

The 12-year-old mission's budget last year was $35 million. The largest programs are in economic growth and in democracy and governance. One third of the budget goes to education, local economic development, and training.

A program Goldman takes special pride in is outfitting all of Macedonia's primary and secondary schools with computers and broadband internet access.

"Connectivity gives them the tools they need to participate in the global economy," he said.

The mission has a staff of 44. ★

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

A girl dances in traditional Macedonian dress at the opening of the visitor center to Stobi, the second largest ancient archaeological site in the country. USAID funded the building of the center.

New Packages Make a Difference for Macedonian Firm

KUMANOVO, Macedonia—In mid-2003, the Buchen Kozyak dairy sold most of its cheese to restaurants and sold its milk and yogurt in plain, unmarked packaging. Now the dairy makes several types of new cheeses, and its products are easily recognized by their colorful new packaging. The dairy has new equipment, and sales have risen by 40 percent.

None of it would have happened this fast if the dairy had not joined Macedonia's lamb and cheese cluster, said Predrag Cvetkovic, marketing manager of Buchen Kozyak. "We have so many new plans," he said. "We want to be the leader in Macedonia five years from now."

The cluster is one of five industry groups receiving help from the Macedonia Competitiveness Activity (MCA), an $11.5 million USAID project that started October 2002 and runs for four years. The other clusters focus on tourism, wine, apparel, and information technology.

"Macedonia, like so many other developing countries, competes on the basis of low wages and cheap products," said Suzi Kanyr-Hagen, chief of party of the MCA. "What we are aiming for is that people identify high-value products and services that the world wants and that Macedonia can produce. Then we can see the creation of better jobs here, with higher wages."

Clusters were chosen based on their leadership initiatives and their industry's potential economic impact. Each cluster has about 60 members and had to identify 10 expansion and competitiveness goals, such as promotion and branding. Members had access to temporary help of volunteer consultants provided by the MCA.

Buchen Kozyak got a Boston dairy marketing manager for two months, who taught the company about shrink-wrapping and better packaging its cheeses.

The dairy joined the lamb and cheese cluster in October 2003. The following summer, it participated in an MCA-organized wine and cheese festival in Ohrid, a popular resort town.

Some 1,600 bottles of wine were sold during the festival. And dairies like Buchen Kozyak sold as much as two tons of cheese; many ran out of products.

Lynn Abbott, USAID

Worker pours milk at a Macedonian dairy.

"We are steadily heading in the right direction," said Stoika Stojkovska, the owner of Buchen Kozyak, referring to the changes she's made to her business based on the recommendations of the cluster advisor.

Before the lamb and cheese cluster started, Macedonia did not export cheese. Today, about 38 tons of feta and various types of yellow cheese, including kashkaval, are being exported to Albania and the United States.

Other industries that have formed clusters are also making progress.

Last year the tourism cluster, with the help of USAID, hosted a dozen foreign tour operators for a five-day trip to cultural and historic sites throughout Macedonia. As a result, a British tour company is including Macedonia in its 2005 catalogue, and a Colorado-based biking tour company expressed an interest in bringing a group in spring.

The biggest challenge to business development is overcoming a distrust in institutions that permeates Macedonian attitudes, said Kanyr-Hagen. But as businesses grow and learn from each other, that attitude will change, she added. ★

Bosnian Refugees Helped to Expand Wrought Iron Exports

VELES, Macedonia—A couple who fled here from Bosnia's civil wars found U.S. help in marketing their wrought iron fences, doors, and carvings.

Anka and Milan Perisic migrated to this central Macedonian town a decade ago and built a house with a large wrought iron workshop downstairs. Milan assembled some machinery and hired four workers to help produce the artisanry he designed.

"With this work we can have success," said his wife Anka, who is Croatian. "We work very hard all day, almost 24 hours."

Milan, a Serb, was jailed when the war in Bosnia started. When he was released, the couple fled. Now in the middle of the slow-paced naturalization process, it's a challenge for the Perisics to expand their company, Hammer Inc.

"When we want to export, we can't go looking for potential clients," Anka said. "We have to use representatives."

Hammer products already sell in Croatia and Germany. But the couple, hoping to expand their business, recently joined the USAID-supported Macedonian Artisans Developing Enterprise (MADE), a program carried out by Aid to Artisans (ATA).

Program participants are assigned a consultant—be it a marketing manager or a designer from Europe or the United States—who examines the way an artisan works and creates some designs to be produced. Those products then go to ATA's headquarters in Hartford, Conn., from where they are shipped to artisan fairs around the world several times a year.

"We also do trainings, teaching [artisans] how to register their business if they haven't, about pricing and costing, and how to do local fairs," said Marija Dimitrijevic from ATA, which works with some 250 artisans.

MADE, a three-year program in which USAID has invested $2.7 million, runs four retail stores throughout Macedonia where artisans can sell their products. It also organizes fairs and festivals.

Last year, artisans through ATA developed a logo for the United Nations Capital Development Fund's campaign to promote the International Year of Microcredit, 2005. The spiral logo was reproduced on cast sterling and gold pins, scarves, copper bookmarks, and glass coasters. ★

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

A Macedonian employee welds iron work at a firm supported by a U.S.-funded artisans group.

Roma Children Get Help

KUMANOVO, Macedonia—Secondary and university students of Roma background are getting tutoring and scholarships under a U.S. program, in an effort to improve education of this country's Roma or Gypsy community.

The program also works with tutors and teachers at kindergartens and primary schools.

Some 280 freshmen in secondary schools and about 50 freshmen at three state universities are receiving scholarships as of December. The younger teenagers received $600 per school year; university students get $100 per month while in school. While secondary school pupils competed for the scholarships, all Roma freshmen enrolled in state universities are automatically awarded scholarships under the USAID-supported program.

Mentors and academic support are provided to secondary school pupils through the Roma Education Program (REP), which began July 2004 and runs for three years.

Most Roma children start the first grade, but only 50 percent finish the 8th grade. Of those 50 percent, only 35 percent go on to the 9th grade. Only 5 percent of all Roma students ever make it to a university.

REP places emphasis on the early levels of education, in part because most Roma children are behind their peers in Macedonian language ability.

