# FRONT LINES

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...FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FEBRUARY 2005

USAID

*President Bush addresses USAID employees at the Ronald Reagan Building Jan. 10, as Secretary of State Colin Powell and Administrator Andrew Natsios look on.*

## Bush Thanks USAID Staff

President Bush visited USAID's headquarters in the Ronald Reagan Building on Jan. 10 to offer thanks for the foreign assistance work carried out by thousands of U.S. and foreign staff around the world, especially during the gigantic relief effort needed to cope with the tsunami in Asia.

"From Sudan to Sumatra, the world has seen America at its best through the work you do," Bush told several hundred USAID staff and representatives of NGOs that the Agency funds to carry out aid programs.

"Sometimes you don't get thanked enough. I don't know how many times a president has been by to say thanks. But I'll tell you this: It's my distinct honor to come by and say thanks.

"I appreciate your compassion. I appreciate your love for your fellow human beings, and thank you for the work you do.

"The international community has responded with generosity and compassion, and the men

▼ SEE BUSH ON PAGE 14

## Fast Response Aids Tsunami Victims

Despite warnings that thousands might die from disease and lack of clean water after the Dec. 26 tsunami killed over 200,000 in Asia, prompt international relief has prevented epidemics, and relief efforts are shifting from emergency to rebuilding.

In the hardest-hit region—Indonesia's Aceh province—people are moving out of relief camps and moving in with their extended families or other community members, according to CNN reports and U.S. aid officials.

"The emergency is over and people are moving out of camps. Kids are going back to school," reported CNN Jan. 24 from Aceh.

"The emergency phase has been stabilized, and we are moving towards rebuilding," said Ken Isaacs, head of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Jan 24.

Isaacs had been in Asia directing U.S. relief efforts in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, and the Maldives.

From Utapao military base in Thailand and elsewhere in the region, he managed the flow of charter and commercial aircraft carrying tons of water containers, plastic shelter sheeting, food, and other emergency supplies from USAID stockpiles in Dubai, the Philippines, Italy, and the United States.

"When I came back two weeks ago, I felt Sri Lanka was stabilized and Indonesia was approaching stability—in another five to seven days, it would be past the peak of the crisis," Isaacs said.

The movement of people from displaced persons camps in Indonesia and Sri Lanka is a sign they are finding ways to

▼ SEE FAST RESPONSE ON PAGE 9

## Iraqis Vote

About 60 percent of Iraq's 14 million eligible voters turned out Jan. 30 for the first free election in that country in half a century, defying threats by insurgents to kill all who vote.

Iraqis trained as election monitors—through some of the $86 million in USAID election support—reported that the election went off smoothly, and votes were counted in polling stations as soon as polls closed.

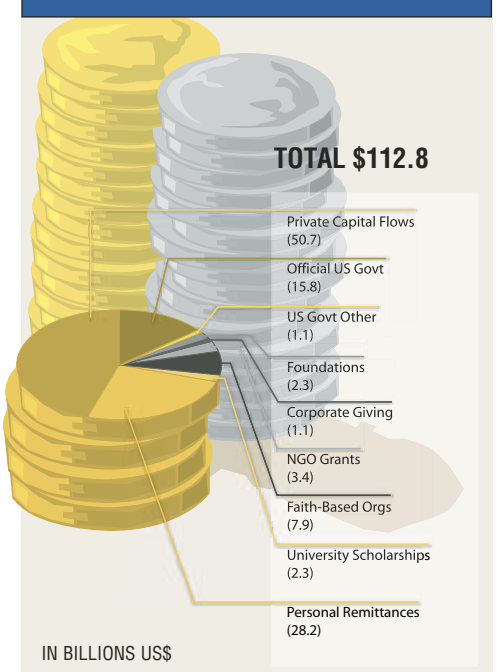
▼ SEE IRAQIS ON PAGE 14

### RELIEF REACHES TSUNAMI SURVIVORS

U.S. Navy

*U.S. assistance is delivered by a U.S. Navy helicopter to survivors of the tsunami in Sumatra, Indonesia.*

### U.S. CAPITAL FLOWS TO DEVELOPING WORLD, 2003




Source: OECD

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# 20 Volunteer to Staff Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan Posts

After a call from Administrator Natsios at a town hall meeting of USAID foreign service employees for volunteers to fill more than 20 unfilled positions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan, all the spots were filled.

The positions were either in areas of high danger or hardship posts that would bar spouses and children.

At first, the jobs were advertised in normal cycle, in which about 200 foreign service staffers bid on new positions after completing their assignment in a mission.

"But we had a number of positions with no bidders—20 for Iraq, two for Afghanistan, two for Pakistan and one for Sudan," said Rebecca Cohn, head of the Personnel Operational Division.

A decision was made not to assign anyone to the other posts until these critical posts were filled.

"Foreign service officers sign a form when they are hired saying they will be available for service worldwide," Cohn said.

"But we decided to ask for volunteers," Cohn added.

To make it more appealing for staffers to volunteer, the personnel office made key changes to the normal bidding process:

- They opened the window to all USAID foreign service officers in the world, even if they were just starting assignments elsewhere and not due for rotation.
- They opened it up to GS employees and personal service contractors.
- And they offered six-month assignments.

Due to the volunteers responding to the need, "it has been determined that there will be no mandatory bidding process required," Agency management said in a statement Dec. 6. ★

# Volunteer Counselors Assist in Solving Personnel Disputes

Veronica "Ronnie" Young is one of four Agency counselors whose job is listening to others tell their problems, especially their concerns about possible discrimination.

"Whenever someone had a problem or needed to vent, they would come to me and usually felt better afterward," said Young, who is a congressional liaison officer in the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs.

Her ability to help people with problems led to her decision to become an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor, listening to those who feel they have faced discrimination on the job.

Young has been an EEO counselor for 10 years.

"The role of the EEO counselor is essentially to identify issues through limited fact-finding and see if there are ways to resolve the issue" said Carolyn Mackey, deputy director for the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP).

The Agency usually has 12 counselors, but retirements and resignations had shrunk the current number to four by the end of last year, Mackey said. Aside from Young, they include Louise Pierce, of the Office of Inspector General, David Grossman of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, and Mark Phillips of the Office of European Country Affairs.

Seven more are being added.

Typically, when a complaint is made, EEO counselors are assigned to conduct the initial interview, clarify the issues, and find out what it will take to resolve the problem. If the problem can't be resolved, counselors report that to EOP and a complaint may be filed.

Counselors undergo 32 hours of orientation and must take eight-hour refresher courses each year. Each counselor usually serves a two-year rotation that can be repeated. They're expected to maintain confidentiality and be committed to equal employment for everyone.

The new candidates were nominated by their bureau heads. That field was winnowed down through interviews. The new counselors were Aimee David, Melissa Walkup, Tanya Dalton, Jean Horton, Jerry O'Brien, Ajit Joshi, and Michael Austin.

Young says despite the time it takes, she enjoys helping coworkers through a dispute. "EEO counseling is a way for me to get managers and employees to communicate better," she said.

In most cases, the problems are miscommunication between two people.

Young and the other counselors play a neutral role.

"I don't represent the employee or Agency management," Young said. "My role is to interview parties involved and try to assist them in reaching a resolution. That's not always easy."

USAID

*From left to right: Mark Phillips, Jean Horton, Michael Austin, Veronica Young, Tanya Dalton, and David Grossman. Not shown: Jerry O'Brien, Aimee David, Ajit Joshi, Louise Pierce, and Melissa Walkup.*

EOP gets about 30 complaints each year, with about one-third progressing to formal complaint status.

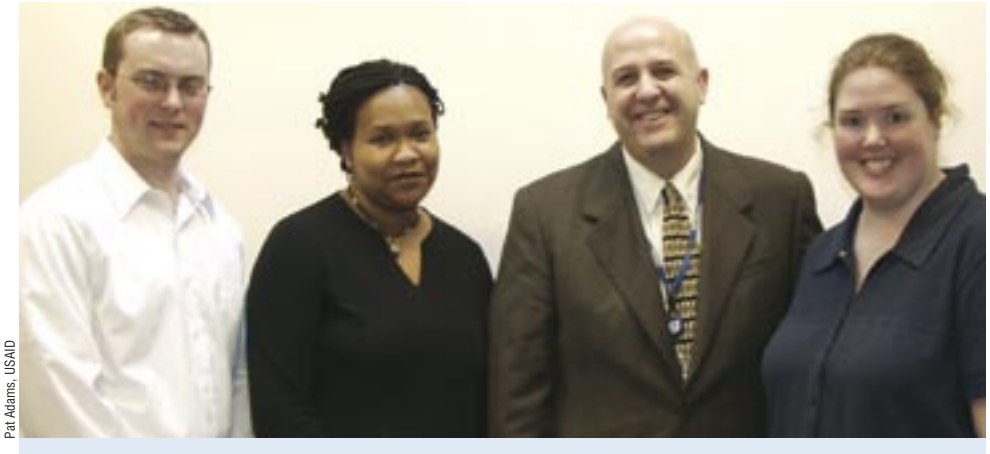
"Sometimes just having a third party enter the equation offers some assistance," said Anne Hunt Phillips, who was a legal analyst in the Office of the Inspector General and an EEO counselor for nine years before retiring from the Agency at the end of last year.

"An EEO counselor is an employee's or applicant for employment's first contact with the EEO complaint process," said Mark Phillips, an EEO counselor for four years.

"My experience has been that counselees appreciate it when someone actively listens to their concerns and tries to address them. This lends credibility to the EEO complaints system as a whole in the eyes of the counselee."

Phillips added:"If the complaint goes beyond informal to the formal stage, the Agency could take years to resolve the issue." ★

# 22 Interns Trained as Contracting Officers to Replenish Ranks



Pat Adams, USAID

*Jeffery D. Bell, deputy director for USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance, third from left, stands with some of the 22 interns in the Contract Specialist Intern Program: from left, Mike Peddicord, Chitahka Floore, and Moncel Petitto.*

The Agency is recruiting and training 22 new contracting experts through the revival of a program that has been dormant for a decade—the Contract Specialist Intern Program (CSIP).

Over the past decade and a half, USAID cut its staff and many officers retired, leaving a need for new contracting officers, especially now that increased aid is going to the Asian tsunami victims, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan.

The two- to three-year program introduces the interns to the world of government acquisition and assistance, as contracting is now dubbed, and shows them how that meshes with USAID's mission of humanitarian and economic development programs abroad.

The last significant CSIP training program was in 1995, said Jeffery D. Bell, deputy director in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance.

"We see CSIPs as our next contracting officers, the next division chiefs," he said.

The current crop of interns comes from a wide variety of backgrounds: Moncel Petitto worked in purchasing in the private sector; Chitahka Floore has a master's degree and experience with Catholic Relief Services; and Mike Peddicord is a recent political science graduate.

When the interns graduate from the program, they will be in career-ladder positions with the Agency.

They are also getting hands-on, real-world experience through four- to eight-week field assignments in Armenia, Georgia, the Philippines, Burkina Faso, Kenya, or Indonesia. ★

FIRST PERSON

Matar Camara, USAID/Senegal

**"We used to try to resuscitate newborns with our mouths. We'd get blood in our mouths, and we'd almost always lose the babies. But since we've had the resuscitation equipment, we haven't lost any babies born asphyxiated."**

**ROKHAYA NGOM**

Head midwife at the Kebemer District Health Center in central Senegal.

