



AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

**ERITREA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
2005**

FINAL REPORT

USAID/Eritrea

December 2005

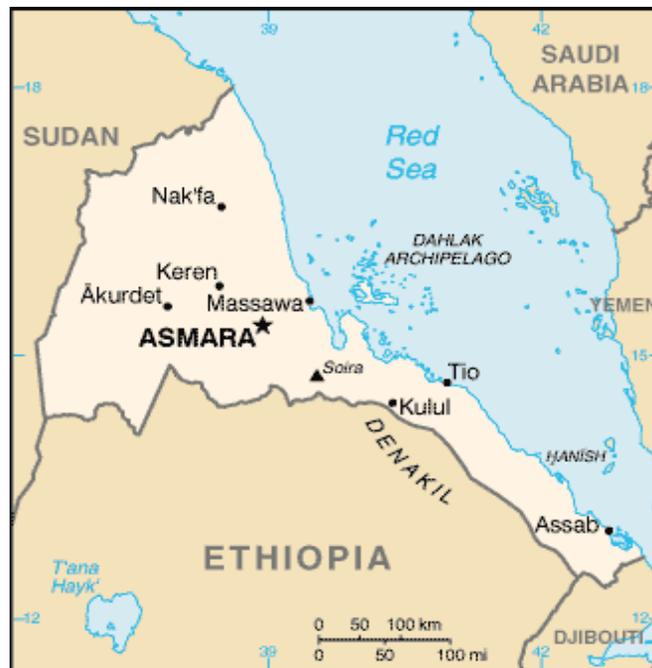


I. INTRODUCTION

In December 2004 the US Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded the Health Professions Education Partnership Program to AIHA. The program was developed within the framework of a two-year cooperative agreement period (Jan. 1, 2005 through July 2, 2007) and was designed to strengthen the foundation for meeting the urgent health workforce education needs in Eritrea. In view of the critical role of physicians and the diminished size of the medical workforce, the program was to emphasize the strengthening of medical education through support to Eritrea's new academic health center¹ comprising the Orotta School of Medicine (OSM), related nursing and other health professions schools, and the OSM-affiliated teaching hospitals.

The planned partnership was to focus on: (a) faculty development, including integration of teaching and clinical practice, clinical training, and use of educational/learning resources; (b) institutional organization and management, including especially management of the hospital affiliates; and (c) effective integration of the health professions, including nursing and other allied health services. In addition to directly supporting the development of the academic health center, the AIHA program was concurrently supporting the Ministry of Health (MOH) in its efforts to develop a comprehensive plan for the growth and development of the academic health center within the context of coordinated and clearly-articulated national healthcare workforce policies and plans.

The program was to contribute to and support USAID/Eritrea's Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) – "Use of priority primary health and HIV/AIDS services increased and practices improved" – under the mission's *2003-2007 Integrated Strategic Plan*. At the intermediate result (IR) level, the partnership was to contribute to IR2, "Quality of priority primary health services improved" and IR3 "Institutional capacity for resource allocation decisions improved."



¹According to the definition by the Association of Academic Health Centers, an "academic health center" consists of an allopathic or osteopathic medical school, at least one other health professions school or program, and at least one affiliated or owned teaching hospital.

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As part of the program preparation, in February 2005 the AIHA team conducted an assessment visit to Eritrea and met with the major program stakeholders – the USAID mission in Eritrea and the minister of health of Eritrea. The team also conducted consultations with the World Health Organization (WHO) mission in Asmara and with representatives of the Orotta School of Medicine (OSM), the OSM-affiliated teaching hospitals, and the School of Nursing and Health Technologies. In addition, meetings with in-country US non-governmental organizations laid groundwork to establish an AIHA in-country presence.

Based on the proposed program and the initial assessment that included consultations with the key program stakeholders, the main points of implementation of the Health Professions Education Partnership Program were to include the following areas of assistance: (a) setting up and managing a partnership between the OSM, the OSM-affiliated teaching hospitals and other health professions schools, particularly a nursing school; (b) developing a medical resource center and conducting training in computer and information and communication technology skills; (c) providing equipment and educational resources for the resource center; and, (d) to the extent possible, supporting the partnership by incorporating through collaboration with faculty and clinicians from the Eritrean Diaspora.

Following the assessment visit, AIHA drafted the solicitation document and sent it to the USAID mission in Eritrea for approval, as well as to the minister of health of Eritrea for his review and comments.