Tutors are available at five centers throughout Macedonia, where children from preschool to the 8th grade spend a couple of hours a day doing homework and getting help with their studies.

Some 240 children attend the center in Kumanovo. Most are in primary school, 32 are younger, and several are in secondary school—getting help catching up with other students so they stay in school.

"Without the preschool help, many of the kids have no chance to compete with Macedonian students," said Ramis Osmanovski, director of the center. "We also work with the parents because many of them are not motivated, and that has an effect on the children."

REP, in which USAID is investing $2 million, links the centers with local school administrators, psychologists, and social workers.

Often, when a child skips school, the teacher reports the fact to Osmanovski, who then pays a visit to the family. Social workers are meanwhile dispatched to visit all parents so they can ensure that children have a home environment where they can do homework and get help with their studies.

At seven primary schools, REP also works to help them better integrate Roma children. Some 300 teachers and administrators are taught to identify and change their prejudices about the Roma.

REP was designed based on lessons learned from previous USAID-funded projects working with Roma communities, including

- community centers that helped identify immediate needs of the Roma
- community volunteer and cultural programs
- job skill-training programs ★

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

Roma children in a Macedonian school program supported by U.S. foreign aid.

Small Grants for Farms, Schools, Fishing Unite Communities

STOBI, Macedonia—Girls in colorful traditional dress sang and danced to Macedonian music on a sunny day in October as the visitor center to Stobi, one of the country's largest ancient archeological sites, opened its doors.

The historical attraction is just off a major road, but until recently there were no markings for it—no visitor center, no traffic signs.

Then a neighboring community contacted the Community Self-Help Initiative (CSHI), a five-year, $14 million program that gives grants to communities for quality of life, economic development, and small infrastructure projects.

A year later, the Stobi visitor center became one of more than 300 projects completed by the USAID-funded program.

Other projects:

- funded the installment of public lighting
- helped school renovations throughout the country
- provided farming equipment to a local

▼ SEE COMMUNITIES ON PAGE 15

Capital: Skopje
Population: 2 million
Size: Slightly larger than Vermont
Population below national poverty line: 30%
GDP per capita (purchasing power parity): $6,700
GDP growth: 2.8%
Ethnic groups: Macedonian 64.2%; Albanian 25.2% Turkish 3.8%; Roma 2.7%; Serb 1.8%; Other 2.3%
Religions: Macedonian Orthodox 70%, Muslim 29%

Source: CIA World Fact Book

Macedonian Shoes Now Hit Australian Pavement

SKOPJE, Macedonia—Kegi Shoes, a popular local children's shoemaker, now sells its products as far as Australia, thanks to loans obtained through a U.S. foreign aid project.

"We are very happy," said Dobre Todorovski, the younger of two sons to Blogoja Todorovski, who started Kegi Shoes in 1995. "Our shoes even have the stamp of approval of the Australian Orthopedic Association."

Kegi had exported twice before, to Croatia. But when the Australia deal came up in November 2003, the company lacked the funds to purchase the amount of leather needed to fill the order. They were only able to seal the deal after they were approached by Sonja Tasevska, a loan officer from the newly created SME Commercial Finance Fund, and took out a $30,000 loan.

"I knew about them because I have two small kids and buy their shoes," said Tasevska, who, along with another loan officer, was promoting the SME Fund by visiting potential clients.

Kegi, which designs and makes its own shoes, repaid the loan within months and borrowed another $50,000 in May 2004. Its exports have grown by 49 percent and its staff by five workers. The business is branching out into retailing, with a growing number of stores nationwide.

Macedonian companies like Kegi can borrow through the banks. But unlike the SME Fund, banks require real estate or equipment as collateral and lend larger amounts, with higher interest rates and over longer periods.

The fund's loans range from $10,000 to $100,000, with an average loan of $60,000 repaid over four months. The fund lends to about 30 companies, some of which are run by women and executives of various ethnicities.

SME began in May 2003 with $1.5 million of USAID funding. By the end of September 2004, the fund had earned $110,000 through fees and interest, and had lent out some $2.1 million to small and medium-sized companies in the textiles, building materials and construction, metal processing, and leather products industries. ★

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

Worker at Kegi Shoes in Macedonia, which expanded production and exports through a U.S. loan.

Civic Education Counteracts Socialist Legacy, Ethnic Hate

SKOPJE, Macedonia—When kindergarten and primary children here start the 2005 school year, civic education will be one of their mandatory and standardized courses for the first time.

Civic education is needed to counteract negative attitudes spawned by 45 years of socialist dictatorship and more than a decade of uncertainty since 1991, as ethnic civil wars devastated other former Yugoslav republics Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia.

Requiring education about democracy, civic participation, and government is the last improvement of a six-year, $2.2 million USAID-funded Catholic Relief Services (CRS) effort that ended in December 2004.

All of Macedonia's 344 primary schools and 54 kindergartens joined the civic education program, which trained 11,196 teachers and school administrators, published 284,770 student textbooks and 14,670 teacher manuals, and worked with parents to promote civic education.

"This is important because it builds the foundation for the future generation to participate in the social issues Macedonia faces," said Sharon Maggard of CRS. "To do this successfully, you really have to change the thought process—really have to go to the core of the educators and the parents."

CRS operates in 94 countries. The Macedonia team won the organization's recognition of the year award in 2004 for its civic education project. ★

AFRICA

Bullets to Bread: Ex-Combatants Learn Baking

MONROVIA, Liberia—Some of the combatants in Liberia's recently ended 14-year-old civil war are trading in rifles and revolvers for measuring spoons and spatulas, part of a U.S.-backed effort to retrain fighters for culinary and other careers.

"I was forced in the first place to take up arms and fight for a cause I did not understand," said Krubo Zayzay, one of the ex-combatants in the program. "I could not wait to give up my rebel life and return to my community."

The Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) began April 2004 in Bopolu, a region about 80 miles from the capital, Monrovia, as an effort to reintegrate former combatants into their communities.

Sixty women—40 of them former rebel combatants—spent three months learning to become bakers and pastry chefs.

Counselors also met with the ex-combatants to talk about the adjustment to living in post-conflict Liberia. The USAID-funded program promotes reconciliation and provides psychosocial support to combatants and others affected by the war.