▼ SEE MIDWIVES ON PAGE 7

**More than one-fourth of all child deaths in Senegal occur during the first month of life, spurring USAID to help the Senegalese Ministry of Health develop and test a program aiming to improve newborn care in the rural District of Kebemer. The project equipped six rural health facilities for newborn care and trained 329 community healthcare workers in essential newborn care. Since nearly half of babies in Kebemer are born at home, the community healthcare providers were also trained to promote better care for newborns at the village level through mass media and mobilization of community groups, including husbands, mothers-in-law, and religious leaders. Local radio stations advised women to deliver at a health facility and broadcast key survival messages about the need to keep the baby warm, delay the first bath, breastfeed within an hour of birth, and visit the health facility immediately when they notice danger signs. Three quarters of women in this district now give birth in a health facility. This project is being extended to seven new districts this year.**

# Mission of the Month

INDONESIA

### The Challenge

On December 26, 2004, a quiet holiday season turned into one of the world's most horrifying disasters when an undersea earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, triggered giant tsunami waves that swept away entire villages in Aceh, permanently changing the coastline and the lives of hundreds of thousands.

With over 120,000 killed and over a half a million left displaced and traumatized by the disaster, Indonesia was hardest hit by the tsunami.

### Innovative USAID Response

Within hours, USAID began to deliver emergency relief assistance and supplies.

"I thought it was going to be a quiet holiday week," said Mission Director William M. Frej. "Instead, we were mobilizing an unprecedented relief effort in coordination with the Indonesia Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Indonesian military to deliver emergency assistance and relief supplies, such as food, water, medical supplies, and services to those affected."

Because of a long insurgency in Aceh prior to the earthquake, international organizations were not allowed into the province without permission from the Indonesian government. One of the few organizations working in Aceh was the IOM, which has long worked with USAID in many countries.

Through a network of local staff in every district, IOM maintained a strong relationship with provincial officials. As a result, IOM moved tons of relief supplies into Aceh province immediately on truck convoys from Medan, and USAID staff were on the ground assisting in the distribution of relief supplies and coordinating the massive multinational relief effort.

Within days, the U.S. response rapidly grew to include the U.S. military and a host of USAID partners, such as Save the Children, CARE, Mercy Corps, International Medical Corps, Development Alternatives Inc., World Vision, and International Relief and Development. USAID provided immediate lifesaving action with the distribution of food, clean water, hygiene kits, and shelter materials and the provision of emergency healthcare, avoiding disease outbreaks and unnecessary death.

Cooperation between the civilian aid agencies and the military was critical to the success of one of the biggest emergency humanitarian relief operations in history. The U.S. military supported USAID's delivery of assistance and the evacuation of severely injured survivors via helicopters and landing craft.

The aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and its five-ship battle group arrived off the coast of Sumatra within four days of the earthquake and tsunami, and it has rushed food, water, and medicine to towns and villages along the battered coast every day since then. Over 3 million pounds of materials, including water, medical supplies, and food, have been delivered to tsunami survivors by the U.S. military alone.

AP/World Wide Photos

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

While the emergency needs of over half a million displaced people were being met, USAID also began planning for the transition from emergency relief to reconstruction. Projects that provided cash-for-work to clear debris, repair roads, and supply water helped families begin to rebuild their lives by engaging them in productive activity in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

Given the grief and trauma brought on by the deaths of family members and the loss of normal community support networks, psychosocial assistance is being provided for those affected by the disaster, especially children.

USAID is looking at both the short-term and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction priorities. Short-term priorities place emphasis on getting people back to work and focusing energies and resources on immediate improvements in community-level services (such as water and sanitation, health, and education) for internally displaced persons and tsunami-affected communities. Long-term priorities focus on essential infrastructure, from roads and schools to loans for farmers and businesses.

Currently there are 144 staff members in Indonesia, and 80 are involved in relief. According to Deputy Assistant Administrator Mark Ward, more Agency staff will be sent to tackle the long-term reconstruction.

As of Jan. 25, the U.S. government had spent $37 million on relief in Indonesia. ★

# Notes from Natsios

★★★★★★★★★★

One of the largest humanitarian responses in history is underway, with the full collaboration of our staff and that of the departments of State, Defense, and other federal agencies.

It began for me as I returned home from church Sunday, December 26, and was informed that the tsunami had occurred and that steps were already being taken to respond to the catastrophe. USAID mobilized Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) and mission staff in the affected countries. Soon thereafter, approximately 50 DART members and more than 100 USAID employees in Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand began conducting assessments of affected areas, participating in coordination of relief and reconstruction activities, appraising funding requests, and recommending appropriate U.S. government relief efforts. Simultaneously, we established our 24-hour Response Management Team in Washington as the point of contact for information regarding relief efforts, and as a backstop to our field staff.

I was asked to accompany Secretary of State Colin Powell and Florida Governor Jeb Bush to assess the damage in affected areas and to coordinate the U.S. government response. Secretary Powell said that he had never seen such devastation in his entire military career. I can second that observation. During my career in humanitarian aid, I also have never seen such devastation.

USAID was able to bring to bear more than 40 years of experience in dealing with disasters. Our response to this one was particularly swift and innovative. We have set up a Tsunami Task Force, chaired by the Deputy Administrator, with deputy chairs from both the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance and the Bureau for Asia and the Near East. This dual-bureau management structure has never been used before, but it is proving to be highly effective.

In another first, in order to make the transition from humanitarian response to reconstruction as smooth as possible, we are using funds from our disaster account to begin reconstruction activities.

Our tsunami response has demonstrated the success of major policy and organizational changes at USAID that have been implemented over the last several years. Our goal is to have the capability to carry out relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction simultaneously.

We no longer look at the process of disaster response and recovery as a series of discrete tasks to be undertaken by discrete organizations following a linear timetable. Instead, we view it as a simultaneous process, where at every stage we are addressing both short-term needs and long-term objectives. A good example is in Sri Lanka,

▼ SEE NOTES ON PAGE 15

# Improved Agriculture Policies Needed to Cut Hunger, Says a Top USAID Official

By Kathryn McConnell
*Washington File* staff writer

**COLLEGE PARK, Md.—**Without improving agriculture, developing countries—particularly in sub-Saharan Africa—will experience significantly more hunger in 2011 than in 2001, said a top U.S. aid official.

Hunger is a looming threat, due to changing patterns in the global food supply, increased demand, population growth, and resource limits for expanding agricultural production, according to Emmy Simmons, assistant administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

More developing countries must adopt agricultural policies that enable markets and science to work together on solving hunger and poverty problems, Simmons said at a Dec. 2, 2004, world hunger conference sponsored by the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the University of Maryland.

Sub-Saharan Africa is getting further from meeting the internationally accepted goal of halving by 2015 the 1990 level of the number of people living with hunger, Simmons said.

Currently, the region accounts for 38 percent of the world's population experiencing chronic hunger. Without an increased focus on agricultural development, 50 percent of the world's hungry people will be living in sub-Saharan Africa by 2011, she added.

Increased income levels in some Asian emerging economies, particularly China, are resulting in demand for more types of food—such as meat—that require more agricultural inputs. That means that the poorest countries are facing increasing competition for food staples from global supplies. Because people in the poorest countries don't have the purchasing power to buy food imports, they must produce the food they need, Simmons said.

She urged developing countries that still try to control food prices to change their policies. Artificially low food prices are a disincentive to local farmers to grow food that could feed their communities or be sold and generate income. Simmons said governments also should lower their barriers to trade so more food can be available to their populations at lower prices.

Mali is one example of a country that has adopted agricultural policy reforms, Simmons said. It invested in broadening its irrigation systems, increasing the capacity of its arable land to produce food. Mali also liberalized food prices and established a market information system, which is updated daily so farmers can learn about current prices. And the country has established buffer stocks of both food and money that can be tapped in the event of a crisis.

Simmons said USAID supports efforts to expand trade and to increase farmers' access to adequate information, distribution, and storage systems.

USAID also supports using science and technology to increase both production quantities and the value of farm outputs. The Agency is working to build more partnerships with agricultural research institutions in the United States and in the developing world, with a focus on adaptive research.

Cliff Gabriel, associate director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, cited examples of current agricultural research conducted with U.S. support, such as root health improvements so that plants can grow in weak and dry soils. Other efforts are going into technologies that decrease evaporation rates of scarce water resources and boost nutrition levels of foods. ★

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# NGOs, USAID Share Ways to Work Together

**WASHINGTON—**This year's annual PVO conference ushered in what may become a new series of events for U.S. private voluntary organizations. More than 400 people, including managers and directors, attended the two-day event. For the first time, representatives from overseas NGOs were also present.

The conference titled "What Makes a Good NGO?" was sponsored by USAID's Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation–American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (PVC-ASHA). It was held Jan. 13–14 at the Renaissance Washington Hotel.

"While annual PVO conferences have been held for a number of years, the January 2005 PVO conference represented a significant departure from prior years," said Judith Gilmore, director of the PVC-ASHA. "In the past, the annual PVO conference focused on funding opportunities for U.S. PVOs, whereas this year the conference was focused on the substantive work of U.S. PVOs and local NGOs, in partnership with USAID, in ensuring effective, accountable, and sustainable implementation of our activities."

Some 515 American PVOs and 58 international groups are registered with USAID. The Agency distributed $7.1 billion in grants to NGOs, businesses, international organizations, and other government agencies during 2003. PVOs received just under $1.9 billion.

The conference opened with panels on major issues facing PVOs and NGOs and some examples of how PVOs and NGOs have dealt with those issues. Coralie Bryant, co-director of the Economic and Political Development Program at Columbia University, stressed the importance of organizations becoming flexible enough to learn from their mistakes and make strategic alignments. "Learning starts with listening and allowing older suppositions to be displaced," she said. "It is not easy."

A session titled "USAID 101," for instance, targeted newly registered PVOs. A nearly packed auditorium got an overview of the sometimes extensive procedures faced by PVOs, including how to get funding and the hallmarks of a good submission.

Another session covered standards and certification for PVOs and NGOs, which is a topic of growing congressional interest. Given the recent outpouring of donations to NGOs in response to the tsunami in Asia and concerns about accountability of many of these groups, the session was particularly timely, Gilmore said.

There was significant interest in this year's theme, said Gilmore, who quoted one participant as calling the event a "superb experience." ★

# Shorter Country Strategy Policy Cuts Red Tape

A new strategic planning process eliminates lengthy country strategy papers that bureaus often spend years writing, only to find they become obsolete as conditions on the ground change.

The new system involves shorter country strategy documents and operational plans. It also contains concise frameworks that lay out priorities at the Agency, bureau, and mission levels.

The process is part of a larger series of reforms that grew out of the Business Model Review, which changes the way USAID conducts strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting.

"The new policy will reduce the workload on our missions and redirect attention from planning to operations," said Joseph Lombardo, director of the Office of Strategic and Performance Planning.

Shorter strategy papers will allow missions to spend more time contemplating and discussing their overall approach, said Gloria Steele, deputy assistant administrator for Europe and Eurasia.

"We can channel some of the freed-up time from writing less to thinking more about what we are trying to achieve, how we will achieve it, and how we convey our strategy in the clearest and most concise way," she said.

The new process has

- Agency and bureau frameworks that will establish major priorities and policy directives at headquarters and regional levels
- mission strategy statements capped at 5 to 10 pages—rather than up to 200—that will outline a broad vision for a country
- operational plans that will focus on tactical issues and plans over three years
- program components, a list of major development activities that will be required with missions' strategic objectives (SOs)

An SO entitled "Support the Peace Process in Sudan," for example, would be associated with three program components: improved community-based reconciliation, support for democratic local government and decentralization, and dealing with conflict transition issues.

