USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FRONTLINES

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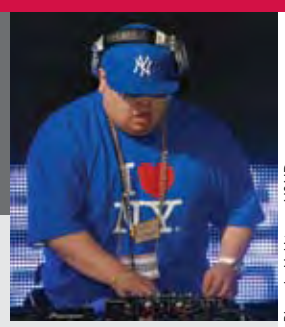

Photo by Hal Lipper, USAID

Buddha of Thaitanium, one of the hottest bands in Thailand, performs at the MTV EXIT concert in Bangkok.

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FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES:

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Jordan airport grows to meet needs of region. . . . . SEE PAGE **3**

Humanitarian Assistance

Pakistani quake victims still recovering. . . . . SEE PAGE **16**

Photo by Jason Howe

Reality TV has come to Afghanistan in a big way. Modeled after Donald Trump's *The Apprentice*, the show *Dream and Achieve* gives budding entrepreneurs in the country the opportunity to compete for $20,000 to help them build and grow their businesses. This woman, a contestant on the show, shows off some of her tailoring.

U.S. Agency for International Development
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Washington, D.C. 20523-6100

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OBAMA, CLINTON PLEDGE TO MAKE FOREIGN AID A PRIORITY

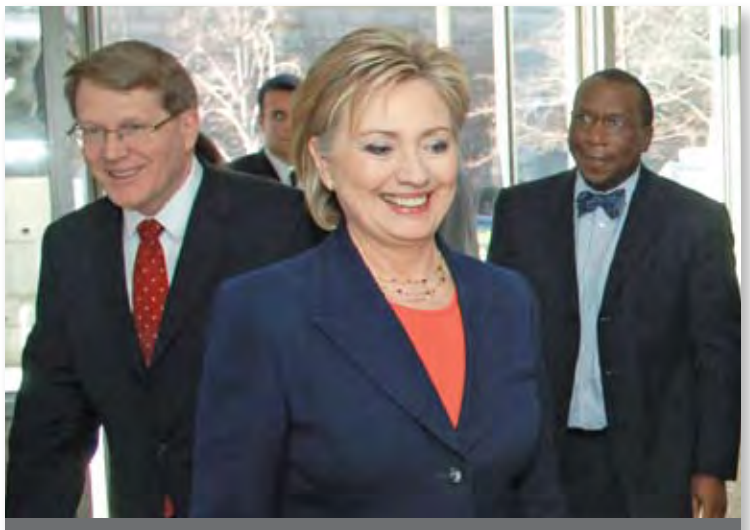
President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton wasted little time after being sworn into office before pledging to support development as a key part of America's foreign policy aims to address global hunger, poverty, lawlessness, and instability.

"To the people of poor nations," said Obama in his inaugural address Jan. 20, "we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds."

Clinton, who visited USAID headquarters Jan. 23 on the second day of her new job, told nearly 1,000 Agency employees that the new administration would boost resources for development.

"I wanted to come here today with a very simple message: I believe in development, and I believe with all my heart that it truly is an equal partner, along

see **CLINTON** on page 14 ▶



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton arrives at USAID Jan. 23 before addressing Agency employees. At left is then-Acting Administrator Kent Hill; at right is Chief Operating Officer Alonzo Fulgham, who was later named Acting Administrator.

MEXICO CITY POLICY RESCINDED

By Ashtar Analeed Marcus

President Barack Obama on Jan. 23 rescinded the Mexico City Policy, also known as the "global gag rule," which prohibited U.S. funding of international NGOs that offered counseling on abortion.

The policy was created under President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

The policy was repealed in 1993 under President Bill

see **MEXICO CITY** on page 14 ▶

USAID's Russia Programs Remain Vital Despite Tensions

By Ben Barber

Why is USAID still operating in Russia?

That's a question Mission Director Leon "Skip" Waskin said he is often asked.

"There is a common perception that Russia is rich, that it has behaved badly, and that it is arguably not a friend of the United States," said Waskin in an interview during a visit to Washington Jan. 9.

He answers such questions with a big-picture view of the world: "It's in our interest to be in Russia—our bilateral relationship with Russia is our most important one in the world. And the USAID program is a major part of that relationship."

"A poor and unstable Russia is not in the interest of the United States. We want a stable, responsible, economically secure Russia serving as a reliable partner."

Waskin acknowledges there has been tension in the U.S.-Russian relationship recently, such as U.S. criticism of the Russian incursion into Georgia, and Russian opposition to NATO expansion into the former Soviet Bloc.

But he says those tensions remain at the federal level; many provincial or regional Russian leaders are eager for U.S. programs on rule of law, tuberculosis (TB), HIV/AIDS, youth, and other issues.

The level of USAID funding for Russia is expected to continue at its current level (roughly

see **RUSSIA** on page 15 ▶

ELLYN OGDEN RECOGNIZED FOR HEROISM FIGHTING POLIO

Ellyn Ogden has walked through the front lines between Congolese troops and guerrillas to vaccinate young children against polio.

She has negotiated with armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Afghanistan, and many other regions—convincing them to cease fighting for a few days so teams could vaccinate millions of children.

In January, she was honored with the USAID Award for Heroism. The award recognizes a staffer for acts of valor and courage or outstanding performance under difficult or dangerous conditions.

"Polio doesn't wait for

see **OGDEN** on page 12 ▶

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING . . .

A column devoted to what our partners and others in the field of foreign assistance are saying about development.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates has called for a more balanced strategy to meet the national security needs of the country. In an article that appeared in Foreign Affairs, *January/February 2009—*A Balanced Strategy*—he argues for a better focus on today's unconventional conflicts to better prepare us for tomorrow. His advice has significant implications for the development mission of this country and for USAID in particular. Excerpts from the article follow.*

The defining principle of the Pentagon's new National Defense Strategy is balance. The United States cannot expect to eliminate national security risks through higher defense budgets, to do everything and buy everything. The Department of Defense must set priorities and consider inescapable tradeoffs and opportunity costs….

What is dubbed the war on terror is, in grim reality, a prolonged, worldwide irregular campaign—a struggle between the forces of violent extremism and those of moderation. Direct military force will continue to play a role in the long-term effort against terrorists and other extremists. But over the long term, the United States cannot kill or capture its way to victory.

Where possible, what the military calls kinetic [violent, or force-on-force] operations should be subordinated to measures aimed at promoting better governance, economic programs that spur development, and efforts to address the grievances among the discontented, from whom the terrorists recruit. It will take the patient accumulation of quiet successes over a long time to discredit and defeat extremist movements and their ideologies.

The United States is unlikely to repeat another Iraq or Afghanistan—that is, forced regime change followed by nation building under fire—anytime soon. But that does not mean it may not face similar challenges in a variety of locales.

Where possible, U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches—primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces—to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention.

In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States' allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so, than the fighting the United States does itself.

The recent past vividly demonstrated the consequences of failing to address adequately the dangers posed by insurgencies and failing states. Terrorist networks can find sanctuary within the borders of a weak nation and strength within the chaos of social breakdown. A nuclear-armed state could collapse into chaos and criminality. The most likely catastrophic threats to the U.S. homeland—for example, that of a U.S. city being poisoned or reduced to rubble by a terrorist attack—are more likely to emanate from failing states than from aggressor states….

The military and civilian elements of the United States' national security apparatus have responded unevenly and have grown increasingly out of balance. The problem is not will; it is capacity. In many ways, the country's national security capabilities are still coping with the consequences of the 1990s, when, with the complicity of both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, key instruments of U.S. power abroad were reduced or allowed to wither on the bureaucratic vine.

The State Department froze the hiring of new Foreign Service Officers. The U.S. Agency for International Development dropped from a high of having 15,000 permanent staff members during the Vietnam War to having less than 3,000 today. And then there was the U.S. Information Agency, whose directors once included the likes of Edward R. Murrow. It was split into pieces and folded into a corner of the State Department.

Since 9/11, and through the efforts first of Secretary of State Colin Powell and now of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the State Department has made a comeback. Foreign Service Officers are being hired again, and foreign affairs spending has about doubled since President Bush took office.

Yet even with a better-funded State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, future military commanders will not be able to rid themselves of the tasks of maintaining security and stability. To truly achieve victory as Clausewitz defined it—to attain a political objective—the United States needs a military whose ability to kick down the door is matched by its ability to clean up the mess and even rebuild the house afterward.

Given these realities, the military has made some impressive strides in recent years. Special operations have received steep increases in funding and personnel. The Air Force has created a new air advisory program and a new career track for unmanned aerial operations. The Navy has set up a new expeditionary combat command and brought back its riverine units. New counterinsurgency and army operations manuals, plus a new maritime strategy, have incorporated the lessons of recent years in service doctrine.

"Train and equip" programs allow for quicker improvements in the security capacity of partner nations. And various initiatives are under way that will better integrate and coordinate U.S. military efforts with civilian agencies as well as engage the expertise of the private sector, including nongovernmental organizations and academia…

But no one should ever neglect the psychological, cultural, political, and human dimensions of warfare. War is inevitably tragic, inefficient, and uncertain, and it is important to be skeptical of systems analyses, computer models, game theories, or doctrines that suggest otherwise.

We should look askance at idealistic, triumphalist, or ethnocentric notions of future conflict that aspire to transcend the immutable principles and ugly realities of war, that imagine it is possible to cow, shock, or awe an enemy into submission, instead of tracking enemies down hilltop by hilltop, house by house, block by bloody block. As General William Tecumseh Sherman said, "Every attempt to make war easy and safe will result in humiliation and disaster."

Repeatedly over the last century, Americans averted their eyes in the belief that events in remote places around the world need not engage the United States. How could the assassination of an Austrian archduke in the unknown Bosnia and Herzegovina affect Americans, or the annexation of a little patch of ground called Sudetenland, or a French defeat in a place called Dien Bien Phu, or the return of an obscure cleric to Tehran, or the radicalization of a Saudi construction tycoon's son?

In world affairs, "what seems to work best," the historian Donald Kagan wrote in his book *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*, "…is the possession by those states who wish to preserve the peace of the preponderant power and of the will to accept the burdens and responsibilities required to achieve that purpose." I believe the United States' National Defense Strategy provides a balanced approach to meeting those responsibilities and preserving the United States' freedom, prosperity, and security in the years ahead.

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Robert Michael Gates took office on Dec. 18, 2006 as the 22nd U. S. Secretary of Defense. Prior to this, Gates served for 26 years in the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council. Under President George H. W. Bush, he served as Director of Central Intelligence. On Dec. 1, 2008, President-elect Barack Obama announced his intention to have Gates remain as Secretary of Defense. ★

Mission of the Month

J O R D A N

The sun rises over Queen Alia International Airport terminal and runways in Amman, Jordan, in this rendering of plans for an expansion to the facility. USAID is helping the Jordanian government expand the airport to meet the demands of increasing numbers of travelers in the region.

Private Sector Helps Expand Amman Airport Terminal

Challenge

In recent years, Amman, Jordan, has become an important international destination for people traveling through the Middle East. When Jordan's government first opened Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) in May 1983, the terminal could accommodate around 5.5 million passengers per year, which seemed more than adequate.