Most of Bopolu's 5,000 residents fled into forests as their towns and villages were overrun by rebel militias during the civil war. Crime, harassment, and ruined roads made mounting any program problematic.

The entire region was physically devastated and its residents impoverished and dispersed. Of the 1,500 who returned, two-thirds were armed rebels whose psyches had been imprinted with warfare.

"My life has changed. I have something to hold on to for the rest of my life," said Massa Gissi, 21, an ex-combatant in the training program. "After graduation, I want to own and operate a bakery so that I help myself and family."

It is a game plan echoed by other participants eager to set up small pastry shops in their communities or try their hand at other alternatives to combat.

"It was all the way, no stopping me now," said Zayzay, who learned to bake large loaves of fanti bread and cake doughnuts. "I was excited all through the training."

While rice is the primary grain consumed in Liberia, bread and pastry products make up a significant part of the diet as well, particularly in remote areas like Bopolu where there is demand for the women's baked goods.

Max Willis, DAI/LCIP

Women in the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program bake loaves of bread.

The first phase of the program has ended, and the new bakers are awaiting startup kits to help them set up businesses where their skills can be put to work.★

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Disaster Experts Train for Earthquakes, Storms

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica—National and local governments, regional disaster agencies, and first responders such as firefighters and medics are getting help to prepare to cope with a hurricane, earthquake, or volcano eruption.

The USAID mission in this Central American nation of 4 million people closed nine years ago. But one program—the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance's Latin American and Caribbean's project on disaster mitigation—carries on.

OFDA/LAC, as the program is known, has spent millions a year since 1989 on regional courses for up to 25 students aiming to prepare to cope with disasters.

Disaster relief agencies from participating countries are asked to chip in 15–20 percent of the costs.

Courses are split into three broad categories: technical, management, and training processes. They include courses on specific topics, such as methods of instruction (helping trainers spread their knowledge), damage assessment and needs analysis, shelter management, search-and-rescue techniques, and prevention and control of forest fires.

The forest fire prevention course, for instance, teaches firefighters how to improve their use of tools. A search-and-rescue class teaches how to extract people who might be trapped in the rubble of a building collapsed in an earthquake, landslide, or hurricane.

The program offers a course for public school administrators and teachers that teaches them how to set up a school emergency plan and how to prepare students for disasters.

"Our efforts are geared at increasing response and preparedness capacities with national authorities," said Tim Callaghan, senior regional advisor for OFDA/LAC. "We have long-term relationships with national disaster organizations and coordinators and work with them to help them develop their own training programs."

While natural disasters—such as this year's devastating earthquake in Bam, Iran, and the most recent typhoons that ripped through the Philippines—can never be entirely eliminated, their impact can be "reduced enormously," so long as there is appropriate investment in environmental management and disaster mitigation training schemes, said Sálvano Briceño, a humanitarian official with the United Nations.

His statement in early December followed that of the U.N.'s most senior humanitarian official, Jan Egeland, who warned that the world faces an "enormous task" in preventing and preparing for natural disasters, while mitigating their aftereffects on an increasingly vulnerable population.

When Tropical Storm Jeanne tore through Haiti in September, for instance, national authorities could barely respond. Instead, international agencies such as USAID and the U.N. performed basic tasks such as assessing damage and providing supplies to shelters.

By comparison, there has been visible improvement of disaster and risk management in countries where various officials have gone through OFDA/LAC's training, said Julie Leonard, OFDA Caribbean region advisor.

"We've done quite a lot of work with the Jamaica emergency management agency on developing a damage assessment and needs analysis course," she said. "And we've noticed increased capacity on both the national organization level and on the parish level."

OFDA/LAC courses in the Caribbean are oriented towards all-hazard management, but with a practical focus on tropical weather hazards such as hurricanes and tropical storms, since the region has several each year. ★

Juan Pablo Sarmiento, OFDA/LAC

National disaster coordinators from the Caribbean region are instructed in the use of satellite telephones in a training course held in Grenada in 2003.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

Nepal's New Roads Promote Common Good

SHANTIPUR, Nepal——Bhagawati Thapa transports her crops to Shantipur and other marketing centers in the region more quickly because of a better roadway and a new bus service traveling on it.

The new 15-kilometer "green road" connects the remote hillside town to marketing centers in the mid-hills district and to those in larger outlying districts, including Tamghas, Ridi, and Tansen.

The access road is a product of the Employment Generation Rural Infrastructure Program (EGRIP), a two-year-old USAID effort in Nepal helping address some of the root causes of the country's conflict between its leaders and the Maoists, who want them removed from power.

That battle has dragged on nine years and claimed more than 10,000 lives. The ensuing chaos has led to food shortages, which in turn has led some Nepalis to leave their homes in search of scarce work in urban centers. Farming is the only option for survival for the majority of rural Nepalis, so boosting their ability to earn a living from the crops they produce is essential.

EGRIP is in the country's isolated, mountainous region, employing people—those who would otherwise be out of work and tempted to migrate elsewhere—to build the so-called green roads and irrigation projects.

Green roads are roads built with manual labor rather than machinery.

Though the rugged, out-of-the-way locale is a magnet for tourists seeking majestic views, it can be a burden to rural Nepalis carrying the oranges, coffee beans, black cardamom, potatoes, herbs, and other produce they grow to central transportation hubs that lead to area markets. Before the road, basic food items had to be carried by foot in an arduous, six-hour walk. Today, the same goods arrive in an hour.

The Western Transport Entrepreneur's Association runs the bus service, which started rolling October 2004 and makes one trip each day to the market centers. Between 35 and 40 people make the journey each day.

Thapa, who is a 52-year-old farmer and shopkeeper, says travel from field to market is now cheaper, speedier, and more comfortable.

Farmers are passing on the savings they see from reduced transportation costs to buyers, with market prices coming in at least 20 percent lower. And the growers say they are making more profit because they can transport more goods per trip.

The road construction efforts are also putting money in the pockets of some Nepalis.

Local residents are involved in all aspects of construction. Committees organize labor groups, procure building materials, and oversee progress.

Women, who traditionally have been unlikely to take on or be welcome at this kind of work, make up 16 percent of the labor force.