Over the next year, the working group that crafted the new process will oversee the development of common indicators for each program component to allow the Agency to capture its performance across all operating units.

This should make it easier for USAID to tell its story and highlight accomplishments to Congress and the public, said Joanne Giordano, senior advisor to Administrator Andrew Natsios, who approved the strategy Nov. 10. ★

**Fern Holland 1970–2004**

Fern Holland, a former USAID contractor who was killed in Iraq March 9, 2004, has been posthumously named Oklahoman of the Year by *Oklahoma Today* magazine.

Holland and two other aid workers with the Coalition Provisional Authority were the first U.S. civilians to die in Iraq. A gunman riddled the car they were in with bullets as the three left a women's center Holland had helped create in Karbala.

Beginning in July 2003, Holland worked for USAID in Al Hillah on human rights and women's issues as part of the Abuse Prevention Unit. A lawyer, she interviewed Shiite survivors of massacres during the 1991 uprising after the first Gulf War.

The magazine, which features Holland on its January/February 2005 cover, said the aid worker's efforts in Iraq "showed the world her fearless determination, generous spirit, and ceaseless work ethic."

# Global Health Campaigns Saved Millions of Lives, Study Says

Millions of people have been saved from disease, thanks to international health campaigns against polio, guinea worm, tuberculosis, measles, and diarrhea, according to a new book by the Center for Global Development (CGD) released Nov. 30.

*Millions Saved: Proven Success in Global Health* tells the history of global health campaigns that dramatically reduced or eliminated 17 diseases once synonymous with death and permanent disability.

Its authors say the book shows that large-scale efforts to improve health across the globe can work.

"The conclusions… leave little doubt that some efforts to save lives and livelihoods through health interventions have worked, and have done so at remarkably low cost, compared with the benefit," CGD President Nancy Birdsall said in the book's preface.

The 17 examples "show that major public health efforts can and have changed the world for the better," she said.

Nearly 60 health projects were nominated for the collection, said Molly Kinder, one of the book's authors. That number was winnowed down to 17 because, in most cases, "there is a very serious lack of evidence—stemming largely from insufficient program evaluation," she said.

Five of the 17 health campaigns that saved millions of lives had significant USAID support:

- family planning in Bangladesh
- trials for a vaccine against bacterial meningitis in Gambia, followed by national immunization
- a global campaign against guinea worm
- the control of onchocerciasis or river blindness in sub-Saharan Africa

Eclipsing those in scope, however, was the Agency's effort to prevent diarrheal deaths in Egypt.

In 1977, before intervention, diarrhea caused at least half of infant deaths in the country. It can lead to serious dehydration in children, and loss of only 10 percent of body fluids can be fatal.

With $43 million—of which USAID contributed $26 million as grants—the National Control of Diarrheal Diseases Project was formed.

The project mounted a promotional campaign for a low-cost mixture called oral rehydration therapy (ORT). The program targeted mothers and health workers through mass media and training sessions. Soon, nearly all mothers in Egypt were aware of ORT and could successfully mix the solution.

Between 1982 and 1987, deaths due to diarrhea fell 82 percent among infants and 62 percent among all children.

The infant mortality rate in 1977 was 100 deaths per 1,000. It fell to only 33 per 1,000 births this year. And it will drop further—to 18—by 2020.

Worldwide, ORT has cut deaths from diarrhea among children by half, saving about 1 million lives, CGD said.

The authors of the case studies said success is possible even in the poorest countries. Contrary to some beliefs, governments are in some cases the chief funders. Technology is an aid, but behavior change is fundamental to improvements. Moreover, saving lives saves money.

"This effort puts to rest the notion that nothing works in global health," CGD's Birdsall said.

Figuring out how these successes can be repeated is a next step. The book says urgent problems persist: HIV/AIDS, health gaps between rich and poor, child mortality in African countries, and cardiovascular and other chronic diseases that have been called a "hidden epidemic" in developing countries. ★

The Carter Center/Emily Howard Staub

*Two Sudanese boys use pipe filters to protect themselves from contracting Guinea worm disease, a parasitic water-borne disease that breeds in stagnant pools of water. The water is strained though a nylon material attached to one end of the straw-like device. The Carter Center blanketed Sudan with more than 9 million pipe filters—one for every man, woman, and child at risk of Guinea worm disease. Today, the disease has been reduced by more than 99 percent.*

Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs.

*Scene from* Nijeke Jana *(*Know Yourself*) a health video designed to teach adolescents about their bodies, abstinence before marriage, and other family planning issues. The program is run by the Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs and was designed in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University.*

# Referendum Lets Peruvian Voters Set Health Priorities

**LIMA, Peru—**A recent referendum, or *consulta ciudadana*, on health priorities in Peru is giving a voice to rural people unaccustomed to the voting process.

The Lambayeque regional government placed a referendum on the November 2004 ballot to gauge which health issues were priorities for its residents.

PHR Plus

*Health promoters and members of the National Office of Electoral Processes (ONPE) motivating rural voters.*

Government officials agreed to incorporate the vote results in its next five-year strategic plan.

"The *consulta ciudadana* was intended to determine health priorities as a primary goal," said Luis Deza, regional health director for Partners for Health Reform (PHR) Plus, an NGO funded by USAID.

"But more importantly, the vote addressed the fact that Peru's rural population was accustomed to being excluded from the government decisionmaking process."

"In the end, 123,627 citizens—32 percent of them from rural areas—helped to set priorities and experienced, possibly for the first time, what enfranchisement of their voice means."

In addition to rural voters, the *consulta* urged military personnel, police officers, and public school students aged 14 and older to vote. These groups are typically excluded from the voting process as well.

The top health priorities identified in the referendum were

- scarcity and deterioration of water services and waste pickup (18 percent)
- marginalization of the poor to health services (14 percent)
- mental health (13 percent)
- malnutrition (11 percent)
- maternal health (8 percent)

In rural areas in Lambayeque, only 27 percent of residents are connected to municipal water systems, and 11 percent do not have adequate sanitary disposal facilities. Statistics also show inadequate health insurance coverage, which often leads the very poor to forgo healthcare.

"The referendum is a good alternative to lead our region. There have been many cases of corruption [and] bad attention to the public," said a 15-year-old from a rural school in the Montsefu district. "I think this should be a priority for the regional government and for the National Health Directorate: for them to promote the development of good health services."

The vote was supervised by Peru's National Office of Electoral Processes, with participation from an external team of observers that included representatives from the United Nations, USAID, and nongovernmental organizations.

"This was a successful exercise in small *d* democracy that, hopefully, will have an impact on the health of rural people of Lambayeque, especially those who have typically been excluded from the process," said Nery Saldarriaga, PHR's regional vice president.

"We hope and look forward to more civic participation from this segment of the population that has unfortunately not had a means to contribute their opinion to their local government decisionmakers." ★

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

# U.S.-Trained Africans Contribute to Local Development, Study Says

Cristin Springer, USAID

*An employee of the Nova Knits factory, Madagascar, works the loom. Alumnus Charles Ratsifaridana, deputy director general of the cashmere sweater factory, took it from 400 employees to more than 4,000. Many graduates of USAID-funded educations eventually move from academia to the private sector. Ratsifaridana gave the evaluation team a tour of the factory when they visited in March 2003.*

A new study of 200 Africans trained in the United States under USAID programs over the past 40 years reports that most believe their successes would not have happened without their experience in the United States.

Alumni credited newly acquired scientific and technical skills, as well as the nontechnical benefits of living in the United States—critical thinking, research techniques, and work attitudes—with their success.

The study, *Generations of Quiet Progress: The Development Impact of U.S. Long-Term University Training on Africa from 1963 to 2003*, was carried out by the Office of Education, within the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

The study argues for continued investment in master's-level training, in particular, to retain development gains and fill in behind USAID-trained professionals who have either retired or died from HIV/AIDS.

Among the programs USAID has funded are the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AfGrad), which ran from 1963 to 1990, and its successor, the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS), which ended in 2003. Combined, the programs trained more than 3,200 African professionals from 14 sub-Saharan countries over 40 years at a cost of $182 million.

More than 200 alumni answered surveys or participated in workshops. Evaluators traveled to Benin, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, and Uganda to interview supervisors and peers to substantiate alumni claims.

"The greater professionalism; positive attitude; better understanding of different issues, people, and cultures; better teamwork… All enhanced performance and productivity," said one respondent about U.S.-based training.

The following are examples of institutional changes inspired by U.S. training:

- Dinah Brandful of Ghana established a customs laboratory to test imported drugs and food for safety after she returned with a master's in food science in 1983; the lab has saved lives and generated income through excise taxes.
- Eduardo Namburete established Mozambique's first university communications department in 2003 after getting a communications master's in 1998 and working as a reporter for a year in the United States.
- Charles Ratsifaridana of Madagascar helped start the physics department at the École Normale Supérieure after he returned with a Ph.D. in physics in 1980. In the early 1990s, Ratsifardana also opened and managed a cashmere sweater factory for the company Nova Knits, which today employs more than 4,000 people

The emphasis of AfGrad and ATLAS on selecting employees from key institutions was an improvement over previous programs, which had chosen the "best and brightest" undergraduates, the report said. By targeting institutions, which nominated employees, recruitment and training were focused on improved performance in the workplace and brain drain was contained.

"Participants are more mature, have secure employment, and are more likely to return," the report said. About 90 percent of the participants returned home when conditions allowed. Few were unemployed.

The study found no difference in the impact alumni with master's degrees had on institutions versus those who received doctorates.

"The report makes a strong case for investing in master's-level education, which is both affordable and high impact," said John Grayzel, director of the Office of Education. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

# Faith-Based Leaders Lend Business Expertise To Those In Need

Inexperienced businessmen in Haiti, Nicaragua, and Kenya are pairing with established business owners to spearhead entrepreneurship in the developing world.

The experienced businesspeople act as mentors to help others establish and strengthen local businesses, create new jobs, and retain existing ones.

The participants in the three targeted countries must be potential or existing entrepreneurs, microentrepreneurs, farmers, current or former members of other mentoring programs, members of a business association, or those who have developed a business that creates jobs. Their number now stands at 53.

USAID has given $700,000 to the program, in alliance with Partners Worldwide (PARTNERS), a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based NGO that recently created the Christian Million Mentors Global Business Alliance.

The initiative aims to recruit 1 million mentors willing to invest time and resources in assisting businesses in developing countries.

Partners include the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and Newdea Inc., a for-profit company that provides information management and communication channels between philanthropists and charitable organizations.

Amway founder and CEO Richard DeVos is a spokesperson, advocate, and mentor for PARTNERS and Million Mentors.

Total partner contributions have exceeded $1.6 million.

Million Mentors finds its volunteer mentors through existing faith-based organizations, and works on the principle that Christians can be instrumental in economic development.

Haitian Partners for Christian Development, the first international chapter of PARTNERS, was formed nearly five years ago by Haitian business people who attended a PARTNERS conference at Calvin College in Grand Rapids.

Haiti consistently ranks as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, in part due to a stagnant economy and political instability.

Between July 1 and September 30, 2004, the Haitian program added eight local and six international mentors.

"The current political unrest and the security risks have prevented a number of international mentors from traveling to Haiti," said PARTNERS Executive Director Doug Seebeck.

As of October 2004, the Nicaraguan initiative reported 27 local and 52 international mentors. In the third quarter of last year, 24 new jobs were created and 29 positions were retained. One new business was established, while 20 existing businesses received assistance in the third-poorest country in the region.