On April 8, AIHA announced a grants competition in support of establishing a new twinning partnership in Eritrea to focus on health professions education. By the closing date for proposal submission (June 3), AIHA had received five program proposals from the following institutions and institutional consortia, representing five US communities:

- Center for International Health (CIH) Milwaukee joined by the Medical College of Wisconsin; the Blood Center of Wisconsin; the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Marquette University; and teaching hospitals, including Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Froedtert Hospital, Affiliated Community Hospital, and Affiliated Ambulatory Centers) – Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Cleveland International Program along with Case Western Reserve University, University Health Systems of Cleveland, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, and the Free Clinic of Cleveland – Cleveland, Ohio
- David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), with UCLA School of Public Health, and Medicine for Humanity – Los Angeles, California
- Morehouse School of Medicine with Grady Health System – Atlanta, Georgia
- Virginia Commonwealth University – Richmond, Virginia

In June, a formal review committee comprising AIHA Board Member, University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing, and AIHA/Washington staff, conducted a comprehensive review of the five applications. Following a fair and impartial evaluation of each proposal against the criteria formulated in the solicitation guidelines, the committee identified the following three applicants which qualified for the Best and Final phase of the proposal review process:

- The Center for International Health (CIH) consortium, based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- The Cleveland International Program consortium, based in Cleveland, Ohio
- The David Geffen School of Medicine consortium, based in Los Angeles, California

On June 27, a package was sent to USAID/Eritrea along with copies of the following documents: (a) all five proposals, (b) summary statements containing the strengths and weaknesses of the

applications as determined by the reviewers, and (c) a draft set of follow-up questions for the three best and final proposals. AIHA asked the USAID mission to review the proposed follow-up questions and provide AIHA with comments or suggestions for further inquiry. USAID approved the process without any additional questions.

For the best and final phase of the proposal review process, AIHA sent the sets of follow-up questions to the three applicants requesting further information regarding their proposed programs. The AIHA proposal review committee met again to review the responses and select the finalist. The consortium led by the Center for International Health (CIH) Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was chosen and on Aug. 8, AIHA submitted a memorandum seeking concurrence from USAID/Eritrea regarding this selection. The selection was approved.

In preparation for the first exchange visit to Eritrea, which had been planned for September 2005, AIHA made plans to bring key Milwaukee partners to Washington, DC, for a two-day orientation meeting. These plans were suspended when USAID/Eritrea announced in early September that it would be closing out its mission in Eritrea and would not be initiating any new activities, including the Health Professions Education Partnership Program.

On Sept. 29, the AIHA project officer for the partnership was invited to attend a closing out meeting at the USAID headquarters in Washington, DC. The aim was to explain the action taken by the USAID to withdraw from Eritrea and describe action steps for the closing of the current programs. Formal notification letter to close the program came in on September 29.

MEDICAL INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

Initial assessment of the Orotta School of Medicine's information and communication technology (ICT) needs was conducted during AIHA's February 2005 assessment visit. The AIHA team briefly visited the OSM-affiliated academic health center's library as well as a newly established OSM-housed computer and library room. Discussions with the school's dean and administrators, as well as with representatives of the School of Nursing and Health Technologies, confirmed the need for developing a strong ICT component that would complement the partnership. It was decided that further, detailed assessment of the ICT situation on the campus of the OSM-affiliated academic health center would be needed.

In July AIHA staff members from the ICT programs conducted a follow-up assessment visit to Eritrea. They met with project coordinators from USAID/Eritrea, the Ministry of Health and the Orotta School of Medicine to assess the information resource needs and make preliminary provisions to set up the proposed resource center. In preparation for this trip, AIHA staff held a conference call with the representative of University Research Corp. (URC)/Asmara to provide additional background regarding Internet connectivity options and the overall ICT environment in Asmara and at the Orotta School of Medicine.

No further actions took place.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DONOR PROGRAMS

AIHA designs its programs to integrate effectively with existing health sector programs and other donor efforts in order to maximize the program impact, achieve economies of scale, and avoid duplication of effort. Therefore, during the February assessment visit to Asmara, the assessment team met with the program's major stakeholders (USAID, MOH, OSM) to discuss in details the future strategy, to precisely define parameters of the upcoming partnership, and to structure the overall management of the program. In addition, the team met with other USAID-funded, in-country NGOs, including URC and Family Health International. These meetings focused on the direction of the upcoming partnership in the context of the country's social, economic, and

political situation, and consequently, on the country's most urgent needs in the area of healthcare services. The team also consulted other key players in the healthcare sector, particularly the WHO mission, to draw on their experience in working with the MOH and in actively assisting in establishing the OSM. Overall, the meetings were successful and resulted in establishing active communication links between AIHA and the key in-country stakeholders.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

AIHA developed a quarterly progress report template for submission to USAID. AIHA's M&E team also provided input to the solicitation document of the grants competition in support of establishing the new Health Professions Education Partnership.

AIHA's M&E team participated on the proposal review committee, with an emphasis on the M&E components of the technical proposals.

No further actions took place.