Now the population in the region is growing at about 2.2 percent annually. Economic activity is also thriving, with imports increasing 20.8 percent and exports 21.2 percent per year. Annual increases in tourism are reported at about 6 percent.

All of these figures mean more airport traffic. The number of travelers is projected to double over the next two years and triple within the next 12 years. Without construction of an additional terminal, airport officials say, they cannot keep up with demand.

Innovative Response

Jordan is undertaking reforms that include an increase in private participation in the aviation sector. In support of these reforms, USAID has agreed to help construct a new airport terminal at QAIA.

With a hefty price tag of approximately $680 million, the Jordanian government would not be able to proceed with this project alone. Not only was financing a challenge, but finding the special technical expertise necessary to complete the project in the Middle East – let alone in Jordan – posed serious obstacles.

Jordan received a $1.3 million USAID grant to recruit and pay two international legal and technical firms to implement the new terminal project.

Working with USAID to find qualified candidates, the Jordanian government selected firms to apply high technical standards and perform in a legal and transparent manner. By operating under more efficient commercial practices rather than getting tangled up in bureaucratic red tape, these firms should employ solid management and design principles and allow Jordan to reduce costs.

"One of the most important activities that USAID supported as part of Jordan's privatization program was the first major PPP [public private partnership] transaction whereby the management of … QAIA was outsourced to the Airports International Group for a period of 25 years," said Jamal Al-Jabiri, former deputy director of the Economic Growth Office at USAID's Jordan mission.

"This was the first such transaction in Jordan and resulted in $700 million in infrastructure expansion to the airport as well as an improvement in service delivery that can already be felt by travelers transiting through the facility," he said.

Result

While traditional public procurement would have required Jordan to provide direct financing, partnering with USAID has allowed the country to finance all capital expenditures privately. This airport expansion builds the capacity of Jordan to serve as an international travel destination and shows the muscle that partnerships can bring to such projects.

"The private sector can mobilize financing and provide the necessary expertise to help meet the infrastructure needs of Jordan's growing economy," said Bernard Sheahan, the International Finance Corporation's advisory services director. "This project serves as a model and sets an important precedent for future initiatives. The design and transparency of the tender will encourage further private sector participation in the country's infrastructure projects."

The first phase of the expansion at QAIA will create enough space for 9 million passengers and the second phase should allow the airport to accommodate up to 12 million passengers. Phase one should be completed in the summer of 2011.

Projections suggest the government of Jordan will earn roughly $1 billion in taxes and revenues during the 25-year concession period. ★

INSIGHTS

FROM ACTING ADMINISTRATOR ALONZO FULGHAM

I am pleased and honored to have the opportunity to serve as Acting USAID Administrator during this historic transition period. As the Agency's chief operating officer since August 2006, I am familiar with the "front office" demands we place on all our operating units. However, having also headed the USAID mission in Afghanistan and served at USAID missions in Serbia, Georgia, Jordan, and Swaziland, I have a strong empathy and appreciation for the work carried out by our people in the field. As for next steps, as many of you know, I have followed the Boston Red Sox for years and I can't help but evoke a baseball metaphor: While I'm thrilled to make an appearance, like all short relief pitchers, I don't expect to pitch very many innings.

The transition from one administration to another provides an important opportunity for USAID personnel to demonstrate their commitment, leadership, and professionalism. Already, the transition documents and briefings that we prepared following the November elections have won high marks.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to brief Secretary of State Clinton on our programs and on the ongoing efforts to strengthen and expand our Agency. The warm welcome given to the new secretary on her visit to the Ronald Reagan Building—only her second day on the job—provided another opportunity to reinforce these themes.

Many of us were encouraged by the message she conveyed. "I believe in development," she said. "I believe with all my heart that it truly is an equal partner along with defense and diplomacy in the furtherance of America's national security."

These are unique times and we have important work to do during this transition period, even as we anticipate the arrival of our new senior leadership. We will also have much to do as the Senate confirmation hearings unfold.

The transition notwithstanding, the demands of our work rarely respect bureaucratic deadlines. Unexpected disasters, both human and man-made, will continue to occur. Our assistance—including alleviating suffering, feeding the hungry, advancing democracy and good governance, preventing and treating disease, and supporting economic growth—is as essential as ever. And, as we serve and partner with those in need, we have launched new efforts to renew USAID and ensure that we have the resources and staffing levels needed to achieve our shared mission.

These are exciting times for development as well as for USAID. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of our Agency. I am grateful for the opportunity to share in that mission and I look forward to our work together in the days ahead. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

BRIEFS

Accused Slayers of USAID's Granville, Rahama, on Trial

KHARTOUM, Sudan—Two Sudanese men on Jan. 21 denied in court that they were involved in the killing last year of USAID officer John Granville, 33, and his driver Abdelrahman Abbas Rahama, 39, but said that killing "American unbelievers" was honorable, Reuters reported.

The two are among five men accused of killing Granville and Rahama, who were returning home from New Year's Eve celebrations in Khartoum Jan. 1, 2008.

"Killing American unbelievers is an honor, but I was not involved in this case," Mohamed Makkawi Ibrahim Mohamed said. A second defendant, Abdel Basit al-Hajj Hassan, agreed with his statement. A third defendant, former army officer Mohamed Osman Yusuf Mohamed, also denied taking part in the killing. All three said earlier confessions were made under torture. The judge was expected to cross-examine the two remaining defendants the following week.

"The whole thing is crazy," said Granville's mother, Jane, in the *Buffalo News*. "This is a horrible time for us."

Sudanese prosecutor Muhammad al-Mustafa Musa said the suspects were members of a previously unknown terrorist group who came to Khartoum to murder Westerners.

Granville's mother resides in Buffalo, N.Y., and said distance and sparse media coverage of the trial have made it difficult for her to obtain accurate information. Hearings for the trial began in August but the judge adjourned the trial until September so the Granville family could appoint a lawyer to represent the family's interest in the Sudanese legal system. The trial was adjourned again in December due to the illness of the judge.

"John was a very selfless man who fell in love with Africa and was trying to make life better for people there," David Gavazzi, a family friend who gave the eulogy at Granville's funeral said in the *Buffalo News*. "This trial is never going to bring John back…. I can only hope that the best effort is given to bringing the men responsible to justice in the most appropriate way possible."

Congress Appoints Key Chairmen to Oversee USAID

WASHINGTON—The 111th Congress announced during the second week in January the chairman and ranking members of committees that oversee USAID operations.

Among these appointments are Sens. Daniel K. Inouye* (D-Hawaii) as chairman and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.) will serve as chairman and Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.) as ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) will serve as chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs and Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), recently nominated to be secretary of commerce, will serve as the ranking member. Rep. Nita M. Lowey (D-N.Y.) was to serve as chairwoman and Rep. Kay Granger* (R-Texas) will serve as ranking member for the House Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations.

Sen. John Kerry* (D-Mass.) is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) is ranking member. In the House, Rep. Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.) is chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) is ranking member.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.) is chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Sen. Susan M. Collins (R-Maine) is ranking member. Rep. Edolphus Towns* (D-N.Y.) is chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform and Rep. Darrell Issa* (R-Calif.) serves as ranking member.

Several other committees have jurisdiction over Food for Peace, a USAID- and USDA-managed program that uses U.S. food for overseas aid. Sen. Herbert Kohl (D-Wis.) is chairman and Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) is ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies.

Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) will serve as chairwoman and Jack Kingston (R-Ga.) will serve as ranking member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) is chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) is the ranking member. Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) is chairman and Rep. Frank D. Lucas (R-Okla.) ranking member for the House Committee on Agriculture.

**Indicates they did not previously hold this position.*

Guinea Aid Cut After Coup

Following a military coup after the death of Guinea's longtime strongman Lansana Conte, the State Department announced Jan. 6 that "the United States is suspending assistance to Guinea, with the exception of humanitarian aid and programs supporting the democratic process."

Most of USAID's $13-million budget for the past year in the West African nation of 10 million people focused on health and democracy—programs which will remain in place.

Humanitarian aid includes health and education assistance and PL 480-funded food aid which supports agriculture and health activities. Democratic process assistance includes USAID elections assistance and most Agency work on good governance—such as local governance and decentralization.

Some agriculture and natural resource management activities worth about $1 million may be suspended, as will military aid by the departments of State and Defense. The political situation, however, remains fluid, and specific program decisions may yet be altered.

Food Convoys Begin Trek Across Sahara

Food convoys for 250,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad began a 1,750-mile trek from Libya across the Sahara desert to refugee camps on the Sudan border, the U.N. World Food Program announced Jan. 13.

Some 58 trucks left Al Khufra in Libya in late December and were expected to reach northeastern Chad later in January, before seasonal rains. A second convoy of nearly 100 trucks departed Al Khufra Jan 11.

Somali Gunmen Release Aid Workers

NAIROBI, Kenya—Two aid workers kidnapped from Ethiopia by Somali gunmen more than three months ago were released Jan. 8 in good health, their organization said.

French aid group *Medecins du Monde* (Doctors of the World) said in a statement that Japanese worker Keiko Akahane, 32, and Dutchman Willem Sools, 27, were staying at a safe location after their release.

In a statement, *Medecins du Monde* quoted Sools as saying , "I regularly tell myself that I'm free; what a pleasure to see the stars!"

"I am in a dream!" Akahane said in the statement.

The two aid workers were seized in September in Ethiopia's eastern border region of Ogaden, where ethnic Somalis have been fighting for more than a decade for greater autonomy or independence, and taken to Mogadishu.

UN Food Agency Condemns Killing of Staff in Somalia

The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) said on Jan. 6 that a staff member was gunned down while monitoring a school feeding program in the south of the war-torn nation.

WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran said the killing of 44-year-old Somali national brahim Hussein Duale was a "shocking attack on one of our staff while he was doing his job."

Duale was shot by three masked gunmen while he was monitoring school feeding in a WFP-supported school in Yubsan village, six kilometers from the Gedo region capital of Garbahare in southern Somalia. Witnesses say the gunmen approached him while he was seated, ordered him to stand up, and then shot him. He is the third WFP staff member killed since August 2008 in Somalia.

UN Agency Delivers Food Aid to Urban Africans

The *Wall Street Journal* reported from Monrovia, Liberia, that "escalating hunger in African cities is forcing aid agencies accustomed to tackling food shortages in rural areas to scramble for strategies to address the more complex hunger problems in sprawling slums."

The shifting situation, aggravated by high food prices, has caused the the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) to reevaluate its methods. It "has plenty of experience trucking food into rural Africa, responding to shortages sparked by drought, famine and war, but in urban areas...the hurdles are different," said the *Journal*. As it develops urban approaches, the WFP must be careful to avoid affecting local livelihoods, so it began in 2008 to experiment with cash and voucher systems that would avoid upsetting local economies. So far, the WFP is working with governments and local aid groups to create programs in the West African cities of Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso, and Monrovia.

Zimbabwe to Charge Journalists $4,000 Fee

HARARE, Zimbabwe—The Zimbabwe government said it will demand that foreign reporters pay an annual fee of $4,000 to practice journalism.

In addition, foreign media groups must pay $10,000 for the application and $20,000 for accreditation, payable only in foreign currency, the government-controlled Media and Information Commission said Jan 8.