John Klein, a PARTNERS member and mentor, visited Managua twice in 2004, where he helped draft business plans for two key projects: the ACJ (the Nicaraguan equivalent of the Young Men's Christian Association or YMCA) and a diabetic pharmacy.

"Million Mentors provides an opportunity to participate with my country's government in a program that meshes the best of the private sector with the best of the public sector to address the basic societal needs of very poor countries, fostering economic growth and strong international relations," Klein said.

The Million Mentors Kenya initiative is also designed to create sustainable jobs and encourage the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. ★

PARTNERS

*Mentor Lesly Jules (standing) reviews Guillometre Herode's business plans in Haiti.*

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

# Technical Team Responds to Crises in Sumatra, North Africa

Richard Nyberg, USAID/Senegal

*Dr. Yene Belayneh assessing the locust situation in Thies region of Senegal, September 2004. Assistant Administrator Roger Winter stands behind him.*

When a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck off the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, triggering a tsunami that killed over 200,000, it took less that 48 hours before a team of USAID technical experts known in the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) as TAG—the Technical Assistance Group—headed to Asia.

Several of the dozen TAG specialists were sent as part of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to assess damage and prepare for emergency relief.

Typically, TAG specialists predict a disaster and have assessments ready when the Agency decides to act. But, in the case of an earthquake or tsunami, TAG can only take action after the disaster.

"With something like a tsunami, there's no warning. There is no lead time, beyond maybe two hours, if every monitoring and measuring device is working properly," said Ayse Sezin Tokar, a hydrometeorologist on the TAG team, which sent specialists to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India.

"Certain places might need immediate interventions in water and sanitation; others might need public health or prevention of disease and epidemics," she added. "Based on the TAG assessments, we as an Agency can address immediate needs."

Each TAG team member is focused on a different sector, rather than a region. For instance, an entomologist studies mitigation and management of desert locusts and grasshoppers, and a gender and social scientist works on issues such as rape as a weapon of war in Congo and Sudan.

TAG's shelter specialist helps guide rebuilding of earthquake-damaged houses so they resist future shocks.

Since food shortages are not only caused by drought but can also be a result of corruption, mismanagement, and other political issues, the TAG team has a member who studies agriculture and food security.

These specialized, skilled staff members are drawn on constantly in crises, said Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, which oversees OFDA.

While the TAG team flew in along with the DART to Asia after the tsunami, TAG specialists were observing Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and Morocco long before locusts swarmed the region in mid-2004.

By the time crops were being destroyed and people were left hungry, Yene Belayneh of the TAG team had had various ideas of how to deal with the locusts, having prepared for this moment for more than a decade.

In October, Belayneh was part of a USAID delegation that spent two weeks touring locust-affected areas.

"We went to see the damage the locusts had inflicted and how the people were doing; what the gaps were," said Belayneh, who helped decide how to use USAID funds to launch a mitigation campaign in late fall of 2004 to kill the locusts, including spraying pesticides for a month.

Aside from responding to disaster, TAG members prepare other Agency employees and developing country counterparts. They provide technical expertise for proposal reviews for response and mitigation activities, DART, and assessments. They also assist with training OFDA and other USAID staff and conduct outreach programs.

TAG was formed from OFDA's Prevention, Mitigation, and Preparedness Division in 1991 by the OFDA director at the time, Andrew Natsios. ★

GLOBAL HEALTH

# Midwife Training Improves Chances for Survival in Childbirth

**SANA'A, Yemen—**A year ago, five Yemeni midwives presented an action plan at an international conference that laid out plans for improving the status of maternal health in their county and for addressing policy and drug logistics.

A few months later, midwives from all over Yemen formally joined forces to confront maternal health, forming the National Association for Midwives, the first in the country's history.

In Yemen, where an estimated 84 percent of deliveries take place at home and without the presence of skilled attendants, thousands of women die or suffer permanent injuries each year due to childbirth complications. Some childbirth complications—particularly postpartum hemorrhage, the biggest maternal killer—are preventable with the help of professional midwives.

Uniting into a midwives association is an important step to improve the quality of maternal and neonatal care, according to USAID Maternal Health Advisor Mary Ellen Stanton.

"A well-functioning midwifery association can play a vital role in keeping members informed of best practices and providing opportunities for their continuing education, and can help give midwives a seat at the policymaking table," said Stanton.

The new association gives midwives in Yemen a forum to address critical issues in their profession.

For instance, it will give the Ministry of Health a medium for consulting midwives to bring them into the process of improving curriculum, standards, protocols, and training programs. It is also an opportunity for midwives to become involved in the design of a new reproductive health strategy for Yemen.

At a crowded first meeting in September 2004, more than 100 midwives from around the country gathered—at their own expense—to decide on the rules of procedure and elect their first administrative board.

Many more women die during labor in the developing world, where births are less often assisted by skilled personnel than in the developed world. In 1996, for instance, skilled birth attendants were present at only 53 percent of births in the developing world, whereas skilled attendance is nearly universal in developed countries. Countries where skilled attendance at delivery is low tend to have higher rates of maternal death and disability.

USAID has long supported midwifery in developing countries. Aside from helping midwives organize, the Agency supports curriculum development and training.

In Afghanistan, for instance, where maternal mortality statistics are among the worst in the world, USAID trains midwives, helps set professional standards for training and care, and improves midwifery education.

In the Philippines, USAID support has helped finance the improvement and expansion of over 217 local midwifery clinics since 2003.

The Agency is also guaranteeing loans for health initiatives for the first time, as local banks established loans for midwives—a practice long perceived by lending institutions as risky business. ★

USAID/Yemen

*Yemeni midwives set bylaws and rules of association at the first meeting of the National Association for Midwives in September 2004. USAID helped the women organize into an association.*

# Indian Relief Efforts Reach Tsunami Victims

Relief efforts are proceeding in India, even as thousands of people grieve over the loss of family, property, and livelihoods.

Whole identities have been wiped out, according to one disaster expert. With no paperwork or anything tangible left to mark a human life, even claiming personal identity can be a struggle.

USAID sent a four-member Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Tamil Nadu state in southeast India Dec. 29—three days after the tsunami—to gather information and craft an aid plan. During the 11-day visit to hard-hit areas, U.S. and Indian staff sent back daily field reports, met with district officials to keep tabs on coordination of relief efforts, and saw first-hand the personal and physical costs of the disaster. The DART continues to monitor the progress of response efforts.

"We have seen a dynamic and effective response from the government of Tamil Nadu," says Rebecca Scheurer, a member of the DART. "Humanitarian relief efforts are helping people return to normal life."

The DART found that roads and other links untouched by the tsunami boosted relief. There were no public health threats as of late January, despite dire warnings by some relief groups and critics cited in the media.

India was hit hardest in the coastal area of Tamil Nadu and on the Andaman and Nicobar islands. More than 10,000 Indians died in the tsunami, with 8,000 of those deaths coming from Tamil Nadu alone. Another 5,640 people are missing.

Sky Wiseman, USAID

*Damaged boats in the harbor of Nagappattinam, one of the hardest hit areas of Tamil Nadu, India. USAID is helping repair or replace fishing vessels of poor fishermen in the area.*

U.S. aid is channeled through the India-based operations of CARE, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, Project Concern International, GOAL, Food for the Hungry/EFICOR, ACTED, and Exnora.

Efforts funded by USAID include

- a $900,000 cash-for-work program led by World Vision India to build 2,500 temporary shelters, while providing families the opportunity to earn money
- a $440,000 grant to Project Concern for recovery and rehabilitation in four villages, including building temporary shelters, repairing fishing boats, cash-for-work for disaster cleanup, and daycare centers so mothers can rebuild or find work and children can heal from the trauma
- grants of $650,000 to CARE and $750,000 to Catholic Relief Services for drinking water and sanitation services
- a $250,000 to GOAL for cash-for-work efforts to rehabilitate affected villages—repairing damaged properties, thatching roofs, organizing debris—and establish childcare centers

In addition, Food for the Hungry received $280,000 through its local partner, EFICOR, to conduct cash-for-work projects. Rehabilitating wells and ponds and replanting trees will be exchanged for income.

About 750 families will benefit from a grant of nearly $300, 000 to ACTED. The NGO aims to restore livelihoods by training 25 self-help groups in microfinance for restarting businesses. Some animal-care commodities and sewing materials are part of assistance packages.

Exnora will focus on waste removal and recycling in Nagappattinam—one of the hardest hit spots on the coast—with a $115,000 grant. Local women and youth are target employees for this jobs effort. Vocational skills for men and women and expanded access to formal banking for residents are part of the activity.

As the immediate relief phase winds down, USAID/India is considering longer-term recovery efforts, which could include U.S.-India city-to-city partnerships, access to credit for affected families (including women), and better community preparedness to stave off impacts from future natural catastrophes. ★

# Sri Lankan Actor Steps off Stage to Inspire Child Survivors

"Who loves the sea?" asked a man with a familiar face, as he beat his tambourine. "We all love the sea," chanted the children around him, laughing and waving their arms.

Vasantha Moragoda, a well-known Sri Lankan actor, invited the children to sing along.

"Does the sea love us?" inquired a small boy suddenly, looking for an explanation for the tragedy that hit his village only a few weeks earlier.

The question touches each of the 98 children in the makeshift camp at the Seenigama Temple in Galle, southern Sri Lanka. All of them lost their homes to the tsunami, and most of them were left with only a fraction of their family members. Some have lost everything.

Moragoda cannot explain their loss, but he has come to help raise morale and build the self-confidence of these traumatized children.

In the village of Seenigama, massive waves destroyed the houses of more than 300 families, leaving behind nothing but rubble and desperation. The need for psychological support, particularly of children and mothers, is acute.

To respond to the psychological damage, the psychosocial drama project was initiated by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in Sri Lanka, using funds made available by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. The project is being carried out by Multi Diverse Community, a local NGO founded by Moragoda.

Assisted by OTI and his group of 50 people, Moragoda is using theater techniques to help the children and teenagers overcome their fears. The group also offers counseling to adults. Through ingenious games and songs, the children gain skills to cope with everyday difficulties in the camp, where hundreds of people share the temple floor, seven tents, and two toilets.

"Can we rebuild everything?" Moragoda asked.

"Yes," respond the children.

"Who is going to clean the environment and pick up the garbage?" he asked.

"We," they respond.

"We are going to pull out of the disaster and rebuild!" answer the children to Moragoda's questions that both challenge and motivate.

Every evening, the children play games and act roles that require forming groups and doing tasks together.

"Already, a few days after starting the project, the children were cleaning their camps, keeping up their own hygiene, and—surprisingly—teaching the adults to do the same," said RHM Zafarullah from OTI.

Julie Fossler, USAID

*Children in southern Sri Lanka are engaged in songs and games as psychosocial help to recuperate after the devastating tsunami that hit Asia in December.*

Although Moragoda will move to other affected coastal communities, his group will continue working in Seenigama.

USAID is also working with international and local organizations to provide individual, family, and community counseling, as well as technical support and guidance to ensure that those services reach all in need. ★

*Anna-Maija Litvak contributed to this article.*

# Rebuilding Process Starts in Destroyed Village

Young survivors from Seenigama, in southern Sri Lanka, have returned to their homes—or the rubble that is left of them.

The damage caused by the tsunami three weeks earlier is so extensive that the fishing village of 325 houses is completely gone.

Now some 200 boys and young men are piling broken stone into neat piles, cleaning the debris from private properties, and clearing the area of dangers such as sharp metal pieces and live electric wires.

A large group of volunteers from the northern districts, unaffected by the tsunami, have arrived to help the locals. Sinhalese and Tamils are working together, undivided by ethnic and religious differences. Their goal is to clean three villages within one month.

