



# THE INSIDER

FRONTLINES

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## COPING WITH THE STRESS OF AID WORK

By Ben Barber

Stress is a predictable side effect of development work, according to Agency social worker Pat O'Brien, who said "trauma has come out of the closet since 9/11."

After working with U.S. military men and women for 20 years, O'Brien came to USAID in September to help its foreign aid workers cope with the stress caused by:

- ▶ living in combat zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan;
- ▶ viewing mass casualties from earthquakes such as Haiti;
- ▶ working in famine regions with desperate victims; and
- ▶ dealing with family needs.

Aside from open conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, USAID staff also work and live in areas of civil unrest such as Sudan, the Congo, and Pakistan.

"You are exposed to traumatic events, as a primary participant and as secondary trauma," O'Brien said. Aid



Photo by Ben Barber, USAID

Pat O'Brien

workers who assist victims of conflict, famine, poverty, or trafficking can "hold their trauma" inside themselves.

From 3 percent to 12 percent of aid workers returning home from service in conflict countries had reported some stress and received treatment at a new unit called the Deployment Stress Management Program (DSMP)

set up by the State Department medical office, located at SA 15 in Rosslyn. However, some officers with stress symptoms are reluctant to seek treatment because they mistakenly worry it could prevent them from keeping their top secret clearance or limit them from going to some overseas posts.

Using a treatment method developed by the University of Pennsylvania, the State medical team reports a high success rate for treatment. Others may have used their own medical plan to privately seek medical help for stress, O'Brien said.

Stress comes not only from conflict zones or work among the survivors of tsunamis and earthquakes—it also comes from the heavy work loads that Civil Service and contractors experience in an agency that is down in staffing due to cuts in the past 10 years.

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These four questions are used to screen for post-traumatic stress disorder. If staffers answer "yes" to three out of the four, then treatment is suggested.

In your life, have you ever had any experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that, in the past month you...

- ▶ have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?
- ▶ tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of it?
- ▶ were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?
- ▶ felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?

Source: USAID

## Equal Pay Is Focus of Women's History Month Event

By Brittany Jackson

For nearly 20 years, Lilly Ledbetter worked as an overnight manager at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company plant in the small town of Gadsden, Ala. Now an advocate for equal-pay rights, Ledbetter leapt into the national spotlight in 1998 when she took on Goodyear for paying her less than her male coworkers.

Ledbetter shared her story at a program that was part of National Women's History Month and held at the U.S. Department of Commerce auditorium on March 16. The event was co-sponsored by USAID and members of the Federal Triangle Partnership.

"I live in a country that gives me the right to stand up for myself and that's what I started out doing," she said.

Ledbetter won her case in the lower courts when a jury awarded her \$3.8 million—a figure that was later reduced to \$300,000 because of laws that place a cap on employee back pay. Her case eventually made it to the Supreme Court where justices ruled in favor of Goodyear based on a technicality—Ledbetter had exceeded the 180-day limit for filing lawsuits under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Ledbetter walked away empty handed. "That was the low point of my life," she said. "I couldn't let it go."

And she didn't.

Ledbetter's efforts to end pay discrimination resulted in the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009—the first bill signed into law by President Barack Obama. The law resets the

see **EQUAL PAY** on page 2 ▶

## SENEGAL FSN WINS AWARD



Photo by USAID

Mamadou Niass

For the third year in a row, the Agency's Foreign Service National (FSN) of the Year award has been bestowed on a staffer from USAID's Senegal office.

Mamadou Niass, chief accountant in USAID's Senegal office, received the award late last year for superior performance and contributions to the Agency.

"Winning this award made me appreciate all the opportunities that were presented to me working for USAID/Senegal," Niass said. "When you reflect on it, you realize that the people you are working with, the projects you are working on, all the exposure you gain makes the ultimate difference in your success. If you don't have the kind

of support I've gotten, you couldn't succeed."

Like other FSN winners, Niass was nominated by his office director. Winners ultimately were chosen by the USAID Special Awards Committee, which reviews nominations annually.

Niass follows in the footsteps of two other Senegal FSNs. In 2008, Abdou Ndiaye received the award as the office's deputy executive officer while the mission searched for a U.S. direct hire to head the office. And in 2007, Pape Sow, the Senegal office's education team leader, won the award for his efforts to increase middle school education in the country.