Many media organizations are banned from Zimbabwe. Those that do still operate there—including Reuters, The Associated Press, *Agence France-Presse*, and Al Jazeera—would have to pay the fee if they wanted to report from the country.

From news reports and other sources. ★

Literacy Hub Takes Off Under Afghan Ownership

Four years ago, USAID started a Web portal called the Literacy Hub to bring literacy information to policy makers and educators in the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region. Now the countries of the region have assumed control over the service.

Afghanistan is the first country in the region to take over control of the Hub, which aims to promote reading and other literacy skills. The transfer of control to the Afghan ministry of education at the end of October 2008 signaled that the effort had reached the holy grail of development projects—sustainability.

"The transfer of ownership from U.S. to regional hands shows that beneficiaries value the Hub enough to commit their own resources to its continuation, thus ensuring sustainability and regional ownership," said Vijitha Eyango, senior education advisor in USAID's Asia Bureau, who has directed the project since its inception.

The Hub's Web portal includes a database of best practices, links to literacy Web sites, a calendar of global literacy events, on-line tutorials for literacy professionals, and literacy research.

"The governments have shown an extraordinary commitment to carrying this initiative forward," said Sakil Malik, director for international development at the International Reading Association, which has run the Hub since 2006.

The BMENA Literacy Hub—www.literacyhub.org—is an online peer-reviewed, professional literacy community and resource center. It pulls together resources in English and Arabic. It also provides a central repository of literacy information for the region, allowing education officials, teachers, and students to share best practices, critique literacy research, and engage with their counterparts throughout the region. Literacy rates are low in the BMENA region, a swath of

see **LITERACY** on page 15 ▶

Anti-Trafficking Concerts Rock Crowds in Cambodia, Thailand

By Hal Lipper

SIEM REAP, Cambodia—Thinh Sean is bright, enterprising, and forever looking for new ways to earn enough money as he drives his three-wheeled taxi known as a "tuk tuk."

But he wasn't ferrying tourists to restaurants in his motorized rickshaw the evening of Dec. 7. His sole passenger was his fiancé, whom he took to a USAID-supported concert produced by the MTV Europe Foundation at Angkor Wat, the 12th-century temple. The concert was part of the MTV EXIT (End Exploitation and Trafficking) campaign, which has reached millions of people in Asia through broadcasts and the internet since its launch in 2007.

Cambodia's top artists as well as Placebo from the United Kingdom and The Click Five from the United States performed for free at the temple. This was the first rock concert staged at Angkor Wat and one of four MTV EXIT events held in Cambodia.

The free concerts and cultural events were launched in Laos, ramped up in Cambodia, and will take place in Nepal, Indonesia, and the Philippines this year.

Photo by Hal Lipper, USAID

Thaitanium, a popular hip-hop band in Thailand, at the MTV EXIT concert in Bangkok. From left: Day, Khan, and Way. MTV VJ Poon is at far right.

The Angkor Wat concert was for 1,500 ticket holders so as not to overrun the UNESCO World Heritage Site. But five days later, more than 35,000 young people packed Olympic Stadium in the capital of Phnom Penh to hear The Click Five and several of Cambodia's top bands, including the country's most popular singer, Preap Sovath, who narrates the Cambodian version of the television show "Traffic: An MTV Special."

The documentary, funded by USAID, is a harrowing account of three people who were trafficked in Asia. It has been translated into 13 languages and broadcast across much of the continent.

As the campaign's Khmer spokesperson, Preap Sovath also appeared at MTV EXIT concerts in Sihanoukville and Kampong Cham, Cambodia.

The deputy chief of the U.S. embassy, Piper A.W. Campbell, urged the Angkor Wat audience to be suspicious of job offers that seemed too good to be true; and USAID's Cambodia Mission Director Erin Soto joined performers in Phnom Penh to warn about the dangers of human trafficking.

Two nights later, MTV staged a concert in downtown Bangkok.

Photo by Hal Lipper, USAID

Yuk Thinratha sings beside her guitarist at the MTV EXIT concert in Phnom Penh.

U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Eric G. John joined The Click Five and Thai and Burmese artists, each speaking against human trafficking. Volunteers distributed wallet-sized cards with anti-trafficking information in Thai and Burmese.

Tuk-tuk driver Thinh Sean received a similar card in Khmer when he attended the show at Angkor Wat—along with a blue rubber anti-trafficking bracelet that he gave to his girlfriend.

"I got to see my first concert," he said the next afternoon. "And I learned that I have to be more cautious when looking for work." ★

BULGARIAN-AMERICAN ENTERPRISE FUND PAYS U.S. BACK $27 MILLION

By Ashtar Analeed Marcus

Seventeen years ago, USAID invested $55 million to assist Bulgaria in its economic transition after the fall of the Soviet Union. The fund USAID created—the Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund (BAEF)—helped Bulgaria by creating the country's first home mortgage program, first bonds, and a pool of capital to encourage entrepreneurship and investing in small and medium enterprises.

Now BAEF has returned the favor and, in an unusual gesture, presented a $27.5 million check to USAID Nov. 24. The money will be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

In addition to achieving exceptional development impact in Bulgaria, the fund also achieved an extraordinary financial return. Over 17 years, it invested $380 million in 4,500 small- and mid-sized companies that employed thousands of people. The balance of the fund's investment proceeds, estimated at $400 million, will endow a charitable legacy foundation—the America for Bulgaria Foundation—to continue support for private sector development in Bulgaria.

Photos by James Brackin, USAID

Board member Joe Borgatti shakes USAID's Ken Yamashita's hand as board members of the Bulgarian American Enterprise Fund pay back the U.S. Treasury $27.5 million from a USAID-funded project. Also pictured from USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia: Maureen Dugan, director of the Economic Growth Office (center), and Steve Eastham, senior capital markets advisor (second from right).

"I call it smart aid," said Joe Borgatti, director of the America for Bulgaria Foundation. "To combine public investment with private

see **ENTERPRISE** on page 14 ▶

PARAGUAY ENDS 61 YEARS OF ONE-PARTY RULE

The year 2008 marked a momentous period in Paraguay's history.

In April, former Roman Catholic bishop Fernando Lugo won a decisive electoral victory, overturning 61 years of uninterrupted one-party rule by the Colorado Party (known formally as the *Asociacion Nacional Republicana)*. This was the first peaceful and democratic transition of power between political parties in the nearly 200 years since Paraguay's independence in 1811.

USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance (DG) helped build public trust by supporting international and domestic election observers through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The election period was tense, with polls indicating a tight race between the Colorado party candidate Blanca Ovelar, and Lugo.

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THE REGIONS

AFRICA

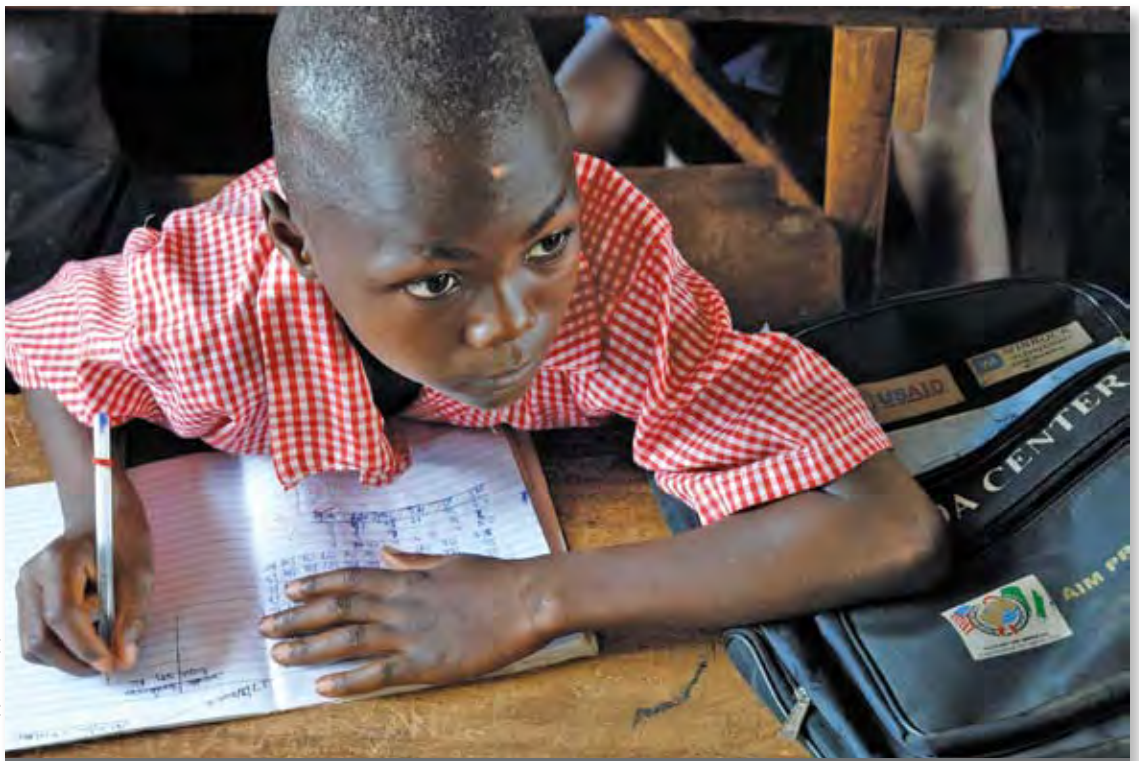


Photo by Jide Adeniyi-Jones

Children can enroll in math, literacy, English, and other classes at the Acada learning center in Okpella, Edo State, in Nigeria.

NIGERIA MISSION PROVIDES EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TO AIDS ORPHANS

By Ebun Aleshinloye

ABUJA, Nigeria—Agnes Oreye, a 43-year-old widow who lives in Agenebode, Edo State, cares for her four children as well as two other children who lost their parents to HIV/AIDS. She is able to feed her extended family from the rice, cowpeas, and other products USAID provides her to sell.

The USAID mission has been helping families like Oreye's care for orphans and vulnerable children by providing them business education, equipment and, as in this case, materials she can sell.

USAID has spent nearly $68 million here over the last four years on a menu of programs aimed at shoring up the lives of children affected by HIV/AIDS and the people who care for them. The funding, primarily from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, has helped the mission, other U.S. government agencies, and Nigerian government workers support nearly 67,000 orphans and vulnerable children in 20 out of 36 states in the country. The program in which Oreye participates supports 5,470 vulnerable children and 937 caregivers in 11 states.

With the largest population in Africa, Nigeria is home to an estimated 1.2 million children who have been orphaned or made vulnerable to HIV infection as a result of having lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. And those numbers are expected to grow in the coming years despite advances in care and treatment.

While losing a parent to AIDS is traumatic by itself, children who are left behind endure stress, face withdrawal from school, and risk social stigma from their communities because of the disease that killed their parent. Some of the children are also at increased risk for malnutrition and sexual exploitation.

As parents become HIV infected and ill, the family savings is spent on care. As a result, household capacity to provide for children's basic needs declines and an increasing number of children are being forced to take up the daunting responsibilities of supporting the family.