Working in community groups for a common good has also reinforced local solidarity, USAID officials said. In some cases, beneficiaries have banded together and stood up to insurgents who tried to disrupt road construction. ★

Laxman Shrestha, Nepal Infrastructure for Rural Income Program

Nepalese women transport stone on a USAID-funded green road.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Disabled Georgia Student Finds Job, Enters Society

TBILISI, Georgia—Lika Revishvili, a disabled woman in this Caucasus state where such people are usually ostracized or placed in institutions, was able last year to hold her first job and attend law school.

Revishvili, 18, was offered a job educating non-disabled children about the legal and human rights of kids with disabilities.

"I plan to visit schools and train not only children, but teachers and school directors as well," she said.

"The trainings will be a very good opportunity for me to grow professionally and to assist other disabled people to be integrated into our society."

She got the job after she attended the 8th International Congress on Including Children and Youth with Disabilities in their Home Communities, held in Stavanger, Norway, in mid-June.

Since 2000, USAID has helped delegates from more than 20 developing countries attend the biannual congress, which focused this year on creating support networks that integrate the health, education, and recreation needs of disabled children.

The meeting also explored the legal rights of disabled people according to international law.

"I could never have imagined myself in the role of a trainer for children having no disabilities, but attending the Norway congress gave me a lot of confidence and so I agreed," said Revishvili.

"Meeting so many people from other countries working on disabled children's rights made me believe that there really is a chance that we can make a difference in Georgia.

"My dream has always been to help other disabled people understand what they can achieve by simply knowing and exercising their rights," said Revishvili, who is of small stature and has an open, ready smile.

Physically disabled since birth, Revishvili gets around with the help of a crutch and her ever-present father, who travels with her to and from school everyday and helps her navigate a university accessible only to the non-disabled.

He half-carries her up the stairs in the university's law building and eases her into her chair in class each day.

In Georgia, people with disabilities are deeply stigmatized and usually excluded from mainstream society. Disabled students often attend separate schools or are institutionalized.

Most families in Georgia are too poor to afford to care for disabled children.

"My job is to explain to healthy children that people with disabilities have similar rights; they also want to study, to work, and to live like ordinary people," she said of her new job.

USAID funded eight of Georgia's 14 congress delegates this year. UNICEF and the Embassy of Norway to Azerbaijan funded another six delegates. ★

Lika Revishvili, a disabled law student in Georgia, now teaches non-disabled youth about the legal and human rights of children with disabilities.

October 31, 2004–November 27, 2004

PROMOTED

Caroline Brearley
Aimee M. David
Alison L. Eskesen
Sonya M. Heller
Janet E. Kerley
Dennis Lauer
Gwendolyn Little
Angela M. Lozano
Garnet Lenora Mason
Hattie Mason
Arlene McDonald
Ericka M. Sikes
Penny R. Smith
Bobbie J. Wallin
Veronica T. Young

MOVED ON

Karen A. Harbert
Matthew K. McLean
Jean Wilbert Saint Elin
Cheryl P. Woodard

RETIRED

Ruth E. Frischer
Jeremy J. Hagger
Rita M. Hudson
Frances Maki
Jerome A. Patterson

REASSIGNED

Cheryl L. Anderson
USAID Rep/Sudan to REDSO/ESA/OD

George H. Buzby
RIG/Pretoria to OIG/AIG/A

Blair L. Cooper
Panama/PPEP to COMP/LWOP

William Spencer Elliott
E&E/OM/OD to E&E/MO/AIS

Steven M. Fondriest
COMP/NE/OJT to Tanzania/D

Wayne A. Frank
COMP/NE/OJT to Angola

Kurt Fuller
Iraq/PO to COMP/FS/Reassign

Ronald Lee Glass
COMP/NE/OJT to Colombia/PFNP

David E. Gosney
COMP/NE/OJT to Iraq/ODP

Michelle A. Jennings
COMP/NE/OJT to Ethiopia/FHA

Karen L. Kasan
COMP/NE/OJT to Nigeria

Nancy M. Shalala
COMP/NE/OJT to Iraq/ODP

James M. Weatherill
COMP/NE/OJT to Iraq/ODP

Washington Sends Holiday Gifts To Iraq, Afghan, Sudan Missions

Harry Edwards, USAID

Administrator Andrew S. Natsios adds his greeting to those of other USAID staff before well wishes are sent to missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan.

In an effort to honor and send cheer to USAID staff serving during the holiday season at frontlines posts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan, the Agency staff in Washington, D.C., collected signatures and personal wishes on large greeting cards as well as nearly $800 in donations to send cookies and other treats.

The organizers of Operation AID to AID, led by Luigi Crespo of the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, stuffed 16 boxes to be delivered by contractor IRG to the missions in time for the holidays. The boxes contained cookies, chocolates, sausages, teas, biscuits, candies, pretzels, peanuts, brownie mix, mints, hot chocolate, coffee, coffee filters, water bottles, and other goods.

Washington staff also sent more than 500 holiday messages.

"We are all touched that our friends took the time and made the effort to brighten our holidays," said Spike Stephenson, Iraq mission director. Those sentiments were echoed by Mission Director Patrick Fine in Kabul and Kate Farnsworth of the Darfur Disaster Assistance Response Team in Khartoum. ★

After 25 Years, Michael Williams Retires

Michael J. Williams always knew he would return to international development after his first taste of aid work as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala after college. He went on to complete law school, worked on Wall Street and then joined USAID where he worked for 25 years, until he retired Dec. 31.

Leaving a "satisfying and rewarding career" is bittersweet, said Williams, who spent the last six years as assistant general counsel for the Asia Near East Bureau.

He will next join the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Williams started his USAID career in Washington, and in 1984 converted to the Foreign Service.

He was in Egypt from 1984 to 1987, in Honduras from 1988 to 1992, and in El Salvador from 1992 to 1997.

The last post, Williams said, was one of the highlights of his career. He assisted with the National Reconstruction Program as the country emerged from bitter civil war in the 1980s.

In his new job at AIR, a nonprofit group dedicated to behavioral and social science research, Williams will focus on basic education.

"I've always believed in the importance of basic education as a means of providing opportunity for the poor in developing countries," he said. ★

Harry Edwards, USAID

Michael J. Williams, who retired as ANE's assistant general counsel Dec. 31.