"Volunteering has created a 'can-do' spirit, which reduces fear and insecurity among the locals," said RHM Zafarullah from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). OTI's partner, Foundation for Goodness, is implementing this $30,000 cleanup program.

Participants get cash to buy food and basic necessities as payment. They also get daily meals.

Before beginning the cleanup in Seenigama, volunteers removed debris from three badly damaged schools in the area. These were a part of five OTI-rehabilitated schools that opened only two months before the tsunami disaster.

The clean-up program encourages people to move on with their fractured lives.

"The wave took my wife and daughter away, but I was able to save my 10-month-old baby," said a tall man who operates a pickup truck that carries the rubble away. "I am grieving, but I can't give up." His tired eyes tell of sleepless nights, but during the day he is contributing to his community.

Despite the tragedy, the young men clearing the rubble sound hopeful. "We cannot look back. We must move forward and build the village anew," said one.

While the clean-up of the three villages is going on, the program is expanding to other devastated areas on the southern coast of Sri Lanka. USAID is funding an extensive $370,000 clean-up of both private and public lands in order to allow the reconstruction of infrastructure and business. ★

*Anna-Maija Litvak contributed to this article.*

Julie Fossler, USAID

*Young men help clear away debris in Seenigama, in southern Sri Lanka. USAID is employing some 200 youths in the area for cleanup projects.*

# Fast Response Aids Tsunami Victims ▲ FROM PAGE 1

move in with relatives and neighbors.

In recent years, USAID and the wider foreign aid community have accepted that the best way to move people toward independent lives after a disaster is to help them rebuild. So a lot of U.S. aid is to provide people with livelihoods, said Isaacs, such as jobs cleaning up debris and fixing roads in exchange for pay.

About 150 USAID staff from missions in affected countries are at work on tsunami relief. Another 50 members of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) continue to assess needs and supply quick funding to relief projects.

As time goes on, more of the U.S. aid effort will shift from OFDA to the Bureau for Asia and the Near East, which has the benefit of established missions in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, the countries most in need of help. Thailand and India have largely been able to cope with relief on their own.

Isaacs noted, in particular, the close working relations between the U.S. military and USAID, which assigned DART members to coordinate with the military. This allowed military planes based at a hub in Utapao to deliver supplies to Medan, Indonesia, and Colombo, Sri Lanka, that were later transferred—often by military helicopters—to survivors.

About $103 million out of the $350 million pledged by President Bush for relief has been spent on food, shelter, water and sanitation, livelihoods recovery, cash-for-work clean-up programs, child protection, and physical and mental healthcare assistance.

However, U.S. private contributions to relief have totaled more than $500 million, Isaacs said.

He told of meeting survivors in a hospital in Sri Lanka who had their children ripped from their arms by the waves. "Most people lost family members—the wave was so absolute," he said.

The Response Management Team based at USAID in Washington to direct U.S. relief efforts said that the last shipment of emergency supplies was sent Jan. 18—kitchen supplies and mosquito nets.

U.S. aid is also providing food and cash for work.

The final death tolls as of Jan. 22 were: Indonesia, 115,000; Sri Lanka, 31,000; India, 11,000; and Thailand, 5,300. Somalia, the Maldives, and Malaysia had small losses.

The greatest challenge currently facing relief assistance is the difficulty in overland access along the northwestern portion of Aceh.

Thus far, two rebel movements in Sri Lanka and Aceh have both cooperated in relief work, and there has not been interference with aid workers. However, Indonesia has asked foreign military teams to pull out in the coming months, and the U.S. military has begun to plan its withdrawal.

USAID is planning to shift to road deliveries when U.S. helicopters are no longer available, including use of 220 International Organization for Migration trucks and charter flights to deliver relief assistance and supplies.

The Indonesian military has also been able to obtain spare parts for its C-130 planes.

To respond to fears that children orphaned by the tsunami could be forced into sexual slavery, USAID provided $2 million to UNICEF for child protection and psychosocial services: $1.5 million for Indonesia and $500,000 for Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, USAID hosted a meeting of relief organizations and Sri Lanka officials to address issues of protection and psychological and social support. ★

Rein Skullerud, WFP

*Girls from an internally displaced persons camp in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, hold up packets of fortified biscuits. Delivered by the World Food Program (WFP), the biscuits were made in India and donated by the German government. The U.S. government is the main donor for WFP, paying for about 80 percent of its annual budget.*

The USAID website lists relief organizations working in the tsunami disaster area and provides their web addresses, though inclusion in this listing does not confer any official status, approval, or endorsement by USAID. **www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/tsunami/ngolist.html**

AFRICA

# Women in Mali Learn to Run for Elective Office

**BAMAKO, Mali—**In societies like Djenné, a woman's place is usually behind the scenes. The Bambara people put it this way: *ce ba koro be na k'a turu kala kelen do*, or every single man has a braid under his hat. She is the consultant; he is the decisionmaker.

But that is slowly changing, as women begin to step out and wield greater influence in Malian society, in part with help from U.S.-supported training activities.

The training works to enhance women's roles in civic education, business management, advocacy, public speaking, and conflict prevention.

In addition, the program takes aim at deeply rooted traditions: both men and women in Mali have been brought up to think women aren't meant to lead.

That was the case for 60-year-old Sirantou Bocoum, a widow from Djenné, an urban commune in the Mopti region, who joined the training sessions and overcame her long-held beliefs.

"In this culture, people believe that a woman is not meant to be a leader," said Bocoum, who was elected a communal councilor. "But I am confident in myself and my leadership capacities. My victory [in the election] was not a mere surprise."

The Agency program has so far hosted 224 training sessions for more than 8,800 women in half of Mali's administrative regions.

In those zones, the number of female candidates rose from 85 in 1999 to 318 in 2004. And the number of communal council seats held by women was 41 in 2004, up from 22 seats in 1999.

The women—and some men—see more work ahead. After one civic education training session, one man from the region said he now understands that men have been an obstacle for women.

Bocoum said: "I am committed to working for the cause of women in Djenné because, as it stands today, we have very little right to mix in what are still considered men's affairs."

Mali is a mostly Muslim country of 12 million on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert in western Africa. It is about the size of California and Texas combined. The literacy rate is 40 percent for women and 54 percent for men, and the life span is about 45, according to the online *CIA World Factbook*.

Women said participating in the training programs breaks the chains of male-dominated decisionmaking and raises their self-confidence. They see that they can be political players in their communities.

Kadidia Dienta, USAID

*Members of the multifunctional cooperative of Gombatou, Niafunké, hold books for women candidates about elections.*

"Before the training, we were living in the darkness of ignorance," said the president of a woman's association in Gombatou, Niafunké. "Now, we have gained lots of knowledge and information. We will now use our veils as belts to fasten ourselves and participate more in the management of our community development activities." ★

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

# Peru Teachers Help Students Think for Themselves

**LIMA, Peru—**Teachers in Peru are learning how to bring life to the classroom and make students think for themselves rather than just memorize facts—a vital step away from the rigid schoolrooms of the past.

A recent aid program has shown teachers how to drop the lecturing role and become more like facilitators, while students do less memorization and more exploration and collaboration with their classmates.

Educators say students develop better reasoning and problem-solving skills with this approach, which has been a hallmark of American-style teaching since World War II.

CAPTIC

*Girls in a rural school use information and communication technology. The virtual world is helping 75 educators in Peru share their skills, ideas, and suggestions.*

A small pilot program, supported by USAID, in February 2004 at 12 primary schools and four teacher training centers helped 64 teachers use the internet and video cameras to move away from a traditional style of teaching to what educators call a "student-centered" approach.

USAID's partners in the program, called Strengthening Teaching Practices through Information and Communication Technologies (CAPTIC), include the Peruvian minister of education's Huascarán Project (an effort to boost quality in Peru's rural and urban schools), the Education Development Center Inc. (EDC), and the Concord Consortium.

CAPTIC is active in four regions of Peru's highland and jungle areas—Junin, Oxapampa, Cerro de Pasco, and Ucayali—that have low student performance and limited resources. The Huascarán project is promoting use of computers and the internet among local schoolchildren.

The regions are distinct in language and geography, but everyone meets on equal footing at the project's website. The teachers use video cameras to tape their classroom efforts. They then upload the images for the other educators to watch and critique.

During one online chat about a project he was preparing, Alipio Luis Carhuallanqui, a teacher at the Mariscal Castilla School in Oxapampa, Pasco, told the other teachers: "I felt the desire and the motivation to communicate with you, to go online and read your comments. The comments felt alive and made me laugh and reflect."

As in other parts of the world, the teachers in Peru found the student-centered approach a difficult concept to master. CAPTIC is providing ongoing support to them. Workshops are providing personalized technical guidance, showing the teachers not only the basics of using a computer but exactly how to translate the ideas they've gleaned from the web into classroom lessons.

Teachers learned to ensure both boys and girls get access to the technology. Girls continue to lag behind boys in education, particularly in rural communities. According to a USAID report in 2002, close to 40 percent of women in rural areas have not completed primary school, compared with 28 percent of rural men.

"One year is a short time horizon to ensure that teachers grasp the concept well enough to actually change their teaching practices, but we hope to continue providing support wherever it is needed," EDC General Project Director Daniel Light said.

The teachers in the program are enthusiastic, but CAPTIC organizers want to ensure the gee-whiz factor of the technology does not overshadow the education goals. "What we need to ensure is that the technology supports quality education," said Project Director Sonia Arias. ★

**www.huascaran.edu.pe/WebCaptic/captic-ing.htm**

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

# Cambodians Protect Forests from Overcutting

**MONDULKIRI PROVINCE, Cambodia—** Clear-cut forests with tree-stump stubble and mud-clumped roads are the usual remains after deforestation in Cambodia, where vast tracts have been logged since the civil war ended in 1993.

"I want my children to see all the nature this generation and past generations have seen," said Vin Sen, deputy chief of Pu Chri village.

"My daughter has only seen a tiger in a poster. Pangolins used to be very common, but we couldn't find one to show our children."

Some 60 percent of Cambodia—or 11.2 million hectares—is forest, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Approximately 8 million hectares are currently in production, a figure considered higher than necessary.

Recent improvements to roads in Mondulkiri Province near the Vietnam border—particularly improvements last year between the provincial capital Sen Monorum and Koh Nhek—allowed new settlers to arrive and claim land for themselves.

As the amount of forest clearing has increased, tensions led to clashes between residents and forest land grabbers.

"It comes to a point at some time when the communities can't lose any more and conflict erupts," said Mary Melnyk, the senior advisor for natural resources management in the Bureau for Asia and the Near East (ANE).

To ratchet down the conflict, forest residents, government officials, NGOs, and others have come together to speak their minds.

USAID is funding three NGOs—the Agri-Business Institute Cambodia (ABiC), Community Forests International, and WWF-Cambodia—to help Cambodians devise solutions to the forest and land conflicts.

The groups translated forest and land laws into Khmer and the indigenous Pnong languages. They also help Cambodians survey and register their ancestral lands and participate in land-use planning.

Residents received cellphones and walkie-talkies to use as they search for illegal loggers. They have confiscated chainsaws, logs, and lumber. "When they confront some of them," said Melnyk, "the reply is 'You have no rights.'"

Villagers in another part of the country had a grenade thrown at them while protesting the establishment of a 300,000-hectare plantation.

To build support for forest protection, USAID is producing two videos that showcase growing efforts in Cambodia to save its forests and strengthen rights in forest communities.