"I believe we have the best USAID mission in Africa," said Kevin Mullally, Senegal's office director. "Our staff of Foreign Service Nationals is enormously hardworking and committed. I am proud to see they continue to receive the recognition they so rightly deserve."

The FSN of the Year Award is part of the annual Agency awards that recognize achievements of USAID staff. Two FSN employees, one professional staff and one support staff, are chosen from each regional area by the geographic bureaus. Winners receive a roundtrip ticket to Washington, where they are presented with a certificate by the USAID administrator and a check for \$1,000. ★

# WHERE IN THE WORLD...

## IN MEMORIAM

**JANUARY 3, 2010 – FEBRUARY 13, 2010**

### PROMOTED

**Annalisa Alford**

Program Analyst

**Michael Ashkouri**

Supervisory Contract Specialist

**Marcus Barnes**

Contract Specialist

**Kathlyn Bryant**

Contract Specialist

**Timothy E. Cox**

Supervisory Auditor

**Earnestine D. Dixon**

Secretary

**Kathryn Sell Garcia**

Agricultural Development Officer

**Kenna Rey F. Hickey**

Contract Specialist

**Raymond Jennings**

Financial Management Specialist

**Callie Mae Johnson**

Contract Specialist

**Abigail C. Lackman**

Program Analyst

**Marissa G. Lemargie**

Program Analyst

**Ashley B. Marcus**

Program Analyst

**Ashley Juliette McCants**

Democracy Specialist

**Julian E. Muganda**

Auditor

**Maria Carmen Naranjo**

Administrative Officer

**Myra A. Rodgers**

Administrative Officer

**Darren W. Shanks**

Supervisory Human Resources Specialist

**Robert P. Thayer**

Program Manager

**Karen L. Towers**

Program Analyst (ICS)