Brad Pitt Visits Sithole Center

SOWETO, South Africa—Movie star Brad Pitt visited more than 100 orphans, some of whom are HIV/AIDS positive, at the Carl Sithole Center near Johannesburg on Nov. 8.

"Brad was great with our Soweto children," said Major Keith Conrad of The Salvation Army, which runs the orphanage. "They knew who he was. The older schoolchildren arrived with posters and went crazy when they saw Brad in person."

The Carl Sithole Center, which is also home to some 36 abandoned HIV/AIDS toddlers, contains a nursery, a school catering to children grades 1–8, and a community care center. It also offers support services to about 140 families.

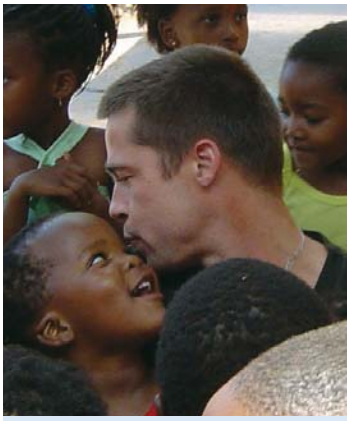
Pitt visited the center under high secrecy, telling his staff that he was there in his private capacity.

"He embraced the children and was very happy to spend time at their orphanage center," said Anita Sampson, USAID activity manager.

Added Salvation Army Captain Richard Welch: "When his aides told him it was time to leave, he insisted that he didn't want to leave yet. He spent at least 45 minutes just chatting at the dining table with five HIV-positive children."

USAID helps fund the establishment of the first voluntary counseling and testing and antiretroviral therapy clinic on the premises of the Carl Sithole Center, which will start treatment for children with AIDS in early 2005. The Agency previously supported the Carl Sithole project's operational costs—including food, clothing, and school-related expenses.

The Salvation Army, associated with 377 South African churches with some 37,000 members, has run HIV/AIDS programs in South Africa since 1992. ★



The Salvation Army

Brad Pitt visits orphans in AIDS center in South Africa.

Bob Lester Retires, Began Career in Vietnam at End of War

Bob Lester returned to Washington, D.C, after more than four years in the foreign service eager to do work that would make a difference, but joining the General Counsel's office did not seem to fit that description.

"I didn't really want to do this work. I didn't see how it was relevant," said Lester, who made a deal with his boss that he would look for another position in six months.

Twenty-five years later, at the end of December, Lester retired from USAID as the assistant general counsel for legislation and policy.

He said he could not have designed a better or more satisfying job.

After graduating from the University of Virginia School of Law, he saw a sign on a bulletin board recruiting lawyers for USAID, followed through, and was hired.

His first assignment was in Vietnam at the beginning of 1975. He left the country April 15, a few months after arriving and 14 days before the fall of Saigon.

From there, he went to Nairobi and spent four years as a regional legal advisor.

"This was before faxes and before emails," said Lester, who was the junior attorney in the mission. "We did a lot of traveling to make sure the agreements were appropriately written and appropriately signed."

Back in Washington, he began sometimes marathon sessions at USAID's offices and on the Hill, helping to write legislation.

At one of those late-night sessions in 1988 with the Senate Appropriations Committee, his Hill colleagues began reading from his biography, which they had framed. Lester sent a copy to his parents, and his mother later told him that it was the only time his ill father's tears were not because of pain.

Lester said that his work was never routine. "Each year, the people change, the issues change, the procedures change," he said. "Once you get involved in something like this, you become a junkie." ★

Harry Edwards, USAID

Bob Lester, who retired December 31 as USAID's assistant general counsel for legislature and policy.

Sudan: A History of Conflict

Africa's largest country remains a strategic flashpoint, commanding world and U.S. attention and assistance. Even as talks to end the conflict in southern Sudan move forward, the Darfur conflict deteriorated in December, with a buildup of military forces and some aid groups preparing to leave.

The conflict in Darfur is the third civil war since Sudan became independent 48 years ago:

- The first war began soon after independence as Anyanya southern African fighters, mainly Christian and Animist, fought for a separate state against the mainly Arab, Muslim Sudan government based in Khartoum. One million died before the Addis Ababa Agreement ended the conflict in 1972.
- The second civil war began in 1982, as the North tried to redraw the North-South boundary to encompass new oil discoveries and extended sharia Islamic law to the south. Former Anyanya fighters formed the core of John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and army. In 2001, USAID persuaded Khartoum to stop the fighting to allow aid to flow to the Nuba Mountains, leading to a general ceasefire and the current peace process. By then, the war had left 2 million dead, 4 million internally displaced, and 628,000 refugees.
- The third civil war started in 2003 in the western region of Darfur. Khartoum unleashed Arab militias against civilians after two African rebel groups—the Sudan Liberation Movement and Justice and Equality Movement—attacked government forces. So far, 70,000 have died, 1.6 million are internally displaced, 200,000 are refugees, and the Sudan government was accused of committing genocide by the U.S. Congress and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Because Sudan, with 30 million people, lies on the dividing line between the Arab world and Black Africa and has been a

flashpoint for Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, the United States continues to invest heavily in assistance aimed at stabilizing the country.

Sudan hosted Osama bin Laden from 1989 until he returned to Afghanistan to live under Taliban protection in 1996. The sermons of Sudan's former Islamist leader, Hassan al-Turabi, now jailed, have been popular across Arab North Africa, encouraging fundamentalist movements in Algeria and elsewhere.

Sudan's conflict spilled over and affected neighboring Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad, and Kenya.

Since 1983, the United States spent more than $2 billion on Sudan—most of it through USAID. The 2004 Agency budget for Sudan is $464 million, including $200 million for Darfur and $264 million for north-south programs in support of the peace settlement.

Much of the money goes for food. The current poor harvest in Darfur—some 85 percent below normal—combined with conflict, could lead to famine.

In the south, USAID is supporting the SPLM as it moves to become the new southern government under the peace accords.

The Office of Transition Initiatives is supporting Sudanese radio and newspaper efforts to get information out and prepare for elections in six years on self-determination.

Other programs focus on education, health, water, sanitation, and roads.