Cambodians depend on their forests for food, medicine, and fuel. Traditional "spirit forests" also require protection from clearing.

Logging threatens animal species such as Asian elephants and raises the likelihood of soil erosion and flooding.

Lori Severens, USAID

*Prak Chanty, an NGO representative, works with Pu Antreng villages to identify their lands on a map.*

Because of human rights abuses by the people grabbing lands and logging illegally, Cambodians are now speaking up to protect their forests. The videos will explain this and show Cambodians asserting themselves to save the forests.

Through the NGOs' work, including a Community Forestry Alliance for Cambodia, USAID has contributed over $1 million to the project.

One film shot in Mondulkiri aims to raise awareness in the Western world about the vitality of the forests and how they are being threatened. It will be shown on USAID's web site.

The second video, which will be completed in late summer, is geared to Cambodians, NGOs, and other interested parties actively working on forestry issues in the country.

Video production is continuing, with several more trips planned to Cambodia to conduct and shoot interviews.

Cambodia is one of 11 countries covered by ANE that experiences conflict over forests; others include the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Indonesia. ★

EUROPE AND EURASIA

# Help to Civil Society Invaluable in Ukraine Election

**KIEV, Ukraine—**As a car full of USAID election observers approached a district polling station in the northeastern city of Poltava on election day, Dec. 26, a vehicle standing outside the voting precinct hurriedly left.

Quick departures of other suspicious vehicles were noticed at other polling stations that day.

The vehicles had license plates from the Russian-speaking Donetsk Oblast, and carried tough-looking young men possibly bent on disrupting the elections.

Many in Donetsk had threatened to secede after their favorite son, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, was denied what looked like an election victory. His campaign was accused of extensive voter fraud and intimidation in the Nov, 21 election runoff with opponent Viktor Yushchenko. Those allegations led to mass demonstrations in Kiev, spawning the "Orange Revolution."

On Dec. 9, Ukraine's Supreme Court annulled the vote and set a rerun for December 26. This led some 80 USAID employees—including 19 from Washington and other missions, among them Deputy Administrator Fred Schieck and Counselor Carol Peasley—to spend Christmas monitoring elections in Ukraine.

The observers ensured that rules were followed at polling stations—from the correct placement of electoral materials outside each station to the correct procedure for issuing absentee voting certificates.

USAID/Ukraine

*Special Forces troops guard the Presidential Administration Building—which protestors had decorated with balloons—during mass demonstrations in Kiev.*

The image of young toughs running from a group of USAID election observers offers a striking metaphor for the Agency's democracy-fostering work here for the past decade. USAID has helped build democratic institutions and worked with Ukrainian civil society and NGOs. It also aided the establishment of rule of law and a democratic legislative base and the development of independent mass media.

"It is very difficult to point to one thing that may have made the difference over time," said Mission Director Christopher Crowley. "Collectively, we believe that these programs added up to essentially what you've seen take place here over the last couple of months."

In late 2003, the USAID mission in Kiev focused on voter education projects aimed at urban youth—who largely favored reform but were politically inactive—and at rural women—who were politically active but often had little access to information.

USAID also responded to a poll indicating many voters wanted to make their decisions based on political platforms and issues, rather than on candidates and personalities.

"We provided voter outreach and increased information about platforms and issues," said Deputy Director Karen Hilliard. "We strengthened the media's ability to tell the story, and we encouraged voters to register in greater numbers."

USAID's democracy and governance programs helped put in place mechanisms to detect fraud and educate voters and civil society groups about their rights and responsibilities during the voting process, Hilliard said. The Agency provided support to the legal system, enabling people who had observed violations to legitimately channel their concerns.

"I believe that this increased awareness of election violations and election fraud played a part in stimulating the popular outcry we witnessed," Hilliard said.

On Jan. 10, Ukraine's Central Election Commission officially declared Yushchenko's victory in the Dec. 26 revote by a margin of 52 to 44 percent.

"We did not have the indications that [civil society] had developed at the level that was necessary for what took place following the second round of the presidential elections, but it was something that our instincts told us was evolving," said Crowley.

Ukraine's Supreme Court allowed the Central Election Commission to publish the official results of the final election round Jan. 20. Three days later, Yushchenko was inaugurated as president. ★

# WHERE IN THE WORLD...



## *28 November 2004–15 December 2004*

### PROMOTED

**Thomas L. Clarkson**
**Byron J. Drake**
**Lee Shian Hsieh**
**Kathleen Hunt**
**Mahalakshmi Krishnan**
**Carolyn S. Mackey**
**Lawrence R. Rowe**
**Darren W. Shanks**
**Timothy R. Shortley**
**Melissa L. Thomas**
**Augusto I. Urrego**

### RETIRED

**William Spencer Elliott**
**David P. Evans**
**Brenda L. Fisher**
**Kenneth P. Luephang**
**Charles M. Mohan**
**Brian D. Rudert**
**Abdul H. Wahab**
**Janice M. Weber**
**Gordon H. West**

### REASSIGNED

**Rebecca W. Cohn**
ANE/TS to M/HR/POD

**Blair L. Cooper**
COMP/LWOP to COMP/FS/Reassign

**Thomas A. Dailey**
WB/Gaza to M/HR/POD

**Markus D. Dausses**
COMP/NE/OJT to Afghanistan/EXO

**Evelyn B. Hogue**
AA/M to M/IRM/CPFM

**Richard W. Loudis**
E&E/PO/PPPD to LAC/RSD

**Betty M. Mangum**
AFR/DP to LAC/SPO

**Michael J. Martin**
COMP/FS/Reassign to WB/Gaza

**Edward Michalski**
COMP/NE/OJT to Ukraine/REXO

**Maria F. Naldo Fontelo**
M/HR/OD to LAC/SA

### MOVED ON

**Mark E. Anderson**
**Nancy W. Carroll**
**Peter J. Kurz**
**Rose Aleacia Moye**
**Leslie A. Perry**

### IN MEMORIAM

**James Pierce Lockard,** 86, died Dec. 30 in Fairfax, Va. He spent more than 30 years with USAID missions in Latin America. He was also desk officer for Caribbean and Central American countries at USAID/Washington. After retiring in 1980, Lockard worked as a consultant to USAID's foreign disaster assistance programs in the Caribbean. He received a superior honor award from the Department of State for his outstanding performance coordinating relief assistance after the 1976 earthquake in Guatemala. A graduate of Cornell University, Lockard served in the Army from 1941 to 1950, before joining USAID.

### IN MEMORIAM

**Richard Ward Reuter,** 86, died Jan. 7 in Lake Bluff, Ill. He headed USAID's Office of Food for Peace between 1962 and 1966, as appointed by President John F. Kennedy. Afterwards, he headed CARE, where he had started his career in 1946. Reuter was instrumental in developing CARE's self-help programs, and guided the progression from millions of CARE packages toward hands-on assistance geared to help the neediest from poverty. President Kennedy sought Reuter's advice when building the Peace Corps, and CARE helped train its first volunteers. In 1966, Reuter joined the private sector as director of area development in the international division of Kraft Foods. He was later vice president and director of purchasing. Upon retirement in 1984, he continued to work as a consultant on international economic development projects.

# Hawke Awarded for Work

**NEW YORK—**Leslie Hawke was given the USAID Outstanding Citizen Achievement Citation by the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia Jan. 10 for her work with Roma street children and their families in Romania.

"The citation was created to pay tribute to people like Leslie—ordinary Americans who make extraordinary contributions to the international community through volunteer service," said Dr. Kent R. Hill, the bureau's assistant administrator and keynote speaker at the event, which brought together some 200 people at the New York University Kimmel Student Center.

A native New Yorker, Hawke now lives in Romania, where she is the founder and administrator of programs—collectively called *Gata, Dispus si Capabil* (Ready, Willing, and Able)—that offer impoverished Roma families employment and social support and help their children stay in school. She has helped hundreds of families in the past five years.

Three days after receiving the award, Hawke attended a private screening of a short USAID-sponsored film playing tribute to her work for Administrator Natsios and USAID senior staff. The film is narrated by actor and director Ethan Hawke, Leslie Hawke's son.

"Anywhere else in New York that evening, Leslie would have been introduced as Ethan Hawke's mother," said Dr. Hill, who spoke at both the New York and Washington, D.C. events. "But at our event, he was introduced as Leslie Hawke's son." ★

*Jennifer Citrolo contributed to this article.*

Shane MacCarthy, USAID

*Left to right: Founder and president of the Doe Fund George McDonald, Romanian Ambassador to the U.S. Sorin Ducaru, Leslie Hawke, U.S. Ambassador to Romania J.D. Crouch II, Dr. Hill, and Ethan Hawke.*

# Dr. King Commemorated

Inspiring words and songs at the Ronald Reagan building marked Jan. 11 the annual observance of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The event's theme was "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On…Not a Day Off!"

Reverend Samuel "Billy" Kyles, who spent time with Dr. King in his last hour and was an eyewitness to his assassination, was the keynote speaker. He shared stories about Dr. King's life and spoke of the importance of following through on one's dreams.

"We have flight because of someone's dream," he said. "The Wright brothers had many failures on their way to success. They held fast to their dream."

Kyles reminded the audience that Dr. King held on to his dream of an integrated country despite struggles in the civil rights movements.

"Dr. King had a dream that his four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," he said.

"They held on to their dreams, they had a will to live, they survived."

Following Kyles' message, the audience was entertained by stirring medley of choral music by the highly acclaimed Washington-based Heritage Signature Chorale.

Carol Peasley, Counselor to the Office of the Administrator at USAID, told the audience: "By what he taught and how he lived, Martin Luther King set high standards for Americans. But what he was really asking of us was to live up to the principles we ourselves espoused."

USAID

*Reverend Samuel "Billy" Kyles, keynote speaker at the annual commemoration ceremony of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Kyles urged USAID employees to follow their dreams*

She added: "We at USAID continue his legacy by creating a workplace environment that respects the individual. We also carry on his legacy by working throughout the world for the causes he espoused: human freedom and the dignity of each individual."

The program also included remarks by Sarah Moten, Bureau for Africa's education division chief, and concluded with the customary reading by USAID employees of the litany "Let My People Go."

The program was co-sponsored by the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and the USAID chapter of Blacks In Government. ★

*Gloria Greene-Blackwell contributed to this article.*

# Trained Local Observers Watch Over Palestinian Elections

Marking the beginnings of a democratic electoral tradition, domestic observers fanned out across the West Bank and Gaza Jan. 9 as Palestinians took to the polls to elect a new leader.

Close to 120 Palestinian observers were directly trained by a USAID program working to strengthen civil society and democracy. In turn, they taught hundreds of nonpartisan volunteers how to monitor elections—from the basics of the voting process to the specifics of what to observe inside and outside the 1,000-plus polling centers set up in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The few problems I've witnessed were resolved quickly," said Khalid Nassif of the Civic Forum Institute, who coordinated a team of observers in the West Bank. "The observers and election officials are taking their responsibilities very seriously to make sure the process is fair."

Nassif is one of several trainers who helped teach civil society leaders how to organize and run an election observation campaign. Participants then transferred their skills to hundreds of nonpartisan volunteers from grassroots organizations and universities.

"I wanted to participate in the democratic process and make it more transparent," said Rani Khalawi, a 21-year-old student who donated his time to a small NGO involved in the observation effort.

All in all, over 100 NGOs—from large, well-established organizations to small community-based groups—joined forces through a coalition that deployed some 3,000 domestic observers in the West Bank and 2,000 in Gaza, according to Aref Jaffal, head of the Civic Forum Institute, an NGO supported by the USAID project.