**Kathryn Jane Ward-Waller**

Country Coordinator

**Valerie Jean Wright**

Program Analyst

### REASSIGNED

**Jennifer Aguilar**

COMP/NE/OJT to Peru/JOS

**Robert L. Arellano**

Zambia/D to Iraq/OFM

**Thomas P. Baltazar**

COMP/FS to Afghanistan/OD

**Jeffrey M. Borns**

DCHA/FFP to SA/MDO

**Jeanne M. Briggs**

Sudan/OMD to Uganda/PPD

**John M. Cali**

COMP/NE/OJT to El Salvador/CONT

**Helen S. Cho**

COMP/NE/OJT to Namibia

**Tanya R. Dalton**

Africa/EA to EGAT/PAICO/PI

**Dianna L. Darsney**

Peru/OFA to Peru/JOS

**Carleene H. Dei**

SA/MDO to Haiti/D

**Gloria Greene Blackwell**

EOP to OCRD

**Danyel B. Hall**

EOP to OCRD

**Rebecca Hammel**

COMP/NE/OJT to RDMA/OD

**Alicia R. Harris**

M/OAA/EGAT to M/OAA/GRO

**Andria D. Hayes Birchler**

DCHA/PPM to DCHA/DG/CS

**Robert Hill**

EOP to OCRD

**Amy Michelle Hunt**

COMP/FS to USAID Representative/East Timor

**Brooke Andrea Isham**

Sudan/OMD to DCHA/FFP

**Brian S. Levey**

Senegal/JOPA to Cambodia/JOPA

**Hannah E. Lindsey**

OIG/A/PA to RIG/Pretoria

**Melinda R. Lucke**

Pakistan/PDO to COMP/FS

**Leslie A. MacKeen**

COMP/NE/OJT to Jordan/JOS

**Luis A. Maes**

Peru/D to Peru/JOS

**Paul G. McDermott**

COMP/NE/OJT to Afghanistan/OD

**Laura McKechnie**

COMP/NE/OJT to Ecuador/JOS

**Lindsay T. McMahon**

COMP/FS to Afghanistan/OD

**Amy Meyer**

COMP/FS to COMP/FSLT

**Monique A. Murad**

Ecuador/GD to Ecuador/JOS

**Daniele H. Nyirandutiye**

COMP/NE/OJT to Ethiopia/SSS

**Katherine Valdez Osborne**

Indonesia/JOPA to DCHA/CMM

**Mandy M. Parham**

COMP/NE/OJT to RDMA/ROP

**Melissa A. Patsalides**

Asia/SPO/SPPM to Asia/SPO

**Allyson Phelps**

Peru/PDP to Peru/JOS

**April L. Rich**

EGAT/PAICO/PI to OCRD

**Luis A. Rivera**

Peru/D to El Salvador/OCG

**Kalonji Samuel**

COMP/NE/OJT to Peru/JOS

**Cynthia L. Shartzter**

Ethiopia/D to O/S LANG TRNG

**Rhonda Shire**

Iraq/OFM to RSC/RFMO

**Todd M. Sorenson**

COMP/NE/OJT to Pakistan/OD

**Richard Spencer**

COMP/NE/OJT to Haiti/D

**Tanya S. Urquieta**

O/S LANG TRNG to DROC

**Stacey T. Warren**

COMP/NE/OJT to Liberia/JOS

### RETIRED

**Anne Theresa Quinlan**

### MOVED ON

**Esther Brobesong**

**Michael J. Chelius**

**Corwin V. Edwards Jr.**

**Jeremiah Grossman**

**Earl W. Ingalls**

**Patricia J. Mengech**

**Heidi E. Mihm**

**Paul F. Ware**

**Eugene Chin**, 80, died Feb. 9 in Los Angeles, Calif. A Foreign Service Officer, Chin joined USAID as an accountant and auditor, and his assignments included work in Egypt, the Philippines, Thailand, and Yemen. He retired from the Agency in 1991. Chin served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

**Joseph Wafa Dajani**, 87, died April 2 in Fairfax, Va. Dajani worked at USAID for 34 years, serving five years each in Bangladesh and Egypt, as well as in posts in Lagos and Yemen. He also spent several years working for the Agency in Washington and retired in 2000.

**George W. Phillips**, 91, died Feb. 15 in Stevensville, Md. Phillips joined USAID in 1962 shortly after President John F. Kennedy created the Agency. He had previously worked for the now-defunct Atomic Energy Commission. Phillips, who was a Foreign Service Officer, spent several years of his USAID career in Lima, Peru, and also

served the Agency in Washington before retiring in 1981. In retirement, he became the executive director of D.C. Partners of Brasilia, an organization that promotes cultural, educational, and development exchange programs.

**Bert M. Tollefson Jr.**, 80, died Jan. 19 in Sioux Falls, S.D. Tollefson joined USAID as a presidential appointee in 1969, serving as assistant administrator for what is now the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA). During his tenure with LPA, he was responsible for testimony that led to passage of a \$9 billion appropriation. Tollefson also represented the Agency at engagements throughout the United States and served as a U.S. delegate at World Bank meetings. In 1971, Tollefson became mission director in Kenya. There, he oversaw a large staff working on several programs, including hydrology, agriculture, veterinary medicine, youth training, basic education, and health. ★

**EQUAL PAY** from page 1

180-day limit for filing equal pay suits with each new discriminatory paycheck issued.

“We still have a long way to go and we can’t do it by ourselves,” Ledbetter said.

WUSA9 reporter Surae Chinn was mistress of ceremonies at the event which also featured musical selections by Tanya Blount of “Sister Act 2” fame. ★



Sean Carroll was appointed as the Agency’s chief of staff in March. Prior to joining USAID, Carroll worked as program director for the Club of Madrid. His background includes work for the Inter-American Dialogue, the World Food Program, the U.S. House of Representatives’ International Relations Subcommittee, and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

STRESS from page 1

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE PTSD?

Your doctor can help you find out. Call your doctor if you have any of these problems:

- ▶ Bad dreams
- ▶ Flashbacks, or feeling like the scary event is happening again
- ▶ Scary thoughts you can't control
- ▶ Staying away from places and things that remind you of what happened
- ▶ Feeling worried, guilty, or sad
- ▶ Feeling alone
- ▶ Trouble sleeping
- ▶ Feeling on edge
- ▶ Angry outbursts
- ▶ Thoughts of hurting yourself or others

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

There is also cultural stress such as working in a country where corruption is part of society and staffers simply have to work with it—this leads to ethical and moral stress, said O'Brien, who replaced long-time USAID social worker Martha Rees, who retired last year.