Another program, this one a few miles from Agenebode in Okpella, is an Acada learning center. It is one of 11 funded by USAID designed to provide math, literacy, and life skills to more than 2,100 Nigerian children who are not able to attend school because of HIV/AIDS. The children are taught for three hours in the afternoon five days a week, and are provided with books, writing materials, uniforms, sandals, and school bags for the 10 months they spend there.

Once they complete the Acada program, the students are integrated back into the formal school system.

The centers receive additional support from traditional rulers and their local communities. Alhaji Tafida Abubakar Ila, the emir of Rano in Kano state, mobilized the local elite to support 75 orphans and vulnerable children at the Acada learning center in the town. The wealthy patrons pay the salaries of the teachers and provide school materials and food for the students. Umah Support Group, a local USAID partner, was instrumental in gaining the emir's support.

USAID's Nigeria mission is also involved in reducing the stigma and discrimination children affected by HIV/AIDS often face. For out-of-school youth, the mission also provides preventive education and skills so they can learn how to protect themselves from HIV infection. ★

LATIN AMERICA

Guatemalan Journalists Receive Training in Investigative Reporting

By Eduardo Flores-Trejo

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala—Journalists in Guatemala recently had the opportunity to brush up on their investigative reporting skills.

Some 240 radio, television, and print journalists attended workshops on investigative reporting between July and December.

Costa Rican journalist Giannina Segnini, who heads the investigation unit of *La Nación*, and Ricardo Uceda, director of Instituto Prensa y Sociedad in Peru, taught the seminars which lasted up to four days and were run by USAID's Transparency and Anti-Corruption Program and Universidad Francisco Marroquin.

Reporters learned how to use media technology and computer assisted reporting, make the case for investigative reporting to news agencies, and work in difficult political environments. The working journalists also had a chance to discuss their experiences in news gathering.

Rodrigo Peréz, a reporter at *Siglo XXI* newspaper said that "the press plays a watchdog role over government. Training in investigative journalism and computer assisted reporting is a key contribution to strengthening the tools needed for conducting more effective and accurate investigations. This translates into journalists who are better prepared to disclose real and potential corruption …."

Photo by Eduardo Flores-Trejo

Guatemalans read local papers.

According to Eduardo Flores, director of the Transparency and Anti-Corruption Program in Guatemala, journalists discovered technology can make up for a lack of resources.

Geovany Contreras, who also reports for *Siglo XXI*, said that "computer assisted reporting opened up a new world of possibilities to conduct investigations online. I was used to more basic and traditional sources, but now I have the possibility of deepening my investigations via the Internet. I have a possibility of being able to clarify issues online that were not evident before. Using IT means that sources are no longer limited to only those in

see **GUATEMALA** on page 14 ▶

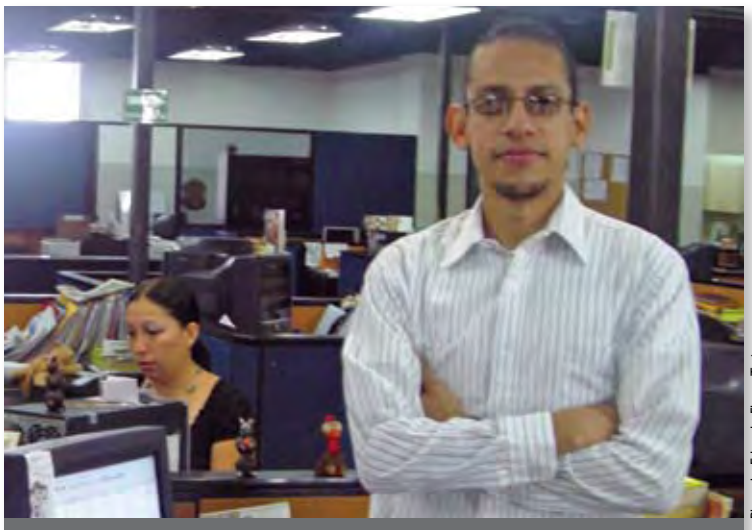


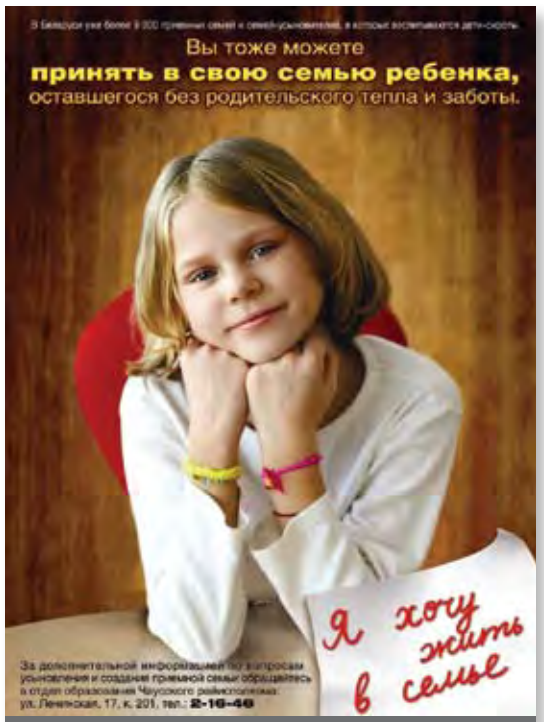
Photo by Eduardo Flores-Trejo

Geovany Contreras of *Siglo XXI* participates in an investigative reporting seminar to help journalists in Guatemala use the latest technology and techniques to gather and report their stories.

EUROPE & EURASIA

Belarus Trains Parents to Adopt Foster Children

By Larissa Komarova



A poster encourages taking an orphaned child into a family.

CHAUSY, Belarus—Fyodor, 13, and his sister Raya, 16, were recently taken from their family by government authorities after their mother had been denied parental rights for child neglect and other problems related to alcohol.

Had that happened even a year ago, both teenagers would have ended up in a state institution. Through USAID's Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children project, however, Fyodor and Raya, whose last names are being withheld, are now living with a foster family.

According to the Ministry of Education, more than 30,000 orphans and children in Belarus do not live with their parents. About 80 percent are "social orphans"—children whose parents are unable or unwilling to care for them. Despite government efforts to find foster care placements, over 50 percent of these children reside in government-run institutions, such as boarding schools and orphanages. The USAID orphans project, implemented by the Christian Children's Fund (CCF), is developing alternative care models in Belarus to increase the number of children brought up by their natural families or in a family-like environment.

Until recentl y in Chausy, a small town in the western part of Belarus with a population of 25,000, nearly all orphaned children were routinely placed in the local orphanage. Very few were adopted or taken in by a foster family.

With financial and technical support from USAID and CCF, the Chausy State Child Protection Service launched a public awareness campaign on alternative care and training for foster and adoptive families in July 2007. With its "You too can take an orphan in your family" slogan, the campaign sought to motivate citizens to adopt or to consider foster care.

Local child protection specialists report that new training in Belarus—originally developed by the Child Welfare League of America and Illinois Department of Family and Children's Services—provides a framework for the recruitment, preparation, and selection of foster and adoptive parents.

The model has been particularly successful in Chausy. Child protection experts note that parents trained in the program are committed to the principle "I am there for a child, not a child for me"; understand the importance of a child's contacts with his or her biological parents; and are more willing to work collaboratively to resolve problems.

The family with whom Fyodor and Raya were placed, and others, shed a commonly-held belief in Belarus that it is better to take in a child at a very young age. Now there is real hope for older orphaned children.

In Chausy, the number of orphaned children in alternative care has increased 75 percent. Since the campaign began last summer, the number of inquiries from citizens about adoption and foster care has increased six-fold and training enrollment is on the rise. Fifteen of the 37 parents who completed training during the past year are now adoptive or foster parents; there is now a waiting list of families who have completed training and are willing to take in a child. Today in Chausy, these children are no longer placed in state institutions—they have a choice: adoption or foster family care.

USAID is currently working to disseminate Chausy's experience to other communities across the country. ★

MIDDLE EAST

Aref Husseini (standing) is one of 22 social innovators from the Arab world to receive grants backed by USAID. He promotes scientific education among young people in Palestine.

Agency Grants Made to 22 Creative Leaders in the Middle East

By Lori Severens

CAIRO, Egypt—In December 2008, USAID launched a new network of social entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa—22 community leaders from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine were chosen to receive grants in support of their work on pressing social and economic problems.

These social innovators, selected from a pool of 150, are pioneers of change within their communities. They offer creative approaches and promising solutions through education, microenterprise, social justice, and arts and culture. The program is funded through a public-private partnership with the Synergos Institute and donors from their global philanthropic circle. The institute works to combat global poverty and

see **CAIRO** on page 15 ▶

ASIA

Boosting Job Opportunities for Youth in Sri Lanka

By Vibeke Greni and Lorna Middlebrough

Photo by Gemunu Amarasinghe

The Joint Apparel Association Forum is partnering with the private apparel sector and vocational training authorities to place vocational school graduates into jobs in Sri Lanka's apparel industry.

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—USAID has built and equipped nine new vocational education schools that together will graduate over 2,000 students per year. All the schools are located in areas hard hit by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, in the south and east of this island nation.

Each of the nine vocational centers will provide classes in trades currently in high demand by the Sri Lankan private sector, such as apparel making, welding, electronic repair, masonry, carpentry, and information and communications technology (ICT). The schools will also teach English.

The private sector has identified ICT as an especially critical area of training to ensure economic growth, and ICT training has proved especially popular with students. In one school in eastern Sri Lanka, more than 500 students turned up to register for 143 slots. ICT skills have become a requirement in Sri Lanka, as companies need employees who can use technology to help businesses compete.

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PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

COMPANIES JOIN FORCES WITH USAID IN DEVELOPING WORLD

When corporations and foundations in developing economies need help in providing clean water, fighting human trafficking or financing coffee production, they increasingly seek out USAID expertise through the Agency's Global Development Alliance.

For example, a key ingredient in Coca-Cola Company products is clean water—a scarce resource in many parts of the world. So Coca-Cola sought to support healthy watersheds that ensure a continuous supply of clean water. In 17 countries—spanning Africa, Asia and Latin America—USAID and Coca-Cola work together to improve municipal water systems so households benefit from increased access to clean water.

In Mali's capital of Bamako, some charged that the local Coca-Cola bottling plant itself was responsible for polluting a nearby stream. Although the bottling plant discharge met government standards, Coca-Cola worked with USAID to improve the municipal water system so that treated wastewater would exceed the standards before making its way to farmers' fields.

USAID brought technical expertise in wastewater management, extensive in-country experience, and networks to the project. As a result, at least 22,000 people got access to clean water for irrigation and other uses.

In Latin and Central America, corporations such as Starbucks have linked up with USAID to help finance more than $12 million in loans for rural entrepreneurs. MTV partnered with USAID to fight human trafficking in 25 countries across Asia.

USAID experts say they know what it takes to make development programming successful, whether the focus is on watersheds, finance, or human trafficking.

USAID understands development challenges and it has the technical expertise, networks and background knowledge of the local scene. This allows the Agency to help the private sector address challenges these businesses would be hard pressed to solve on their own. And as the global economy becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of partnerships between the public and private sectors is growing.

Since 2001, USAID has employed its own model of public-private partnerships, the Global Development Alliance, to link the Agency's resources with the skills, resources, and creativity of the private sector for sustainable growth.