"For many participants, this is the first time they take part in elections, not only as observers but also as voters," Jaffal said.

The enthusiasm of volunteers like Khalawi was only surpassed by that of first-time voters, especially in refugee camps, where people spontaneously gathered to share tea, sweets, and songs outside polling stations.

### The Value of Training

Some observers, like Nassif, monitored the first round of Palestinian local elections held Dec. 23. "This helped prepare me for my mission during the presidential elections," he said. "I learned many things from that experience that I've incorporated into the training I deliver to election observers."

Nassif began his day at 5:30 a.m., when he met with a team of observers to finalize decisions on which stations to monitor. Once the stations opened, he spent anywhere from half an hour to an hour at various locations in the West Bank.

In his role as coordinator, he also stepped in to resolve problems, juggling two cellphones that rang every few minutes.

In the early morning, for example, election officials would not let observers inside a polling station in Ramallah, unaware of their role. A couple of phone calls later, the observers were allowed in, and their day went on without a hitch.

Chemonics

*Khalid Nassif, head of an election monitoring team, on the phone as citizens check their names on a voters' list at Al Amaari refugee camp.*

As election monitors made their rounds, the USAID project—known as Tamkeen or empowerment in Arabic—deployed its own team of civil society specialists across the West Bank and Gaza to "observe the observers." Project staff completed forms capturing what they saw and are now compiling the results.

Based on a preliminary assessment, "there is clear evidence that trained observers performed better than untrained observers," said Tim Russo, who helped design and launch the project's election monitoring initiative. "Observers trained by either Tamkeen partner NGOs or others were more engaged and active than those who were not trained."

### A Burgeoning 'Culture of Elections'

Naji Odah, a social activist in Bethlehem, couldn't agree more. "You see the difference between her and the other observers?" he asked, pointing to Maha Ahmed Issa, one of 20 volunteers he trained and supervised, based on what he learned from the project. "She's taking notes and has observation forms."

This was Issa's first experience with elections, but probably not her last. "I'm volunteering for the sake of my country. I want to show that Palestine is the first democratic country in the Arab world," said the 19-year-old university student. "Elections are for the people. The people vote, so the people should monitor."

Nassif echoed this sentiment: "As a Palestinian, these elections are very important to me. We proved to ourselves and to the world that we have a democratic system and that we can make our choice in a peaceful, orderly way."

Though there were some irregularities, such as people not finding their names on voters' lists and illegal campaigning at polling stations, observers—both domestic and international—generally gave the process high marks.

"Though challenges lie ahead and more training is needed, the high level of participation from voters and observers alike is in itself a success for democracy," said Tamkeen Chief of Party Mohammed AlMbaid.

The last—and only—Palestinian national elections were held in 1996, when Yaser Arafat was voted in as head of the Palestinian National Authority. Next, Palestinians will cast their vote for members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and municipal leaders.

Although the election results are in, for Odah the observers' role has not ended. They must now start advocating for the next round to help create a "culture of elections." ★

## Young Palestinian Observer Casts His First Ballot

For 25-year-old Ahmad Al-Azzeh, Jan. 9 was a day like no other. Starting at 7 a.m. with the opening of polling stations across the West Bank and Gaza, he spent the next 17 hours witnessing democracy in action as Palestinians elected a new leader. It was also his first time casting a ballot.

"This day gives me hope for the future of my country," said Al-Azzeh, who volunteered as a nonpartisan election observer. "There is no way to know that the election is free and fair unless you see it for yourself. Then you can report back to your constituents and encourage them to participate."

Al-Azzeh works for the Holy Land Trust, a small NGO that runs community development and peacebuilding programs in the West Bank. He was among close to 120 civil society leaders trained by a USAID project known as Tamkeen—meaning empowerment in Arabic—on how to mount election observation campaigns. Using the skills he learned, he recruited, trained, and led a team of nine observers deployed at polling stations across his hometown of Bethlehem.

Chemonics

*Ahmad Al-Azzeh (on right), volunteer observer, and Tim Russo (on left), Tamkeen's election monitoring expert, at a polling station in Bethlehem Jan. 9.*

Al-Azzeh observed the election process at three polling stations, taking notes, asking questions, and watching history in the making until the wee hours of the evening. He assumed his role with a great sense of pride and responsibility.

"As a local observer, the most wonderful sight for me was when I saw all those people from the different political factions who were competing throughout the day for voters settle down and rest—to have a cup of tea with some jokes and laughs after that long, hard day of work for the election," he said.

Although partisan observers were mostly untrained, their presence at polling stations was crucial, he said. Once ballots are counted, both partisan and neutral observers are asked to sign off on the final results. By signing on the dotted line, they essentially agree that there was no wrongdoing or fraud.

Election officials are also more motivated to do things right, he added. "For example, they held up every single ballot during the counting of the votes so we could see it. They worked very hard to avoid any mistakes and were applying legal regulations very carefully."

As a conflict-resolution trainer working largely with educators and children, Al-Azzeh said he wants to see more young people engaged in "building a democratic, independent state where everyone can express themselves freely." ★

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## CLEAN WATER FOR TSUNAMI SURVIVORS

Dr. Endang, CARE

*A woman in Aceh, Indonesia, purifies water using Safe Water System (SWS). One capsule of SWS purifies 20 liters of water. USAID has provided more than 70,000 bottles of the solution to victims in this area.*

# Iraqis Vote

▲ FROM PAGE 1

Results were to be sent to provincial centers and then to the capital, Baghdad, by Feb. 10. Final results will be announced about Feb. 15, according to Adam Schmidt of the USAID's Democracy and Governance Office.

"We spoke to representatives of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) office in Baghdad, who said they went to a polling center to observe and were ecstatic. They said it was a moving event—a celebration—a civic gathering in an area of mixed sectarian and ethnic communities," Schmidt said.

NDI, along with the National Republican Institute (NRI), the International Foundation for Election Systems, and other groups, received funding from USAID to provide election training to thousands of Iraqi monitors, dozens of Iraqi political parties, and many election officials.

President Bush greeted the successful election turnout, saying: "The world is hearing the voice of freedom from the center of the Middle East."

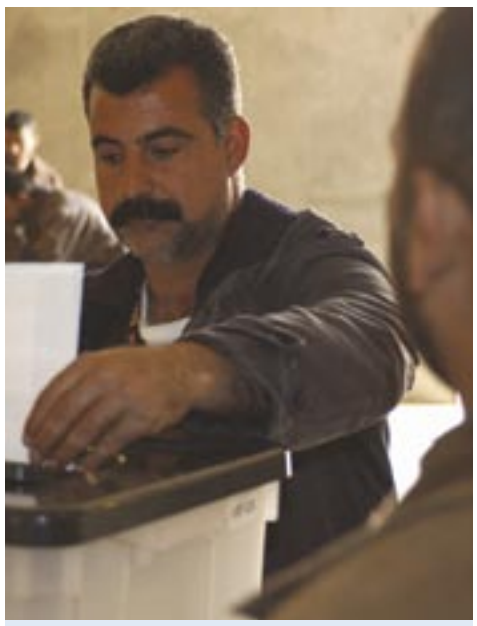
Turnout was highest in Shiite and Kurdish regions historically suppressed by Saddam Hussein. In the strongholds of Saddam's 20 percent Sunni minority, people also voted, but in smaller numbers.

"In Anbar province—in Falluja and Ramadi—voters turned out in light numbers," said Schmidt. "But in some predominantly Sunni Arab communities, reporting from the domestic observers and election administration officials reflect a turnout higher than expected."

U.S. and Iraqi security forces took a series of measures that appeared to deflect a feared onslaught of attacks by insurgents. Private cars were prohibited on the streets, and many U.S. and Iraqi troops were taken from other tasks to provide security.

Because of a lack of women security agents, polling officials asked every tenth woman on line—after she was searched—to search the 10 women following her.

"Positive voter turnout and a voting public knowledgeable about the actual voting mechanics may be considered a direct result of $20 million expended by USAID and NRI in voter education and media initiatives to get out the vote," said Schmidt. ★



Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen, U.S. Marines

*An Iraqi voter casts his ballot, as a worker from the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq looks on.*

# Bush Thanks USAID

▲ FROM PAGE 1

and women of USAID have been at the center of that response," he added.

Bush shared the stage with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Administrator Andrew S. Natsios—both of them back from a visit to the appalling destruction in Sumatra, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand.

"I really do want to thank Andrew for not only helping to organize the effort, but for his travels and his concern and his willingness to put in the long hours necessary to make sure that which we spend works," Bush said.

"And I want to thank you all for working along with Andrew. I know the response disaster team of USAID is sitting behind me. Andrew tells me that the response disaster team went into work the minute we heard about the disaster. And since then, you've been working long hours. I appreciate it very much."

He then called on Americans to "contribute to NGOs" for tsunami relief, but cautioned that "we don't short-change the needs for compassion elsewhere in our country and the world."

He said that earlier that morning his brother Jeb, Powell, and Natsios had reported on the devastation they witnessed. They also reported that "the efforts—the compassion, the money, the hope—is well coordinated, and that your work is making a difference in saving lives and helping people who need help. That's what you're here to do, and it's working.

"USAID personnel in the region responded the very day the disaster struck. So not only did the response team get set up, but the people around the world began to move. Your fellow colleagues and yourselves have been working day and night, 24 hours a day, and we're grateful. It's not easy, I know, it's hard, particularly in the time of year in which this hit. But you're doing your job. And for that, I'm extremely grateful."

Bush said "USAID has delivered food, temporary shelter, hygiene kits, and supplies to help people survive. In other words, we've been focused on the relief effort; now we're beginning to focus on rehabilitation and rebuilding. And as a result, USAID is arranging small loans for those whose livelihoods have been destroyed."

He also noted "superb" cooperation between USAID and the NGOs carrying out emergency relief.

"The effort of USAID is essential for the foreign policy of the United States of America," the president said.

"Your efforts and the efforts of others, especially to create jobs, promote markets, improve health, fight HIV/AIDS, and help democracy take root are instrumental to making the world a better place and to protecting the American people." ★

## Forest Service Awards Agency

**WASHINGTON—**As part of its centennial celebration, the U.S. Forest Service presented USAID an award for its "outstanding contributions in international cooperation and leadership for resource stewardship" during a January ceremony.

The award recognized the almost 50-year partnership between the two agencies in natural resources management, conservation, and disaster management.

Through an agreement administered by the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, the two agencies have worked on projects such as park management in Africa's Congo Basin, computer software that calculates the costs and benefits of reduced-impact logging in Malaysia, and fire management in South America.

The Forest Service typically matches one dollar of Agency spending with two to three dollars of its own resources.

## Call for Tsunami Warning System

**NEW YORK—**The United Nations is moving ahead with plans to set up an early warning system in the Indian Ocean for tsunamis that is similar to one that exists in the Pacific Rim region.

"The tragic losses in the Indian Ocean would certainly have been reduced if a similar alert system had been in place; if coastal populations had been aware of the dangers of tsunami and taught what to do when faced with such a threat; and building norms and standards had taken into account the risk of tsunami and earthquakes," Director General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Koïchiro Matsuura said.

The tsunami alert system for the Pacific, initiated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in 1968, remains the world's only regional tsunami warning system.

Headquartered in Hawaii, IOC serves 26 member states, and has been hailed as one of the most successful international scientific programs with the direct humanitarian aim of mitigating the effects of tsunami, saving lives and property.