"Many Foreign Service Officers also have separation stress from unaccompanied tours" in which they must leave their family for several years, he added.

Another cultural stress comes from working with other U.S. institutions such as the State Department and military, which all have different ways of working and viewing their jobs. For example, many USAID officers are former Peace Corps volunteers who try to resolve conflict in a non-violent way. They seek solutions in economic, social, educational, and other ways. This is different from military officers who are trained to fight.

Human nature also differs and some manage stress better than others. The biggest factor in determining whether stress may become a problem is the "dose rate, which is determined by the frequency, proximity, magnitude, and duration" of stressful experiences, said O'Brien.

"Trauma is amped up energy—you are hyper alert, trying to avoid things that will trigger" bad thoughts, said O'Brien. "You see it in relationships—some step back and withdraw. Others have an anger reaction. Some act out. Others hold in, and get into alcohol and depression. It's an involuntary reaction. Thoughts come of their own volition.

"I worked with combat marines. I asked them about their helicopters. They said that after 30 hours they needed to be serviced. I said 'what if you need a tune up?'"

To help determine who needs help, USAID officers returning from conflict countries attend a high stress briefing at the Foreign Service Institute or individually with a regional psychiatrist at their new post. Those who need treatment can be medevaced to attend from six to 12 sessions with the DSMP to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, said O'Brien.

"Trauma is amped up energy—you are hyper alert, trying to avoid things that will trigger" bad thoughts.

In recent years, therapy and trauma management have become accepted as a normal part of society. O'Brien said that instead of speaking about post-traumatic stress disorder, he'd rather speak of post-traumatic stress growth.

It is important to reach out with compassion and to have leaders show sensitivity towards staff, O'Brien said. "USAID now needs collaboration and support of one another. We need FSNs, contractors, Civil Service, Foreign Service—one is not better than another," he said.

For further information see <http://blogs.usaid.gov/tags/stress/>. ★

## Evaluating the Results of Central American Crime Prevention

USAID is expanding the way it measures the results of crime prevention activities in Central America.

Traditionally, USAID has used a "performance management" plan to gauge a project's effectiveness, for example, by tracking the number of people trained or the amount of equipment distributed.

The new method adds impact evaluation (IE).

Much like a medical study to test a new drug, IE target communities are divided randomly into two groups—one-third get USAID assistance and two-thirds do not. Both sets of communities are then assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the crime prevention activities.

The three target countries receiving U.S. assistance through the Merida Initiative are El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama. The interagency initiative includes USAID and the departments of State and Justice. The USAID-led portion of the initiative aims to improve security in Mexico and Central America by helping communities: prevent crime and violence; create social, educational, and employment opportunities for youth; and improve community-based policing.

According to the U.N. Development Program, Central



The NGO Grupo Ceiba provides skill training for at-risk youth in Guatemala City.

America has the world's highest violent crime rate, ranking alongside countries with internal armed conflicts.

The IE deploys five methods to gather data: household surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews with community members,

demographic data, and observation of community infrastructure. The program is being carried out by Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project.

For more information, contact Vanessa Reilly at [vreilly@usaid.gov](mailto:vreilly@usaid.gov). ★

## Agency Tackles Contractor Waste and Fraud

**WASHINGTON**—USAID is working to eliminate waste and fraud among Agency contractors, a USAID official said at a March hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

An October 2009 report issued by USAID's Office of Inspector General (OIG) showed that the Agency was not effective in suspending contractors who mishandled USAID projects.

Of the OIG's 12 recommendations for improvement, action had been taken to complete six of them as of mid-March, said Drew Luten, senior deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Management. In response to the OIG report, USAID has finalized a set of standard operating procedures that comply with federal regulations and established new filing procedures to strengthen Agency records on actions taken for suspending sub-par contractors, Luten said.

Luten also told congressional members that a new division for partner compliance and performance oversight housed in USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance will be established to handle cases of suspension and debarment. ★

Of the OIG's 12 recommendations for improvement, action had been taken to complete six of them as of mid-March, said Drew Luten, senior deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Management.