USAID expects to move its Sudan field office from Kenya into the southern capital of Juba and continue to work in Khartoum and Darfur. ★

Asian Tidal Wave

▲ FROM PAGE 1

shelter and food and clothing."

U.S. help began with $400,000 released to aid agencies by U.S. embassies in the principal affected countries: Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, India, and the Maldives; a large commitment to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent; and other aid totaling about $15 million.

"We also have to see this not just as a one-time thing… Lives have been lost in a few moments, but the lingering effects will be there for years," Powell said.

"The damage that was caused, the rebuilding of schools and other facilities, will take time. So you need a quick infusion to stabilize the situation, take care of those who have been injured, get immediate relief supplies in, and then you begin planning for the longer haul." ★

For the latest information about the tsunami, visit USAID's website, www.usaid.gov, and click on the link "Tsunami Relief." While there, you can sign up to receive Tsunami relief updates by email.

Jacob J. Kirk, U.S. Navy

A young Indonesian boy watches the humanitarian relief efforts at Sultan Iskandar Muda Air Force Base in Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia, Jan. 5, 2005.

Jacob J. Kirk, U.S. Navy

An Indonesian family waits for food and humanitarian relief at Sultan Iskandar Muda Air Force Base in Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia, Jan. 5, 2005

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Readers are encouraged to send in stories, feature articles, photos, nominations for "First Person" or "Mission of the Month" columns, and other ideas.

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BTEC Sets Business Transformation Priorities

The Business Transformation Executive Committee (BTEC) held a retreat Nov. 17 that identified the key management reform initiatives the committee will focus on over the next 12 to 24 months.

Human capital initiatives topped the list, specifically the need for more effective processes to

- assign the right people to the highest foreign policy priorities and core presidential initiatives, such as Iraq and HIV/AIDS
- improve training and succession planning for senior managers
- place new hires and provide opportunities for career development
- facilitate the career development of foreign service nationals

"If we do not have the right people for our programs in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan and we do not have the right people to address priority health issues such as HIV/AIDS, then we will suffer mis-inferior mission performance."

Linda Morse of the Bureau for Global Health added that "USAID's foreign service nationals are important to the accomplishment of Agency projects" and that "nurturing their development is critical to achieving program results."

More useful management reports were also identified as a high priority.

The BTEC will provide a greater level of direction for initiatives critical to management reporting, including establishment of an Agency executive information system, continued rollout of the Phoenix financial management system to overseas missions, deployment of a new acquisition and assistance system, and continued collaboration with the State Department on infrastructure and systems.

In the area of strategic budgeting, which supports the performance and budget integration goals of the President's Management Agenda, the committee will direct projects to align budget decisionmaking with the Agency's new strategic planning revisions.

The new priorities directly support the four strategic areas in the Agency's business transformation plan: strategic management of human capital, business systems modernization, strategic budgeting, and knowledge for development. ★

Harry Edwards, USAID

Workman attaches sign for USAID on the 14th Street face of the Ronald Reagan Building Dec. 9 in Washington, D.C., seven years after the move from the State Department into the new building.

CORRECTION:
An article about Nepal in the November issue of FrontLines reported that a recent visit by Andrew Natsios was the first by a USAID administrator to that country. However, USAID Administrator Peter McPherson visited Nepal in the early 1980s.

Anti-Malaria Plant Takes African Roots

The fight against malaria increasingly uses Chinese sweet wormwood, but demand for the plant has exhausted supplies, leading USAID to promote new plantings in East Africa.

The Agency is working with the World Health Organization (WHO) to transplant the ancient Chinese remedy to Africa, where soil and climate are suitable. Artemisinin is the extract of wormwood that is useful against malaria.

Planting of 450 hectares of *Artemisia annua* begins in Kenya in January. In the spring, 450 hectares will be planted in Tanzania.

"By this time next year, we will be looking at the extraction of 20 metric tons of artemisinin," said Dr. Dennis Carroll, malaria expert with the Bureau for Global Health. Malaria kills more than 1 million people each year.

Since sweet wormwood is mainly grown in China and Vietnam, to meet growing demand USAID engaged two East African groups in December to produce artemisinin in Kenya and Tanzania.

The Bureau for Global Health and the Global Development Alliance were working with artemisia growers and several pharmaceutical companies to build artemisinin extraction facilities in Kenya and Tanzania.

The sweet wormwood plants that will be grown in East Africa are hybrids, which may produce up to twice the artemisinin as Asian plants.

An estimated 15 million malaria cases were treated in 2003 with artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACT), a three-day, fast-acting combination of several drugs that quickly kills the malaria parasite.

By the end of 2006, demand for treatment will rise to 150 million cases, according to the WHO.

"ACT has proven an extremely effective way of rapidly clearing out the parasite," Carroll said. "Combining artemisinin with another drug means you have two modes of acting, so if 95 percent is cleared with the artemisinin that other 5 percent is taken care of by the other drug."

USAID has supported safety and efficacy testing of ACT in Africa since 1998.

As drug-resistant malaria spread, USAID nearly quadrupled funding to fight the disease: from $22 million in 1998 to $83 million in 2004. In the past three years, the U.S. government contributed $623 million to the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and gave $547 million during 2004.

Malaria infects some 300 million to 500 million people each year, while new AIDS and tuberculosis infections attack 5.3 million and 8.8 million respectively, according to the WHO.

USAID also supports the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, which can reduce overall child mortality by as much as 30 percent.

The Agency also funds the development of a malaria vaccine that is being field tested in Kenya and Mali. ★

The plant, Artemisia annua*, and local hybrids, kill malaria parasites.*

Justice Project Helps Bolivians

BY BRAD BESSIRE
USAID/DCHA/DG
Democracy Fellow

Last September, I had the pleasure of serving in the Democracy Office of USAID/Bolivia while their Democracy and Governance officer was on home leave. It was my first TDY since joining the NEP program.

The contrast between La Paz, Bolivia, and Washington, D.C., could not be greater. The ride from the airport makes it obvious that one is working in a country that desperately needs developmental assistance. The other immediately noticeable contrast is the lack of oxygen. My thoughts about what it might be like to live in El Alto on my way to La Paz were occasionally punctuated by thoughts of what it might be like to be a fish flopping around on land. Fortunately, La Paz is at a somewhat lower altitude.

