

The First 50, the Next 50 *The United States Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of USAID*

By U.S. Ambassador Cameron Munter

Few relationships are as dogged by history as the United States and Pakistan. I am often struck by our shared amnesia—there are select episodes we hold on to, but longer engagements we choose to forget. Fifty years ago today, President Kennedy established the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) “to meet our moral obligations in the interdependent community of free nations” and “our economic obligations as a nation no longer dependent upon loans from abroad.”

U.S. assistance to Pakistan preceded President Kennedy’s announcement, yet we are often asked, “What has the United States done for Pakistan?” On the occasion of USAID’s 50th anniversary, I would like to reflect on the many quiet successes America and Pakistan have achieved over more than 50 years of working hand-in-hand.

Pakistanis who doubt that U.S. assistance has borne fruit in Pakistan would be surprised to know that they’ve tasted it. Pakistan’s most popular citrus fruit, the kinoo, comes from California. USAID brought kinoo seeds to Pakistan in the 1960s. Today, we are helping export Pakistan’s sweetest fruit, the mango, in the other direction.

In the 1950s, we brought together the University of Karachi, the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business, and the University of Southern California to establish a campus in Karachi to meet the demand for business managers in the bustling port city. USAID sponsored the project and the Institute of Business Administration became Pakistan’s first business school and one of the first outside of North America. IBA is recognized today as one of South Asia’s leading institutions.

In 1965, Dr. Norman Borlaug, who later won the Nobel Prize for his contribution to agricultural research, came to Pakistan to introduce his new high-yielding variety of wheat. We worked with the Lyallpur Rotary Club to support a program that gave individual farmers a bushel of the new generation of seed if, when the harvest came in, they returned the bushel so we could give it to someone else. While modest in scope, this small project brought Lyallpur into the Green Revolution that in turn converted a food deficit region into an exporter of grains.

In the 1960s and ‘70s, a consortium of U.S. construction firms employing Pakistanis, Americans, Brits, Canadians, Germans, and Irish built the two mighty dams of Tarbela and Mangla with USAID and World Bank financing. Those engineering feats - more complex than anywhere in the world at that time - soon accounted for 70 percent of the country’s power output and made Pakistan a leading provider of clean energy.

In the 1980s, with USAID’s assistance, Pakistan’s private industry founded the Lahore University of Management Sciences. Pakistanis approached us with the idea for the new institution and we agreed to support it with a contribution of \$10 million. Today, LUMS incubates the ideas and nurtures the leaders who are critical to Pakistan’s future.

Since the inception of the Fulbright scholarship program, nearly 3,000 Pakistanis have studied in the United States and close to 1,000 Americans have studied in Pakistan. Today, the U.S. Fulbright program in Pakistan is the largest in the world.

Key to all these successes was that Pakistanis owned them. We may have helped sow the seeds but Pakistanis made sure the flowers blossomed.

Aid is a catalyst and its success depends on those who receive it. So today, while we help complete dams in Gomal Zam and Satpara and rehabilitate power plants in Muzaffargarh and Jamshoro, only Pakistanis can put an end to circular debt by paying their bills and holding the system accountable. While we work to cultivate international markets for Pakistan's fruit and fashion, only Pakistanis can deliver quality products that can compete. While we pay for road construction in South Waziristan, only Pakistanis can provide the local population with economic opportunities to make use of those roads. While we build schools in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, only Pakistanis can ensure that qualified teachers show up to teach in them.

As Mohammed Jinnah charged the Constituent Assembly at the country's founding, "If we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people. Work in cooperation and you are bound to succeed."

I hope that fifty years from now, Pakistan will not be a recipient of assistance but instead will have joined us and other like-minded nations in helping others succeed. Development assistance cannot be a substitute for the change that must come from within Pakistan. But until we get there, LUMS, IBA, and the Kinoo stand as symbols of the success Pakistan and the United States can achieve by working together.