USAID missions report that they have formed more than 900 partnerships to attract $9.6 billion in partner resources for development. The Agency is focusing on building fewer, yet more considered partnerships that emphasize the long-term value they bring to communities.

In this special feature, *FrontLines* highlights some of the public-private partnerships in development. ★

Photo by PADF

Photo by José Valladares, Mercy Corps

A worker in the village of El Camán packs pre-washed carrots in hygienic plastic bags to ready them for market as part of an alliance in Guatemala that increases incomes for small-scale farmers and their families.

Afghan Reality TV Contestant Wins With Recycling

By Becca Acuna and Kate Olsen

The next big Afghan star doesn't sing, doesn't dance, and doesn't act—he recycles.

Faizul Haq Moshquani, a father of nine from Kandahar, isn't the typical Afghan celebrity. But as the winning finalist of *Dream and Achieve*, a reality TV show modeled after Donald Trump's *The Apprentice*, Moshquani has stolen the limelight and captured the imagination of thousands of would-be entrepreneurs across the country.

For the past three months, Afghans have tuned into *Dream and Achieve*, or *Fikr Wa Talesh*, and followed Moshquani and six other finalists as they competed to prove they had the most compelling, innovative, socially responsible, and viable business concept.

On the night of Aug. 14, 2008, Moshquani and his plastic-recycling business plan went on to claim the top spot against competitor Mariam Jami Al Ahmadi's jam-making business. As the winner, Moshquani will receive $20,000 to help make his business dreams a reality.

"With this prize, we will relocate our factory and build a micro-hydro power plant so that we have electricity at no cost," said Moshquani. "This will help us to grow the business."

Half of Afghanistan's population lives below the poverty line on $1 a day.

Dream and Achieve, which is the result of a Global Development Alliance between USAID, TOLO TV, the American University in Afghanistan, and the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan, sought to inspire budding entrepreneurs and promote products and ideas that meet the needs of those at the lowest levels of the economic ladder.

"There are lots of ordinary Afghans engaged in small business, and this TV series has done a great job to show how those entrepreneurs are making a difference in their communities," said Noor Delawari, a guest judge on the show and an advisor to Afghan President Hamid Karzai on private sector affairs.

"This [show] demonstrates the impact of individuals with the commitment and drive to achieve their dreams."

Over the course of 13 episodes, the six finalists worked with the USAID to improve their business plans and craft their presentations for the judges, who would determine the winner. Even the 12 contestants who did not make the top six received loan assistance, training in export strategies, Web site development, and other services.

"We were excited about the show because it exposes over a million Afghans to new concepts and builds capacity for business development," says David Elliot, an advisor for USAID. ★

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

In Trinidad and Tobago, this new bridge quickly replaced a collapsed bridge thanks to the Disaster Management Alliance between USAID, the Pan American Development Foundation, and more than 60 corporate partners.

Migrant Workers Invest in Home Countries

Remittances can be a financial life line between migrant workers and their families and friends back home in developing countries. The money is also proving to have profound importance to the economies in these countries.

In 2007, migrant workers worldwide sent more than $300 billion to developing countries—almost twice the amount of foreign direct investment. And in the United States, where total resource flows to developing countries amounted to $158 billion in 2005, more than a quarter of that money came from recorded remittances.

To harness this power, USAID is working with other development institutions, the private sector, and migrant, or diaspora, communities in the United States to make these remittances go farther and work harder for beneficiaries.

Through the new disapora Networks Alliance, USAID and its partners are awarding grants to migrant entrepreneurs and organizations for projects geared toward investing back in their home countries.

"Diaspora direct investment offers immense possibilities given the willingness, motivations, and resiliency of the diaspora's investment approach in these risky markets," said Thomas Debass, a senior GDA advisor at USAID. He added that, through the alliance, "USAID will address an area that has long been neglected by development practitioners and policymakers." ★

Photo by Café Bom Dia

A coffee farmer in rural Brazil clears brush between his coffee trees. The Brazil Responsible Sourcing Global Development Alliance trains 3,600 farmers to grow organic and Fair Trade Certified™ organic coffee.

Photo by Jason Howe, DAI

The Concord Women in Kunduz project teaches women, mostly widows, to become self-sufficient through factory work such as sewing.

Photo by EcoLogic Finance

In rural Peru, coffee farmers wash coffee cherries at a community washing station made possible by a Global Development Alliance between Starbucks, USAID, and EcoLogic Finance.

In the Pirang District of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, a woman scoops cocoa beans that will be weighed and graded for quality at a cocoa trading station as part of the Amarta Sulawesi Kakao Alliance. At right, a man weighs and grades a sack of cocoa as the farmer watches.

Photo by Lorin Kavanaugh-Ulku, USAID

CORPORATIONS AND USAID PREPARE TO COPE WITH DISASTER OVERSEAS

Many corporations don't think about the impact of disasters on their employees, facilities, value chains, and customers until after devastation. Once tragedy strikes, aid agencies and corporations alike have to scramble to provide disaster relief and reconstruction assistance.

Witness the recent disaster in China's Sichuan province: corporations such as Chevron, Cisco Systems, Proctor & Gamble, and Wal-Mart pledged almost $33 million in the days following the earthquake.

Now, through the Disaster Management Alliance, companies are working with governments to mitigate a natural disaster before it strikes. Across the Latin American and Caribbean region, USAID, in collaboration with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America, and the Association of Contingency Planners, work with the private sector, governments, and community leaders on disaster preparedness. Private sector partners number more than 500 and include Merck, Royal Caribbean Cruises, Del Oro, and Cargill.

The alliance has leveraged $2 million to reduce risk in 150 communities with 290,000 people in nine countries.

The Disaster Management Alliance model aligns the business community's interests with the local community's needs. "This is beyond [corporate social responsibility] and an evolving model of public-private collaboration," said Louis Alexander, senior program director for PADF. ★

WHERE IN THE WORLD. . .

Drawn to Disasters, North Dakota Native Makes a Difference in Iraq

BAGHDAD—"When the call came that they needed volunteers, I knew I had to respond."

Tamra "Tami" Halmrast-Sanchez said that is what sealed her decision to sign up for a six-month tour with USAID in war-torn Iraq in May 2008.

The disaster management expert has spent most of her 22-year professional career working in tenuous situations—from famines to hurricanes and from earthquakes to floods. She has hopped continents to provide food to displaced civilians or erect make-shift shelters for survivors as part of her work with USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

Now Halmrast-Sanchez is in the thick of things in Iraq. She is putting her experience and skills behind a number of programs aimed at helping the country—and its citizens—rebuild.

Growing up in Bismarck, N.D., Halmrast-Sanchez was sure she would be a teacher like her father with a sideline in sports—her father was a history teacher and wrestling coach—but fell under the spell of adventure and enlisted in the Peace Corps. Once in Guatemala, she set her far-reaching sights on rebuilding lives.

"My father instilled in me the importance of service to one's country. And I chose to come to Iraq because I know this is the right thing to do," says Halmrast-Sanchez in a soft, unhurried voice.

Over the past six months, Halmrast-Sanchez has lived with both traditional and embedded PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams) at forward operating base Loyalty, in New Baghdad, and in Hillah, just south of the capital, Baghdad. She has toiled with her colleagues from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. military to help Iraqis rebuild their country.

Recently, she volunteered to work in one of the toughest neighborhoods and is now covering Sadr City and other areas of Northeast Baghdad. Halmrast-Sanchez is working to strengthen the management skills of city and governorate administrators to improve the delivery of municipal services like water, sewer, electricity, and trash disposal.

"On one hand it is exhilarating to be working with dedicated people on trying to improve the living conditions in Baghdad, but on the other hand it can be frustrating because they are learning how to take care of the problems themselves, instead of having the central government do everything for them as it was in the past," Halmrast-Sanchez said.

Photo by Larry Tabash

Tami Halmrast-Sanchez (standing, second from left) visits the Medina Market in Baghdad's Shaab District in September 2008.

She says she is most proud of the projects that focus on equipping widows with new skills and alternate livelihoods.

Vocational training for women in sewing and tailoring, computer and mobile-phone maintenance, and cosmetology is the start of a solid and sustainable future, she says. In addition, small loans and grants offered through USAID's microfinance programs help Iraqis to kick-start businesses, something they could not do before.

So far USAID has spent more than $6 billion on programs designed to stabilize communities; foster economic and agricultural growth; and build the capacity of the national, local, and provincial governments to respond to the needs of the Iraqi people. ★

Christine Lyons, Who Awarded Agency's Largest Iraq Reconstruction Contract, Dies

Christine Lyons, 58, died Dec. 29 in Washington D.C. For 25 years, Lyons served as a USAID Foreign Service Officer throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Christine Lyons

She began her career in 1984 as a commodity management officer with the Agency, and she held her first overseas post in Honduras. Five years later, Lyons worked in Somalia and as a contracting officer to the USAID mission in East Africa. With the exception of tours in India and Washington, D.C., she served in East Africa from 1990 to 1995, again from 1997 to 2000, and then most recently from 2004 to 2008.

Lyons awarded the largest construction contract in Agency history—the $1.8 billion contract for Iraq reconstruction—which upgraded Iraq's infrastructure and delivered essential electricity, potable water, sanitation, and project management services. In addition, Lyons managed many complex awards under extreme urgency.

Known as a mentor to her colleagues at the Agency, Lyons also devoted personal support to an orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya. She is survived by her daughter, Djanyeba Lyons, of Atlanta, Ga. ★

NOVEMBER 23, 2008 – DECEMBER 20, 2008

PROMOTED

Michael Ashkouri
Contract Specialist

Linda C. Atkinson
Administrative Officer

Theodore Grolimund
Supervisory Auditor

Lisa M. McClennon
Supervisory Criminal Investigator

Michael Metzler
Program Analyst

Gladys B. Parker
Human Resources Specialist

Timothy J. Rice
IT Specialist (INFOSEC)

Karen M. Tinker
Management & Program Analyst

Travis W. White
Administrative Support Assistant

REASSIGNED

Debra M. Banks
Asia/SPO/SPPM to LAC/CAR

Acasia Barrett
HR/OD to GH/PDMS

Robert Barton
COMP/NE/OJT to Afghanistan/OPPD

Valerie Chien
E&E/ECA to E&E/EA

Jo Jean Elenes
COMP/NE/OJT to East Africa/PH

Karl Galle
COMP/NE/OJT to Egypt/PO

Peter R. Hubbard
Guyana to COMP/FS

Nancy Lowenthal
COMP/NE/OJT to Mozambique/JOPA

Jerry Marcus
COMP/NE/OJT to Egypt/PPS

Julia V. Nenon
COMP/FSLT to Ghana/PPD

Allyson Phelps
COMP/NE/OJT to Peru/PDP

Sharon D. Sadler
M/CIO/KM to AA/LAC

Sally E. Verser
HR/CSP/PO to COMP/LT TRNG

Lee Wilbur
COMP/NE/OJT to Egypt/HRH

Andrew Winters
Honduras/DP to COMP/FS

RETIRED

Charles Richard Aanenson

Harry F. Birnholz

George Carner

Michael Farbman

Nicholas A. Jenks

Richard A. Lawrence

Ellen Leddy

Jeffrey R. Lee

Dayton L. Maxwell

Margaret McCarthy

Kim Q. Randall

Dwight A. Smith

John R. Thomas

MOVED ON

Erica Copeland

James Drennan

Scott D. Jeffcoat

Kelly McCray

Stephanie N. Molina

McKinley Posely

IN MEMORIAM

Norman R. Ashton, 87, died Dec. 27 in Bethesda, Md. Ashton was a career Foreign Service Officer who joined USAID's predecessor agency in 1956. He served in Yugoslavia, Senegal, Cyprus, Turkey, and Afghanistan. According to the *Washington Post*, Ashton stayed behind on Cyprus while his family was evacuated to Beirut during the outbreak of war between the Turkish and Greek factions in 1963. In 1971, Ashton returned to Washington and worked in the Bureau for Asia and Near East as executive director of management. He retired from USAID in 1976, but remained active as a consultant for the State Department. Earlier Ashton participated in the World War II invasion of Normandy landing on Omaha Beach. After his discharge from the military in 1945, he served as a civilian employee of the American Battle Monuments Commission, participating in the establishment of the military cemeteries of St. Laurent and St. James, now known as the Normandy and Brittany Cemeteries. ★

Agency Helps Albania Cope with Trafficking, Improve Crops

VLORA, Albania—A nondescript building in this small Albanian city is a shelter for women who have escaped sexual slavery and other violent abuse. On a recent visit there were 14 women staying in the shelter, but the number of residents fluctuates regularly.