El Alto would prove to be more than the place I drove through on my way to La Paz. As one of the poorest areas in Bolivia and the poorest in La Paz, it was an area targeted by many of USAID's programs.

The purpose of my trip was to attend the inauguration of the first Integrated Justice Center (IJC), which was opened by Carlos Mesa, the president of Bolivia.

Although El Alto is quite poor, with a poverty rate of 70 percent, USAID would soon be opening up other centers in the Yungus and Chapare, areas that had poverty rates of 80 percent and higher.

The IJCs are being built in these areas to provide access to justice for the poor and indigenous peoples. The lack of access to justice is one of the biggest threats to maintaining stability for the Bolivian government.

The government has been on precarious footing since the last year, when political, social, and economic conditions in Bolivia resulted in violent protests that included serious confrontations with government forces and eventually culminated with the ousting of the president in October 2003.

Confidence seems to have stabilized under the Mesa administration.

The IJCs are just one of a series of new programs that will take advantage of the new political landscape and the changing relationship between the government and its citizens.

Emboldened by their success at chasing out the previous president and winning the first-ever rights for indigenous people, Bolivians are increasingly aware of their power to obtain government responses through collective protests.

In fact, USAID was closed the day I was meant to begin my TDY due to blockades set up by people protesting the price of gasoline. But they are unaware of the appropriate roles that they should be playing in preventing social chaos.

The inauguration of the IJC September 15, 2004, came at a perfect time, as the IJCs will provide formal and alternative forms of justice and conflict resolution to the most vulnerable citizens of Bolivia.

The IJCs will teach citizens about their rights and legal procedures, provide instant conciliatory service, and work closely with the formal justice system to address the needs of their clients. Even more exciting is the component that builds the capacity of the indigenous leaders who work in the centers.

Brad Bessire, USAID

Bolivian indigenous women hold up flags at the opening of the Integrated Justice Center in El Alto, near the Bolivian capital La Paz.

The indigenous leaders will implement and administer an Alternative Dispute Resolution program that will be recognized by the formal legal system. While the law decreeing this has been on the books since 2001, this is the first time that a mechanism has been created allowing indigenous people a chance to use their own system.

By giving the indigenous people a system that they have been used to and trust, USAID will defuse some of the conflict and mistrust of the government. ★

▼ SEE BOLIVIA'S INDIANS ON PAGE 7

Communities Get Grants for Farms, Schools, Fishing

▲ FROM PAGE 9

agricultural cooperative
- supported an education center for Roma children
- provided a local fishing association with fish breeding technology and enough funds to organize fishing competitions

"Some people think it's done for the money, but really it's just for the pure passion of fishing," said Joshko Micoski, president of the Sport Fishing Association in Vratniza, near the city of Tetovo. "And we want to leave something for the younger generation."

When it was started in 2000, CSHI picked regional representatives who advertised the program at schools and municipal centers throughout Macedonia. News traveled fast, and soon representatives were being approached by various community members about different projects.

"Although this is a small country, people from the different regions are different—they have different cultures, different accents," said CSHI Chief of Party Dianna Wuagneux. "Our regional representatives are from the different areas, so when they talk to the villagers they know what the issues are; they grew up with them."

The biggest challenge for CSHI has been to get neighboring communities and various groups to work together, said Wuagneux. Under socialism, relationships were built vertically. Now Macedonians are learning how to work with their neighbors and cooperate with groups that share their interests, she added.

Proposals are reviewed and chosen based on need, sustainability, and feasibility.

"If you look at a beekeeping association in communities that border each other, a project to certify and bring the honey together—that's going to work," said Wuagneux. "But a water reservoir for $1 million is out of our scope."

In a village not far from the Bulgarian border, farmers got together and asked CSHI for a grant for tractors and other farming equipment. Today, the association has nearly doubled its production of potatoes and other vegetables and has extended its sales to neighboring Bulgaria and Greece.

The association also continually increases its resources by renting its farming equipment to neighboring communities.

"What makes the CSHI so impressive is that it provides immediate and tangible economic and quality-of-life results to those communities that are willing to bridge ethnic differences in order to achieve a common goal," said Donna Gray, USAID project manager for CSHI. ★

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

A man stands next to a potato picker paid for by a U.S. aid project in Macedonia.

$23M to Protect Honduras Watersheds

WASHINGTON—USAID/Honduras is sponsoring a four-year, $23 million watershed resources management program, carried out by International Resources Group, an international professional services firm.

The program—Manejo Integrado de Recursos Ambientales (MIRA) in Spanish—will work with the mission's Office of Trade, Environment, and Agriculture to help municipalities, communities, and private organizations improve watershed resources management and increase economic growth through improved management of natural resources.

Deputy Mission Director Alex Dickie said: "Honduras's economic future depends on the application of sound natural resources management policies and practices. Through the MIRA Program, the mission is addressing these issues by linking land use and environmental policy with good governance, disaster preparedness, and sustainable enterprise initiatives."

India Fights HIV/AIDS

NEW DELHI—India, which is second only to South Africa for HIV infections worldwide, announced on World AIDS Day Dec. 1 it will start a major health awareness campaign.

"We are going all out, and within six months the whole country should know about HIV/AIDS and its implications," said Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss.

The campaign will include distribution of 1.5 billion condoms.

The announcement came at an Asian policymakers conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, which worked on strategies to prevent an African-style pandemic from hitting the region. The Asian experts agreed to focus efforts on women.

$500M to Fight Children's Diseases

WASHINGTON—USAID announced Dec. 8 a contract for up to $500 million to prevent childhood deaths in the developing world. The money will go to immunization; Vitamin A; and treatment of diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria.

"Nearly 11 million children die each year of preventable diseases," said Dr. E. Anne Peterson, Assistant Administrator for Global Health. "We have a major opportunity and a moral obligation to implement low-cost, lifesaving treatment for children in the developing world."

The award goes to the Partnership for Child Health Care Inc., a joint venture of the Academy for Educational Development, John Snow Inc., and Management Sciences for Health. The contract bolsters USAID's role as a leader in the global Child Survival Partnership, a multidonor program established to focus attention on the dire health needs of children in developing countries, with the goal of saving 6 million children each year by 2015.