## HIV/AIDS Treatment Swells

**DAVOS, Switzerland—**The World Health Organization (WHO) says the number of people in developing countries receiving antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS skyrocketed in 2004 to 700,000 people, an increase of 75 percent. The WHO, which made the announcement at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in late January, credited the growing amount of international aid and determination from governments to combat the pandemic. Financing from the United States and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria were specifically credited for boosting treatment numbers.

"Collaboration over the past year has shown that several initiatives can work in tandem to achieve real acceleration," said Dr. Richard Feachem, executive director of the Global Fund. "The work so far has been laying the groundwork for a much larger expansion in the months and years to come."

While highlighting the progress, health organizations stressed that major efforts should be continued to reach "the goal of access to treatment for all who need it."

## Public Research Boosts GM Crops

**WASHINGTON—**A study published Jan. 6 by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) found that public research efforts have already created 201 genetically modified (GM) lines in 45 different crops

The study was a joint effort of IFPRI and 15 developing countries in three continents. In those countries studied, public research was helping along 201 "genetic transformation events" in 45 different crops, among them apples, cotton, sweet potatoes, rice, bananas, and beans.

The report concluded: "Although some commercially developed GM products have a role to play, GM crops developed by public research institutes should be most relevant to local needs in poor countries. Paradoxically, because they are novel, locally developed products pose unique challenges for institutes seeking regulatory approval. Gaining approval can be one of the biggest obstacles facing public GM crops in developing nations."

## FDA Approves Generic AIDS Cocktail

**WASHINGTON—**The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Jan. 25 its first generic triple-therapy AIDS cocktail, a move that means cheaper drugs can now be purchased by the United States to combat HIV/AIDS in developing countries. The drug regimen is manufactured by Aspen Pharmacare of South Africa.

The United States intends to treat some 2 million people with HIV/AIDS by 2008, said Randall L. Tobias, the president's Global AIDS Coordinator.

Tobias' medical advisor, Dr. Mark R. Dybul, called the move "fantastic," according to a published report. "We've been saying for a while that we want the lowest-cost drugs, no matter where they come from, as long as they're safe and effective," he said.

Groups working in developing countries also hailed the FDA decision, saying they too would be able to purchase more HIV/AIDS medicines.

## Afghan Poppy Crops Drop

**KABUL, Afghanistan—**Responding to calls for an end to opium production by the international community and the government of President Hamid Karzai, Afghan farmers are slashing their cultivation of poppies, government and foreign officials say.

A drop of 30–70 percent in this year's crop is expected, especially in heavy producing provinces Nangarhar and Helmand.

Karzai recently called on Afghans to erase the shame of opium production. U.S. and other aid donors have prepared programs, including support for alternate livelihoods such as wheat and vegetable production, as well as support for eradication of crops.

Some had feared eradication before alternative income was available might push Afghans to support the rump Taliban and other hostile forces (see *FrontLines,* December 2004).

"The first priority...is self-restraint and self-eradication, and it is happening amazingly well," Rural Development Minister Haneef Atmar told the Associated Press.

Farmers said they had plowed in their young poppy crop late last year because they were told to by powerful local landowners and security officials. ★

## USAID WORKS WITH GUINEA'S CASHEW SECTOR

Enterprise Works Worldwide

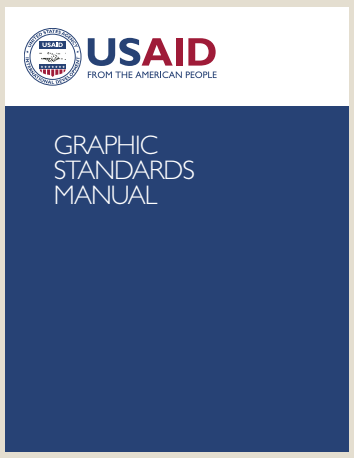
*A Global Development Alliance with food giant Kraft Foods and other partners, along with two local research organizations, is helping Guinea's cashew sector reach the world market. The project is conducting sector analyses and identifying potential local, regional, and overseas markets. It is also rehabilitating cashew plantations, supporting the planting of cashews on new plantations, providing seeds, and helping farmers organize into associations. Some 1,600 farmer's associations have been trained in cashew harvest, postharvest, handling, and conditioning techniques. USAID/Guinea has worked with the cashew sector since 2002. Although Guinea currently produces roughly 3,000 metric tons of raw cashews annually, unprocessed cashews are largely exported in bulk to India, where they are processed and then sold to western companies in North American and Europe.*

# Notes from Natsios ▲ FROM PAGE 3

where we began microcredit and cash-for-work programs even as we were still providing relief assistance.

Compassion is at the very core of what USAID stands for. By giving the citizens of emerging nations a helping hand as they work to improve their societies and economies, we show the world the meaning of the American spirit. ★

## NEW GLOBAL BRANDING




USAID has launched a branding campaign to ensure American taxpayers receive full credit for foreign assistance. In addition to an updated logo, a new brandmark with the tagline "From the American People" is now required on all programs, projects, activities, and public communications produced by employees and contractors.

All branding guidelines are detailed in the *Graphic Standards Manual,* available at **www.usaid.gov/branding.**

# Tourism Fuels Growth, Protects Greenery

Ten years ago, Bulgarians chopped down trees in their parks to heat their homes. But that stopped when ecotourists began pouring in to visit green areas.

A 10-year promotion of ecotourism preserved the rich and varied countryside, which was being destroyed in the chaotic economic setbacks following the end of communism. (see *Frontlines*, December 2004).

The Bulgarian green evolution is one of many such examples. Well-run national parks, clean beaches, thriving coral reefs, and abundant wildlife draw tourists from around the world.

The chief question asked by foreign aid experts and domestic managers is whether people can make a living from tourism, especially poor people in environmentally sensitive areas.

"Tourism is the world's largest industry, and is driving economic growth in many USAID countries," said David Hess, director of the Natural Resource Management (NRM) office within the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

"If done with the sustainable use of the environment in mind, tourism can enhance people's wellbeing and conserve animals, plants, and their habitats," he said.

Communities that earn a living from tourism and understand the connection between their livelihood and conservation are motivated to protect their environment, said Roberta Hilbruner of NRM and chair of the tourism working group.

Community involvement in all aspects of tourism projects is essential to their success, she added.

Tourism projects were initially designed to support environmental conservation, but since 2000, USAID has funded 98 projects in 72 countries that also addressed poverty, gender, education, governance, and economic growth.

"More and more, we are taking a holistic approach to tourism development," said Hilbruner, who organized USAID's involvement in the first global meeting of the newly created U.N. World Tourism Organization (WTO).

The WTO serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues. Its goal is to be a source of practical, tourism know-how. First launched as the International Congress of Official Tourist Traffic Associations in 1925, the WTO became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 2003.

An Agency working group on tourism is gathering information on the wide array of tourism projects funded by USAID over the past decade.

Work in Namibia, Jamaica, and other countries shows how projects have worked with people at the grassroots to help them earn a living, govern their community or manage their business more efficiently, and protect the environment.

The accounts are being sifted for lessons learned and will be distilled into project design guidelines, training, and other resources. ★

*Kathryn Stratos contributed to these articles.*

## Jamaica's Hotels Learn to Save Water and Protect Natural Beauty

**KINGSTON, Jamaica—**In order to keep Jamaica's aquamarine Caribbean waters clean, healthy, and attractive to tourists, dozens of hotels—from small mom-and-pop operations to the largest hotel chain, Sandals—have learned to reduce waste, conserve water, and protect the environment.

Hotels regularly check their operations to ensure environmentally sound practices. Many—including the Sandals hotel chain—are now "Green Globe" certified: in addition to environmental protection on their properties, they work on community projects.

Environmental awareness in Jamaica's tourism industry has been supported by USAID since 1997, when the mission persuaded some of the island's smaller hotels to conduct environmental audits.

"The major challenge was with management," said Hugh Cresser, chief of party of the Environmental Audits for Sustainable Tourism project. "It was a hard sell."

Managers thought the process would be costly, but project leaders "focused on the bottom line" and stressed waste reduction, said project officer Karen McDonald-Gayle.

"Hotels were able to report savings within a few months of starting the program."

In each hotel, "green teams" of managers and staff came up with a strategy. These typically small hotels spent $700 to $1,500 on improvements, which usually paid for themselves in less than a year.

Changes often were simple. They included fixing leaking toilets and pools; watering gardens in the morning or evening instead of during the day; replacing 10-gallon toilets and other equipment with water-saving ones; and using ecologically safer products like vinegar instead of bleach when cleaning.

"I heard that many cleaning ladies were actually amazed how well vinegar worked," said McDonald-Gayle.

Managers appointed employees to "green teams." Seeing the change they were creating motivated the staff, said McDonald-Gayle.

To ensure changes endure, the current USAID sustainable tourism project in Jamaica is working with the tourism ministry to include environmental management practices as hotel certification requirements.

The project also has convinced hospitality training programs to add environmental protection to their curricula. ★

Chris Howell/PA Government Services

*Keeping pools, showers, and toilets in good working condition so they do not leak water is one of the environmental management principles followed by hotel staff at the Tryall Golf and Tennis Resort in Jamaica.*

## Namibians Value Wildlife; Tourism Rewards Conservation

**WINDHOEK, Namibia—**Big drops in the numbers of lions, elephants, zebras, rhinos, and antelopes began to concern the Namibia Ministry of Environment and Tourism and NGOs in the early 1990s, who spoke to rural communities about the problem.

Wildlife figures largely in the mythology of Namibian tribes. Traditional and religious feasts often center around wildlife. Many people carry totem names of animals.

Rural people said they were killing or not protecting local wildlife from poaching because they were competing with it to survive. They wanted the same rights as white farmers on "freehold" land, who earned money from trophy hunting and tourism and had the right to manage wildlife on their land.

"Communal area residents said they wanted to keep wildlife and wanted to benefit the same way as white farmers from it," said Brian Jones, a conservation specialist with USAID in Namibia.

That desire led to new legislation in 1996 creating conservancies—geographically bounded areas with a membership, elected leadership, and a charter—that channel income earned from hunting, photographic safaris, and travel lodge concessions back into local communities (see *FrontLines*, April–May 2004).

To help the conservancies, USAID's Namibia mission funded the World Wildlife Fund and local organizations to advise conservancy board members how to negotiate contracts with the private sector or to set up joint ventures to run lodges, safaris, and other concessions.

The aid projects taught residents how to set up camp sites and traditional villages for tourists and also taught wildlife guards how to discourage poaching and observe and monitor wildlife.

As of October 2004, 31 communal conservancies covered more than 70,000 square kilometers, 10 more were nearing registration, and 40 more were being formed.

Benefits surpassed $1.8 million, and community-based enterprises were employing more than 500 people fulltime and nearly 3,000 others parttime.

Jonathan Simon, Chemonics

*A leopard blends in with the scenery of the Omboroko Mountains in the Waterberg Plateau. Wildlife populations have recovered in Namibia's community-run conservancies.*

Conservation benefits include maintenance of wildlife habitat, successful reintroduction of game animals, fewer losses to poaching, and recovery of wildlife populations.

In the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, a San or bushman community in the Northeast, springbok, blue wildebeests, red hartebeest, oryx, eland, and kudu—all different types of antelope—were reintroduced. With better water management, less poaching, and 2,100 animals brought in from elsewhere, the number of these animals in Nyae Nyae jumped from fewer than 1,200 in 1995 to about 6,300 in 2004.

The challenge was "legal structures and training to conserve the wildlife—not persuasion. It was almost literally a question of being able to afford wildlife," said Jones of the USAID's decade-long experience of promoting sustainable tourism in Namibia. ★