USAID has supported the women's shelter, whose location is guarded and maintained under tight security.

It is one of a series of projects USAID backs in Albania—including agriculture, health, democracy and governance, and rule of law. Albania is one of the poorest countries in Europe—it was for decades one of the most isolated countries in the Communist world—loyal only to Maoist China.

Thirteen of the women at the shelter are between 13 and 25 years old. One is but seven.

"This saved our lives," said some of the women when they met with former USAID Press Director David Snider, on a visit to Albania in June.

The women are getting psychological and medical support in additional to vocational training and basic education. For those who have low security concerns, the shelter helps the women find jobs after completing vocational training. Those with high security cases spend their days in the shelter, knitting, playing cards, watching TV, and waiting until the Albanian state can provide a durable solution to their security concerns. Some women have been waiting two and a half years for this freedom, one waited for over five years. The women also try to get social assistance from the state, which is reluctant to acknowledge the extent of the trafficking for prostitution.

Photo by David Snider, USAID

Albanian farmers display fresh tomatoes grown with U.S. irrigation, agricultural and greenhouse assistance.

The shelter is run under a six-year, $7.5 million program for anti-trafficking work with the government of Albania. This includes grants to civil society and technical assistance to anti-trafficking officials.

One young woman told of being kidnapped and smuggled into a European Union country by speedboat. She was subsequently held in slave-like conditions and forced to prostitute herself in private apartments for over five years. Her situation came to the attention of authorities, who deported her back to Albania. Her testimony led to the prosecution of her pimp, who was eventually released for insufficient evidence. The woman now lives in fear that the pimp will some day kill her.

The women told Snider they intended to stay in the shelter for protection. Since 1998, some 1,500 women have benefited from the services the shelter provides, such as: protection, accommodation, foster care, mentoring, psychological and medical care, counseling, legal services, reintegration, educational support, vocational training, and job placement.

Eventually, the women are reintegrated with their families or move to independent living situations.

Another USAID project reduces corruption in government services by streamlining access and eliminating the bureaucratic red tape that encourages extortion and bribery. The Agency refurbished the National Registration Center, which opened in September 2007, and helped set up its computer system. Clerks were trained to assist people in the use of the online systems. Starting a business, paying taxes, and public procurement are now carried out online.

Snider also visited the construction site of a plant that processes oil from aromatic herbs and spices—The Xherdo Co.—which expects to employ 40 full-time workers and engage 250 herb collectors. USAID helped the owner to draw up contracts and market the herbs in Germany. Herbs and spices are the second largest Albanian export, after fish packaging. Sage, basil, and oregano are the main herbs.

"The Albanian herb and spice industry has grown significantly and has become competitive in the world market due to the assistance of the USAID program," said Xhevit Hysenaj, owner of the Xherdo Company in Maminas, Durres.

Snider also visited a watermelon farm and wholesale market for melons, potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, and carrots in Lushnje, about a half-hour drive south of the capital, Tirana. U.S. support for modern irrigation technologies has driven yields up by 15 to 20 percent. The project encouraged the creation of a farmers association; and helped introduced drip irrigation, lines of credit, and loan guarantees.

Snider saw boxes of colorful tomatoes being hauled off to market thanks to USAID help with technology, financing and, especially, road improvements. ★

Photo by David Snider, USAID

A cargo ship sails off of Albania's Adriatic shoreline.

Students Win Grant for Cell Phone Project to Detect Famine

A team of Columbia University graduate students won a $10,000 grant from USAID in the Agency's first competition for innovators who use cell phones and other mobile technology to advance development.

The Columbia team hopes to teach health workers in Malawi and other developing countries to work with the Ministry of Health and the U.N. Children's Fund to use cell phones to collect height and weight data, said Kirsten Bokenkamp, one of the students with the winning project, RapidSMS Child Malnutrition Surveillance.

This information—which can determine if famine or malnutrition is occurring—is then sent by text message to Ministry of Health offices in the main cities of the country. Previously such data was collected on paper and mailed in, delaying data collection by days or weeks.

"RapidSMS text messages have been used for inventory but never for health and nutrition data," said Bokenkamp.

The announcement of the winner was made Jan. 8 in a ceremony held at the Newseum in Washington.

The two runners-up—who each received $5,000 grants—were ClickDiagnostics and Ushahidi v.2.

ClickDiagnostics trains health workers in rural Bangladesh, Egypt, and other countries to use cell phones to take photos of patients with skin diseases, eye maladies, and other visible conditions. The phones are programmed to prompt the health worker to ask a series of questions of the patient that help a physician determine the illness. Both the photo and the patient responses are sent by phone to doctors in nearby cities who then provide a diagnosis and prescribe treatment otherwise not available to the rural poor.

Ushahidi, which means "testimony" in Swahili, used text messaging from witnesses to tribal violence in Kenya to draw up a map of danger zones people should avoid. That map was then made available to media to help the public stay safe. The system also is working in Gaza and the Congo.

The three winners were among 115 projects submitted to an online competition, with the public invited to log on and offer feedback.

Other projects which were not among the top three included: solar-powered refrigerators to store perishable medicine, and a call center for research to prevent the sale of counterfeit goods. Further information on these projects is at www.globaldevelopment-commons.net.

The competition, called the Development 2.0 Challenge, was developed by USAID's Global Development Commons. ★

AWARDS CEREMONY 2008

OGDEN from page 1

Ellyn Ogden holds a premature baby in Afghanistan.

peace," Ogden said. "You have to vaccinate even in conflict. Reaching children in times of conflict is a challenge.

"For example, during the fighting in eastern D.R. Congo in 2000 people were displaced and health workers were afraid to move. There is suspicion as to why they move, what they carry, why they go house to house.

"I was asked to go to D.R. Congo because I was seen as a credible emissary to discuss with various factions at a higher leadership level what polio eradication was about, what was the experience at local levels with cease fires, and to hammer out a system so commanders would send orders down the chain for days of tranquility to allow safe passage for vaccinators and allow children to be immunized."

At the headquarters of the three main factions, each agreed to a vaccination truce. "We crossed the lines and had back-channel arrangements done with knowledge of the U.S. ambassador in Kinshasa and the D.R. Congo government," Ogden said.

Agreement was reached on the dates of the immunization campaigns, how the vaccine would be transported and the need to assure the vaccine remained chilled so it did not spoil. All the logistics information was to be passed down the chain of command so there would be no misunderstandings.

"I came with data slides—my maps of polio," said Ogden. "I said I was only there for polio and did not engage in any discussion outside of polio. I kept very focused."

Since 1997, Ogden has been the Agency's worldwide polio eradication coordinator. She spends about 40 percent of her time overseas—away from her husband and two sons—as she battles fresh outbreaks of the crippling disease. In Washington, working closely with the regional bureaus and missions, she manages the Agency's $32 million polio budget.

Polio is a highly contagious virus that invades the nervous system. In the worst cases, it can cause paralysis, permanent disability, and death. When global eradication began in 1988, there were 125 countries with 350,000 cases of childhood paralysis each year, Ogden said. To date, the U.S. government has provided about a quarter of the funding to the effort.

By 2000, polio was wiped out in much of Asia and Africa. But four countries never stopped transmission—India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

In 2003, superstition and rumors led officials in northern Nigeria to halt polio vaccinations and the disease quickly re-infected people in 12 countries. Ogden helped negotiate a resumption of the vaccination program.

Eradication programs are especially tough because all children under age 5 must be vaccinated at least seven to 10 times, and in some countries, even more, to stop poliovirus transmission. Each case of paralysis means possibly 200 other infections without any symptoms.

Afghanistan and Pakistan share a common strain of poliovirus which moves easily between the two countries as people frequently migrate across the border. This year, partly due to insecurity and poor quality vaccination campaigns, polio spread throughout Pakistan. So Ogden is working on improving the quality of campaigns to reach children there and to minimize international spread of the virus.

"People ask me 'Why polio? We have so many other health problems.'" Ogden said. "The answer is we have the money, equipment, and an effective vaccine. This is something we can do now. We have a 13 cents-a-dose vaccine that works. Polio eradication is do-able in a short time if everyone works together."

"My heart is in the field, in the villages, searching for children to immunize," she added. "I spend a lot of time in the field with the teams going door to door, making sure they ask for kids, how many, where are they, when they are coming back. We can't make a half-hearted effort to eradicate polio." ★ – *B.B.*

Agency Staff Recognized at Annual Ceremony Marking Achievements

USAID's annual awards ceremony Dec. 17 at the Ronald Reagan Building's amphitheatre gave staff in and outside Washington an opportunity to recognize the achievements of some of their peers in the Agency. Former Administrator Henrietta Fore, who handed out awards during the event, called USAID extraordinary and congratulated the staff for its breadth of achievements in 2008. A partial list of awards follows. A complete list can be accessed on the USAID intranet at http://inside.usaid.gov/M/HR/docs/2008_Awards_Booklet.pdf.

2008 Presidential Distinguished Rank Awards
James Bever
Gloria Steele

2008 Presidential Meritorious Rank Awards
Donald Clark
Carleene Dei
Kenneth Ellis
Alonzo Fulgham
William Garvelink
Allan E. Reed

Administrator's Distinguished Career Service Award
Kenneth Ellis
Sheryl Grossman
Mosina H. Jordan
Harry Manchester Jr.