$23 Million for Palestinian Authority

WASHINGTON—The Bush administration announced Dec. 8 that it would provide $23.5 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) to help conduct elections, establish security, meet its payrolls, and upgrade infrastructure in Gaza.

It is the first direct U.S. payment to the PA since August 2003, when the administration, trying to encourage talks between the Israelis and Palestinians, gave $20 million.

William J. Burns, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs, said the aid reflected American confidence in PA efforts to reform its finances and security services in the weeks since the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat Nov. 11 in Paris.

"Palestinians deserve credit for their careful management of a difficult leadership transition and their commitment to the electoral process," Burns said, adding that Israel had also been "commendably clear" in making a commitment to facilitate elections to select Arafat's successor as Palestinian president, set for Jan. 9.

First VfP Report Out

WASHINGTON—Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP), President Bush's initiative promoting voluntary service by skilled Americans to support the U.S. global health and prosperity agenda, said in its first annual report that it recruited nearly 200 nonprofit and for-profit organizations representing at least 34,000 American professionals. Next year, these organizations plan to deploy at least 8,000 volunteers worldwide.

Participating organizations are given priority for federal funds in six foreign assistance initiatives: The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Middle East Partnership Initiative, Digital Freedom Initiative, Water for the Poor Initiative, Trade for African Development and Enterprise, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

www.volunteersforprosperity.gov.

Child Deaths Not Abating, U.N. Says

GENEVA—The annual report on the State of the World's Children by UNICEF concludes that the goal of reducing childhood deaths by two-thirds will not be met by 2015 as planned, but only in "the 22nd century."

One of the eight U.N. millennium development goals commits member states to cut the mortality rate for children under 5 by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. But the rate has fallen only by 16 percent globally since 1990, and by just 7 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, where conflict and HIV/AIDS are the greatest threats.

In sub-Saharan Africa as well as in former Soviet republics, the report says the best estimates indicate that the millennium development goal will not be met "well into the 22nd century."

Around 29,000 children under age 5 die every day—10.6 million a year—including many from easily prevented causes, such as diarrheal dehydration, acute respiratory infections, measles, and malaria.

Congo's War Death Toll at 3.8 Million

KINSHASA, Congo—Six years of continuing conflict in the Congo have claimed 3.8 million lives, half of them children, with most killed by disease and famine in the still largely cut-off east, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) said.

The IRC's previous survey, released April 2003, estimated 3.3 million deaths. For years, the group has produced the most widely used running estimate of deaths in Congo.

Since it erupted in 1998, the war has drawn in the armies of five other African nations and, despite peace deals reached by 2002, more than 31,000 civilians continue to die each month, the group said.

Red Cross Focuses on Sudan, Iraq

GENEVA—The International Committee of the Red Cross has placed Sudan and Iraq at the top of its agenda in the coming year.

ICRC is seeking more than $840 million for its 2005 operations in 80 countries. Sudan and Iraq, it said, would get the lion's share of the funds: $112 million to the war-torn African country and $43 million to the Middle East nation.

The number three focus for ICRC appeals will be $40 million for programs in the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

Iraq To Vote in January ▲ FROM PAGE 1

for verification of the list of names and birthdates in the family. Only if something was not accurate would they need to submit a correction.

Support for voting is strongest in the long-neglected Shiite and Kurdish regions of the south and north, but, even in Sunni areas of the troubled center and west, some mainly Sunni political parties met a Dec. 15 deadline to register.

December 15 also marked the start of the political campaign, which may be waged largely through the media to reduce the security risks of large public gatherings.

Voters will elect a 275-seat Transitional National Assembly, which will appoint a new government and draw up a constitution. Each vote will go for one of more than 100 coalitions, parties, or individuals on the ballot. Seats will be allocated according to the proportion of votes on a nationwide basis.

The main contenders include:

- The United Iraqi Alliance, backed by top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. It includes Abdel-Aziz al-Hakim, head of Iraq's largest Shi'ite party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq; the Dawa party; and Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress.
- The Kurdish Coalition of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party.
- Prominent individuals or their parties, such as Prime Minster Iyad Allawi, President Ghazi al-Yawer, and former Iraqi Governing Council chairman Adnan Pachachi.

Voters also will elect provincial governments and, in the north, a Kurdish Regional Assembly.

USAID programs are being carried out by NGOs such as the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and IFES—formerly the International Foundation for Election Systems.

Despite U.S. and U.N. aid, the election is being carried out entirely by Iraqis.

"There is no field-level international presence—it's an Iraqi process," said Schmidt. "The Independent Commission is in charge. International assistance is only at the central level.

"This is untested; never in postconflict situations has there been such devolution" of authority to run an election, Schmidt added.

More than 7,000 voting centers will attempt to swiftly funnel voters through the process to avoid forming long queues that could become targets for groups that have vowed to sabotage the elections.

In December, such groups attacked some election staff and destroyed voting registration forms in mainly Sunni areas, where opposition to the elections and to the U.S. presence has been the strongest. ★

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human rights; rule of law; and freedom of religion, press, speech, and association.

"Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, along with Georgia's 'Rose' revolution [against President Eduard Schevardnadze], this is one of the most important developments in Europe," said Kent Hill, Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia.

Yanukovych, supported in the first election by the incumbent President Leonid Kuchma and Russian President Vladimir Putin, appealed the results to the Supreme Court, which could take two weeks to respond.

However, there was little outpouring of support for him—such as the hundreds of thousands who camped in the Kiev city center for weeks in freezing temperatures to support Yushchenko after the first election.

U.S. aid included educational, professional, and technical assistance, and did not provide cash or funding to any candidate. Most aid is provided through U.S. nongovernmental organizations, such as the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute.

These groups offer training to election officials; voter education drives; help setting up polling places; and training of journalists, judges, and poll watchers.

Yushchenko is considered more pro-Western than his opponent, who relied heavily on support in the Russian-speaking south and east, a rustbelt of old Soviet heavy industry.

He is expected to try to bring the nation of 48 million closer to the EU.

The Council of Europe, a major international human rights group, called on Yanukovych to accept defeat. ★