## Agency Record Keepers Trained to Manage Files

When thousands of AIDS patients receiving assistance under the U.S. anti-AIDS program PEPFAR—President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—were miscounted in 2006, the program came under scrutiny for poor recordkeeping.

To prevent this from happening again, and to avoid problems in delivery of U.S. assistance, USAID, which carries out much of the PEPFAR program, is providing a training program on proper records management to Agency employees.

USAID’s Records Management Program (RMP) administers mandatory Agency-wide courses on recordkeeping

protocol several times a year. Courses can be taken in person or online through USAID University.

Good recordkeeping isn’t burdensome, and it is more efficient, said Ken Matthews, an electronic records program specialist in the Bureau for Management’s Information and Records Division.

Good recordkeeping “helps the Agency accomplish its mission,” Matthews said. It makes

operations more effective and reveals USAID’s successes and problems—a crucial part of President Barack Obama’s Open Government Initiative, he said.

The courses, also taught in USAID offices overseas, cover the proper organization, maintenance, and disposal of Agency records. So far, 317 people have received this training.

Last year, RMP staff members trained Agency employees in Thailand. This year they plan to go to offices in South Africa and Egypt. These hands-on training sessions are particularly helpful for staff at Agency offices overseas, said records team leader Cynthia Staples, who led a training course at USAID’s Nigeria office in 2008.

Mercy Kasitigu, a communications and records management clerk at USAID’s office in Zimbabwe, said she gained a lot from Staples’ course.

“Soon after I came back from the training, I went office by office working with the files custodians, giving directions on how to manage records according to the USAID regulations,” she said. “We managed to put the house in order in almost every office. We created lots of space by retiring files.”

Beginners to recordkeeping will find the courses quite user-friendly, said Linda Porter, a management analyst who conducts records management training for Washington-based bureaus. websites, desktop publishing, and

animation elements have been added to the course to keep participants interested.

While keeping track of Agency records is mainly a legal requirement, the process is very practical.

“If the students apply the training to their everyday workflow process...USAID will be able to document and account for the programs and activities that are funded and performed,” Staples said. “USAID will then be able to adequately justify the budget requirements submitted to Congress each fiscal year.”

For more information on the Records Management Program courses visit <http://inside.usaid.gov/M/AS/IRD/>. ★ —BJ.

## USAID EXCEEDS CFC GOAL AND WINS AWARD



USAID’s employees donated a record \$602,787 to this year’s Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

“Historically, our agency has been extremely generous in its contributions to the 4,000 CFC charities,” said Scott Radloff, USAID’s CFC campaign manager, “but to have achieved our goal in the midst of the current economic downturn is testament to the commitment of our employees to help others.”

For the second successive year, USAID achieved the CFC’s highest agency-level recognition, winning the Summit Award, which is given

to those departments and independent agencies within the U.S. government that produced a 3 percent increase in giving over the previous year’s results.

In each of the past two years, USAID’s contribution level grew by 9 percent. In addition, this year saw a 9 percent increase in the number of USAID contributors, with that total going from 967 to 1,055.

Nine USAID operating units during the current campaign were recognized with a President’s Award, given to bureaus and offices that substantially exceeded their goals. These include the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs; Office of the General Counsel; Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs; Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business

Utilization; Office of Security; Bureau for Global Health; Office of Development Partners; Bureau for Middle East; and Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade.

Radloff underscored the voluntary efforts of his CFC team of 200 employees—evenly split between Washington and the field—who served as the backbone for this year’s campaign: “What makes USAID’s CFC efforts so successful, year in and year out, is the enthusiastic engagement of our CFC coordinators and key workers. It is their energy, making sure that each USAID employee is invited to contribute and facilitating the process, that is such an important motivational factor.”

Next year’s campaign will be co-managed by the Bureaus for Asia and the Middle East, and planning efforts are already underway. ★



Omneya Hesham Kamal Abdelhamid from Egypt, a participant in USAID’s Peace Scholarships Program, listens during a meeting with USAID staff at the Ronald Reagan Building March 15. The 26 young Peace Scholars attending the meeting were from countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Abdelhamid, who is studying linguistics at the University of Utah, and the other scholars are in the United States for one year of undergraduate study at an American university.

Photo by Matthew Johnson/USAID