Outstanding Career Achievement Award
James B. Ahn
Robert Alan Archer
Calista Downey
Michael Farbman

Administrator's Implementation Award
Eileen Hsieh

Administrator's Management Improvement Award
Diane A. Perone

Global Development Alliance Leader Award
Mary Anna Melnyk

Global Development Alliance Excellence Award
The Partnership for the Future of Alchevsk

Office of Inspector General Achievement Award
John B. Crihfield
Philip M. Heneghan

Corbett M. Flannery Award
Denise A. Herbol

C. Herbert Rees Memorial Award
Caroline B. Brearley

George C. Marshall Award
Jeanne M. Pryor

Michael H.B. Adler Award
Courtney L. Chubb

Michael K. White Memorial Award
Gresa Caka

Molly Kux Award
Jerry P. Bisson

Science and Technology Award
John O. Wilson

USAID Award for Heroism
Ellyn W. Ogden

Ethics Award
Arben Nagavci

Equal Employment Opportunity Award
Tanya R. Dalton

Outstanding Support Staff Award
Jocelyn A. Rodriguez
Leslie G. Vaughn

Foreign Service National of the Year Award
Urim Ahmeti
Helen Barminova
Sheena Chhabra
Jose M. Godoy
Anthony P. Muthee
Abdou Ndiaye
Patchara Rumakom

Superior Accomplishment & Special Act Awards
Michael Bak
Jon C. Brause
Dirk W. Dijkerman
William P. Hammink
Rockfeler P. Herisse
Scott R. Radloff

Distinguished Honor Award
Jennifer M. Adams
David A. Atwood
George Deikun
Ricki Ann Gold
Christy L. Hanson
Nicholas A. Jenks
Michael E. Kite
Alvera Reichert

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Employees Seek Equality

At USAID, Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA) represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees, their families, and straight supporters.

GLIFAA is a membership organization of more than 500 Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service National, and other employees of the State Department, USAID, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Peace Corps, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and contractors and grantees.

"I feel completely comfortable being myself and sharing my life with my co-workers," USAID's Marlise Edwards said. "I hope and look forward to one day [when I will] be able to receive benefits that recognize my partner and family as well."

The group was founded in 1992, the year that sexual orientation ceased to be a barrier in granting security clearances. Its principle is equal benefits for all employees, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

In 2000, the category "Member of Household" (MOH) was established to recognize the full range of Foreign Service families, which includes same-sex partners, opposite-sex partners, adult children, and aging parents. The policy, issued by the Department of State, provides limited benefits to MOHs, such as assistance for visas and inclusion on warden lists. But it does not provide benefits such as health insurance, relocation costs, or evacuation in emergencies. Interpretation of the policy varies widely, for instance, regarding limited access to U.S. facilities and services at overseas posts.

Ambassador Harry K. Thomas Jr., director general of the Foreign Service and director of human resources at the Department of State, has made access to emergency visitation travel, security training, language courses, distance learning training, and a course for Iraq-bound employees available to MOHs, this year, GLIFAA President J. Michelle Schohn said.

The first celebration of Lesbian and Gay Pride Month at USAID was held in 2001. That year, former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios presented the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Award to Ajit Joshi and Erin Krasik for their achievements in promoting diversity in the USAID workforce.

GLIFAA celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2002, the same year that it invited openly gay Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., then chairman of the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee and Appropriations Committee in 2002, to serve as its Gay Pride Month keynote speaker. It also honored James Hormel, ambassador to Luxembourg from 1999 to 2001, as the first openly gay U.S. ambassador. From 2004 to 2007, GLIFAA worked with Mosina Jordan, the Agency's former counselor and chair of the USAID Executive Diversity Council, to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees in Agency diversity surveys.

"We look forward to the day when all employees, lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight, and transgender are treated equally," said Joshi, GLIFAA's director of policy, "When that day comes, it will be because of the hard work of GLIFAA, the USAID Executive Diversity Council, and all our allies."

GLIFAA officials said pets receive benefits, such as transportation overseas, but partners do not. FSOs with non-American partners are further challenged in fulfilling their FSO tour-of-duty requirement in Washington because there is no provision for their same-sex partners to obtain U.S. visas to join them here.

"I have benefited from exceptional training and mentoring and have moved up through the ranks into the Senior Foreign Service, where I have served as a deputy director and soon as a mission director," USAID's Jeff Bell said.

"However, for the past six years, having a partner of the same sex with the denial of basic benefits provided to married partners is making it increasingly difficult to continue my service with USAID beyond the immediate horizon," he said, "since I'm denying my partner an opportunity to pursue his career and the financial burdens of no benefits."

One FSO said he was evacuated from Indonesia and had to leave his then partner behind because domestic partners are not automatically evacuated in the case of emergency as are other family members on travel orders, such as spouses.

GLIFAA and other groups have requested that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees across the foreign affairs agencies and with affiliated employers are treated equitably, receiving the same benefits given to straight employees and their spouses to build a diverse Foreign Service for the 21st century. ★

ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMITTEE HOLDS EVENTS

The Asian-Pacific American Employee Committee (APAEC) represents USAID staff from dozens of foreign cultures spanning Asia and the Pacific Islands. According to the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, there are 158 USAID employees of Asian American heritage, which equals about 6.4 percent of the Agency's U.S. civilian labor force.

APAEC's by-laws contain the following objectives to promote Asian-Pacific American diversity at USAID:

- assist the Agency in promoting and establishing effective and equitable participation of Asian-Pacific Americans in its work force,
- promote a better understanding of Asian-Pacific American culture and seek solutions to equal employment opportunity issues, and
- work in coordination with Federal agency partners to promote career development and advancement opportunities through training conferences, celebration of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, and developmental workshops.

In conjunction with the Agency's Office of Human Resources, Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, and the Diversity Executive Council, APAEC sponsored annual events at the Ronald Reagan Building in May to commemorate Asian-Pacific American contributions to the melting pot of the United States.

Activities in recent years have included a 2008 talk by Prof. Frank Wu, author of *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*; a 2007 event at the State Dept. organized by Asian American Foreign Affairs Association and APAEC, at which Ambassador Sichan Siv was the guest speaker; a talk by Commissioner Vellie Sandalo Dietrich-Hall from the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders in 2007; a talk by George Takei, actor and human rights activist, in 2006; an event with Suchin Pak, MTV news correspondent and cultural series host, in 2005; and a 2004 talk by Kieu Chinh, actress and humanitarian activist.

"We want to showcase our culture and share our values, pride, and diverse contributions to USAID's programs," said APAEC Vice-President Mary Jane Cotter.

If you are interested in contributing ideas and energy to APAEC, please email Bhavani Pathak at BPathak@usaid; or Cotter at mcotter@usaid.gov. ★

SRI LANKA from page 7

Photo by Gemunu Amarasinghe

Sri Lankan youth receive training in small engine repairs, using modern equipment supplied by private donors to the new vocational training centers built by USAID.

"Training young people in vocational trades will help to provide good paying jobs in the near future, and will help boost both family income and the economic health of Sri Lanka as a whole," U.S. Ambassador Robert O. Blake said at the opening of the first two schools in August 2008. "But to generate job opportunities, we need to attract private sector investment to create jobs for all those who receive training."

Currently, only 16 percent of the country's workforce has the higher education and technical qualifications needed to fill skilled positions.

USAID has worked for decades for development and stability in Sri Lanka where the private sector has proved to be the engine for economic growth and employme nt. Since the tsunami, the USAID mission has counted several successes in securing private sector funding.

In planning the vocational training centers, for example, USAID worked closely with the private sector to ensure the project incorporated the sustainability and flexibility to meet labor market needs. These businesses are likely to employ most of the graduates from the vocational training centers—their representatives helped to develop the curricula to ensure the students' skills are in tune with the needs of the growing economy. Private donors also partnered with USAID to provide modern equipment for students training at the vocational centers. ★

CONTINUED. . .

CLINTON from page 1

with defense and diplomacy, in the furtherance of America's national security," she told an enthusiastic crowd.

As first lady and senator, Clinton visited USAID programs overseas and told staffers that "I perhaps have seen some of you in other places, from Nicaragua to Egypt to Indonesia and lots of places in between."

U.S. foreign assistance fighting HIV/AIDS and malaria left "positive attitudes" around the world, she said, adding that "it is essential that the role of USAID and our other foreign assistance programs be strengthened and be adequately funded and be coordinated."

U.S. military officers in Iraq and Afghanistan have funds for reconstruction projects and great flexibility in spending them. But USAID has to go through extensive paperwork to spend "10 cents," she said.

Even so, she added, "when I speak to my friends over at the Defense Department, they will confess that they very often have to turn to you to determine how best to spend the money they've been given for development, reconstruction, and stabilization."

Agency employees see their work as "not just a career, but a labor of love," Clinton said, while warning that they would have to be "more effective."

"It will also not surprise you to learn that we have to regain some credibility in order to regain the authorities and the resources that have drifted elsewhere," she said. "Much of the migration of the authority and the resources to the Defense Department came about because they were able to move, and move aggressively and agilely, to fulfill a purpose or a need. We are going to have to streamline our operations."

She noted that there has been "a very vigorous debate within the development community" about USAID's place in the government structure. She also called on Agency staff to figure out how to "eliminate redundancy" and "streamline procedures."

"I want to know from you what we need to do to make sure that USAID assumes once again the global leadership role you deserve it to have in the delivery of development assistance," she said. "We are asking you to do more and more with less. And my goal is to make sure we match the mission and the resources."

Clinton also noted that Obama's late mother, Ann Dunham Soetoro, worked on USAID microfinance projects in Indonesia, "so his understanding and commitment to these important human issues runs very deep."

At his January confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to be deputy secretary of state for management and resources, Jacob Lew said he would seek greater resources for foreign assistance. He said Clinton, along with Defense Secretary Robert Gates, supports expanding results-oriented, hands-on diplomatic and development work.

"Our support for development and good governance, and our role in defending human rights and alleviating suffering in the world reflects our values and advances our interests," Lew said. But "we need to reduce overlap between programs and departments, articulate clear objectives and leverage resources of international organizations, allies, the private sector, foundations, and NGOs to maximize our impact." ★ *– B.B.*

MEXICO CITY from page 1

Clinton and reinstated in 2001 under President George W. Bush.

"For too long, international family planning assistance has been used as a political wedge issue, the subject of a back-and-forth debate that has served only to divide us," Obama said. "I have no desire to continue this stale and fruitless debate."

Many NGOs involved in international family planning welcomed the Obama decision.

"For eight long years, the global gag rule has been used by the Bush administration to play politics with the lives of poor women across the world," International Planned Parenthood Federation's Gill Greer in London told the *Washington Post*.

USAID spent $457 million for family planning activities in 2008.

Women and couples using contraceptives in developing countries rose from less than 10 percent in the 1960s to more than 50 percent today, in large part due to U.S. assistance programs. The average number of children born in these countries decreased from six to three over those years, according to USAID officials. ★

ENTERPRISE from page 5

management, it was a stroke of genius."

Four BAEF board members were awarded the President's Call to Service Award for their 17 years of volunteer service. Ken Yamashita, senior deputy assistant administrator for Europe and Eurasia, presented the award.

"The group is the epitome of what volunteerism is all about and it is unique to America and not well understood by our colleagues overseas," Yamashita said.

Nearly all former BAEF board members will continue to serve in a volunteer capacity with the America for Bulgaria Foundation. To better inform the foundation's grantmaking process, board members aligned themselves to areas of personal interest and have become experts in agriculture, archeology, education, and culture. ★

GUATEMALA from page 6

Guatemala. This is opening a new horizon for me and allowing me to consult alternative and parallel sources in sustaining and documenting investigations."

Flores said another concern journalists had was how to deal with editors and co-workers who do not understand the process of investigative reporting—as opposed to daily deadline writing—and how significant it is to the health of a news organization.

"Journalists were concerned that their editors did not fully realize the importance of conducting investigative journalism, which requires more time to prepare than daily articles," Flores said.

"They feared that they would not have enough time to complete their stories. The seminars showed them how to explain to editors how good investigative reporting eventually pays off in increasing the credibility of a publication or news organization and in enhanced sales of news products."

Television journalist Francis Urbina from Telediario Channel 3 said skills she gained from the seminar would be beneficial in news gathering, but she also had a philosophical take on the course: "We seek transparency, justice and equity," she said. "These tools are contributing to a more democratic society and helping us in the fight against impunity and corruption." ★

PARAGUAY from page 5

Michael Svetlik, vice president of programs at IFES, said: "The international observation of the election lent legitimacy to the process and ensured that result was accepted by all parties."

IFES election experts conducted an intensive pre-election assessment and monitored the electoral process. The result was a series of recommendations for electoral officials.

IFES also fielded a delegation of international observers led by Andres Pastrana, the former president of Colombia. The team gained the confidence of electoral authorities and political parties.

"Leading up to April 20, many Paraguayan citizens, NGOs, the media, and the campaigns themselves, openly expressed fears that the elections would be marred by fraud or manipulation," said USAID's Paraguay Mission Director John Beed.

"In this tense and uncertain environment, the credibility and on-the-ground work of the IFES delegation with all political parties, the electoral tribunal, and civil society actors played a crucial role in restoring public confidence and ensuring a highly-transparent election process," he added.

Photos by Pablo Galarce

An observer from IFES' international monitoring team watches as Superior Tribunal of Electoral Justice poll workers assist a voter at a local polling station during the 2008 Paraguayan general election.

USAID worked with a consortium of Paraguayan NGOs, known as SAKA, to field an extensive domestic observation team. While international observers had greater access to the media and to election officials, domestic observation ensured that citizens provided oversight to their own elections.

The citizens of Paraguay spoke clearly for Lugo and for change through the ballot box. After his first 100 days in office, President Lugo still enjoyed strong popular support, with over 80 percent of citizens having a favorable or highly-favorable opinion of him.

Yet the honeymoon period is always short for leaders, particularly in a country like Paraguay where an estimated 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, income inequality is stark, and access to basic services, health care, and education is constrained.

Lugo faces sky-high expectations and numerous challenges in this landlocked South American country, but his administration will not be tackling the issues alone. As a result of a 2008 meeting in Washington between Lugo and President Bush, the United States committed to doubling USAID development cooperation with Paraguay, with the mission's 2009 fiscal year funding for democracy, economic growth, and public health initiatives expected to total $20 million. ★

CORRECTIONS

In the December-January 2009 *FrontLines*: a page one story on the Obama transition, Semhar Araia's name was spelled incorrectly; and Valerie Dickson-Horton and Larry Nowels no longer work at the jobs listed and are currently private consultants.

On page 11 of the November *FrontLines*, the credit for the photo of U.S. Army Col. James Wolff should have read Patricia Adams. On page 13, the list of mission directors and representatives should have included:

Burundi (Bujumbura, Burundi)
Jim Anderson
Tel: 257-22-20-7270

Djibouti (Djibouti, Djibouti)
Stephanie Funk
Tel: 253-35-39-95 ★

CONTINUED. . .

RUSSIA from page 1

$60 million) into the near future, said Waskin. He called it a small sum for such a vast country, but said he hopes to double that with contributions from Russian local government, civil society, corporations, and foundations.

Russia is expected to announce soon that it will no longer accept what it calls "technical assistance," and instead only allow "cooperation," said Waskin. The USAID program is focused on three "Cs":

- cooperation with Russia on transnational issues such as AIDS, TB, anti-money laundering, and climate change; and on avowed priorities of the Russian government such as strengthening respect for the rule of law;
- challenging Russia in areas such as human rights and political processes; and
- catalyzing Russia to increase resources for health and other social needs.

Waskin noted that Russian spending on AIDS jumped from $5 million in 2004 to $400 million in 2008 in part "because of U.S. work with them."

One example of the friendly reception to U.S. programs at the regional level came when the president of the autonomous republic of Buryatia expressed interest in using the resources of his regional government to support USAID models and projects in areas such as protecting the environment, fighting tuberculosis, and assisting vulnerable children and youth. "He said, 'I like your programs, and I'll pay for them,'" said Waskin.

USAID's Russia mission already has a successful partnership with another region, Krasnoyarsk, that is supporting USAID projects in civil society, improving municipal governance, and health.

The mission has 84 Russian Foreign Service Nationals and 14 U.S. Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). Three more FSOs are expected under the Development Leadership Initiative.

The recent market collapse, drop in fuel prices, loss of value of the ruble, and other economic setbacks are taking a toll on the Russian economy, Waskin said.

But Russia was becoming wealthy in recent years, and its foreign ministry has been working with USAID to revive a Russian foreign aid program that once built dams and power plants across the developing world in the 1970s. USAID continues to help Russia develop its own bilateral donor program which "will be one of our most important legacies," said Waskin. ★ – *B.B.*

LITERACY from page 5

Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries stretching from Morocco to Pakistan. Numbers vary widely depending on the country; and women are far more likely to be illiterate. In Saudi Arabia, for example, 13 percent of men over age 15 are illiterate as are 24 percent of women. In Afghanistan, 57 percent of men and 87 percent of women are considered illiterate. Some 5 million primary school age children region-wide are not in school.

Regional governments agree that literacy is key to prosperity. "Despite all the problems, conflicts, and differences in the region, literacy is one issue that really brings people together," said Malik.

To ensure a smooth transition, Afghanistan education officials received USAID-sponsored training on line and in two sessions held in the region. USAID also trained BMENA government representatives, who are now serving as the Hub's steering committee and will rotate every two years.

"Ultimately, the most important goal is to encourage all literacy initiatives in the region to use the Hub as the gateway for knowledge sharing and capacity building," said Mohammad Sarwar Hussaini, deputy minister for literacy in Afghanistan's ministry of education.

The BMENA government representatives are planning to enhance country-specific pages and train literacy professionals in their own countries on how to use the Hub. Plans for translation of the site and its materials into Dari, Pashto, and other regional languages are also underway.

In addition to Afghanistan, the BMENA countries and regions are: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. ★

CAIRO from page 7

social injustice, and has backed efforts in more than 30 countries and regions.

Projects among the new network range from promoting non-violent approaches to social change in Palestine and reviving traditional Berber handicrafts in Egypt to encouraging volunteerism in Jordan and supporting organic agriculture in Lebanon. As Dave Besch, USAID's regional alliance builder, said, "USAID cannot support every one of the 100 million young people in the Arab region, but we can identify and link people with the potential to inspire others. That is what this program is all about."

In Palestine, Aref Husseini fights brain drain and gender inequities among bright young Palestinians by cultivating new inventions and encouraging scientific research and critical thinking. His foundation, *Naizak*, "the Meteor" in Arabic, helps young people transform good ideas into products and attract investors. Husseini focuses on those with few resources and looks for equal numbers of inventions from young women and men. In classrooms south of Nablus, he also organizes creative thinking games for about 1,800 students.

Across the African continent in Morocco, Saadia Zrira teaches women in rural mountain communities to cultivate aromatic and medicinal plants for local and international markets. Designed to raise incomes of women who live in poor and isolated areas, her work is built around existing indigenous resources.

She helps the women organize into cooperatives and provides a year of training in plant cultivation and extraction of essential oils. The soaps and other cosmetics containing the essential oils from the plants are popular in upscale Moroccan hotels, and have begun to break into the international market for environmentally and socially friendly products.

Zrira says she believes in the women's cooperatives, not only for their economic benefits, but also for the sense of empowerment they give their members.

In addition to $20,000 grants, the program provides Husseini, Zrira, and their colleagues with professional development, mentors, and peer support. The Synergos Institute will also help them identify strategic connections and additional investors through its philanthropic contacts and other resources.

The goal is to help each entrepreneur expand the impact of his or her work, establish a supportive network across the region, and encourage others to follow their examples.

"In this program, Synergos aims to support those who are already making social change take the next step and make their organizations more effective and sustainable," said Robert H. Dunn, president and CEO of Synergos. "We also believe these leaders will partner with others to strengthen civil society throughout the region and collaborate across sectors to promote economic and social progress."

USAID's budget for the program is $1 million. Synergos will match that amount through private donations. This is one of several programs supported by USAID's Office of Middle East Programs that invests in global values and skills for youth in the Middle East and North Africa. ★

FRONTLINES

IS PUBLISHED BY THE U.S. Agency for International Development, THROUGH THE BUREAU FOR LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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Pakistani Villages Hit By Quake Continue To Rebuild

Photos by Jane Thomas, CDM

Girls in Paras, Mansehra District, demonstrate the clay-coated writing boards they use for their studies. The pupils cannot afford notebooks; they memorize each lesson before washing the board and starting again. Since the collapse of their school building, the girls have been studying outdoors or in tents. Construction of their new school began in 2008 and completion is expected in 2009.

The Mansehra District on the eastern edge of Pakistan's remote North West Frontier Province possesses remarkable natural beauty: rolling mountains, meandering rivers and shimmering lakes. Three years ago, that serenity was shattered when a 7.6 magnitude earthquake shook northern Pakistan, killing over 73,000 and leaving 2.8 million homeless.

The U.S. response was immediate and massive. Within 48 hours of the earthquake, the first CH-47 Chinook helicopters arrived from Afghanistan to ferry relief supplies to people trapped in near inaccessible pockets of the province. U.S. government assistance focused on immediate humanitarian needs, providing emergency shelter, relief supplies, and medical help.

Since the earthquake, USAID's $200 million Earthquake Reconstruction Program has been helping to rebuild destroyed and damaged structures, create jobs, and improve the region's persistently poor health care and low levels of school enrollment, particularly for girls. Four schools have been rebuilt in Mansehra District and an additional 10 are currently being constructed. USAID is also training district education officials, teachers, and parents to improve the quality of classroom instruction.

Today the Mansehra District faces another daunting challenge: high food prices. It is one of 12 districts in North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan Province classified as food insecure by the World Food Program (WFP).

In early September, USAID signed an agreement to provide WFP with $8.4 million to purchase and deliver food aid to more than 2,900 elementary schools in severely food-insecure districts. Under this program, each family sending its children to a school receives a 50 kilogram bag of wheat, and each student gets a tin of vegetable oil. These "take home" rations serve as an incentive to the families to keep their children in school.

The effort is boosting school enrollment in Mansehra and the other targeted districts. WFP reports that throughout Pakistan enrollment in participating schools has doubled overall and tripled for girls. ★

Photos by Jon O'Rourke, USAID

A sign over the entrance to Shoukat Abad announces the food distribution day.

Photos by Jon O'Rourke, USAID

Girls receive cooking oil as part of the USAID food aid program.

Photos by Jon O'Rourke, USAID

Fathers and sons carry home the wheat and oil rations from the parent-student distribution day.