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Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

# **VEGA 2007 Quarterly Report 3**

**(July 1 – September 30, 2007)**

**LEADER WITH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT (LWA)  
EEM-A-00-04-00002-00**

**Prepared for the United States Agency for  
International Development (USAID)**



## **Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance Leader Award EEM-A-00-04-00002-00**

### **Quarterly Report 3 (July 1 – September 30, 2007)**

This is the third Quarterly Report submitted to USAID for 2007. This report covers what VEGA has accomplished in the period from July through September 2007.

#### **Part I. Governance**

##### A. Staffing and Administrative Matters

During the month of June, Administrative Assistant Michelle Mowery notified the Executive Director that she had been accepted to a Master of Arts Program in International Relations at the London School of Economics, that her classes were scheduled begin in early September, and that she would have to terminate her employment by VEGA at the end of August.

VEGA conducted a search that resulted in the competitive selection of Ms. Danielle Payne, who graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. In the Fall of 2005, she studied Mandarin Chinese at the Peking University, and conducted English lessons as an after-school enrichment program for primary school students. In the Spring of 2006, she was an Intern at a Mother-Child Care clinic/counseling center in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She joined the VEGA staff on August 1.

During the month of August, Michelle provided orientation and training for Danielle, shared the workload with her, and prepared her to assume the Administrative Assistant's duties fully. Michelle's last day of employment at VEGA was August 31.

##### B. Executive Committee Meetings

Executive Committee meetings in this quarter were held on July 18, August 1, August 22, September 5, and September 19.

Typically, the agenda of these meetings included such items as:

- Weekly Activity Sheet by the VEGA staff
- Periodic Program Performance Reports
- Periodic Financial/Audit Reports and Issues
- USAID/Client Relations
- Responsibilities/Communications to the VEGA Board
- Planning and Implementation of Outreach Activities/Tracking of the Outreach to the Top Twenty USAID Country Programs

- Governance issues or policies currently impacting on-going outreach and project implementation activities
- Prospective or Pending USAID Requests for Program Description
- Special Events

Notes for these meetings can be made available by the VEGA staff to Member Organizations and USAID clients upon request.

## Part II. Outreach

In August, members of the Executive Committee met and interviewed the President and Executive Director of Encore! Service Corps International. Encore! is a nonprofit organization, created in 2003, that specializes in developing, managing and measuring social impact projects around the world. Encore! deploys former Peace Corps volunteers on short term assignments in their areas of expertise. The purpose of this interview was to gather more information about Encore! and assess the potential for the organization to become a VEGA member.

### Meetings and Representations

On July 24, at the local Winrock office, VEGA staff attended the viewing of a documentary, about Southern Sudan and VEGA's Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development (AMED) Program. One of the VEGA/AMED volunteers, Malcom Glover, developed this documentary during his assignment.

On September 5, the Executive Committee met with Jack Hawkins from Volunteers for Prosperity. VFP and VEGA talked about advocating the importance of volunteerism and possible collaboration in post-disaster situations, specifically strategic cooperation between willing volunteers and disaster relief groups.

In mid September, Executive Director, Earl Yates and Project Management and Support Officer, Lee Warren met with Thomas Debass from the USAID Microenterprise Office. They discussed microenterprise development and strategies for utilizing Diaspora in international development. This meeting was partially informational as the purpose was for Mr. Debass to become more familiar with VEGA and its success in using Sudanese Diaspora in its Southern Sudan Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development Program.

On September 24, Executive Director Earl Yates attended an informational workshop about AFRICOM, hosted by member organization ACDI/VOCA and prepared by AFRICOM Resource Group.

### Newsletter Headlines

- *“South Sudan Employees Get “Programmed”*
  - VEGA Diaspora volunteer **Ismail Limbo** conducted a four-week Computer Literacy Training in Juba.

- Limbo also held a separate session on computer networking and maintenance, including syllabus development, for ten IT trainers at the **Juba Computer Training Institute**.
- *Volunteer Experts in South Africa Begin Assistance Assignments*
  - Volunteer Expert, **Colette Bennett** visited **Red Cedar** a women-owned enterprise that specializes in products made from an indigenous plant *rooibos*.
  - She focused on capacity building in marketing strategies, including improved packaging and product display.
- *VEGA Initiates Business Park Development in Bulgaria*
  - On June 19, 2007 VEGA/BTD organized a conference “**New Partnerships for Park Development**” with the support of the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and Energy to promote the project with the Municipality of Dobrich, and to create awareness about the opportunities business and industrial park development presents to municipalities, local populations and Bulgarian businesses.
- *VEGA Advisor Contributes to Sustainability of MFI Serving Indigenous Women of Rural Mexico*
  - **VEGA Long-Term Business Advisor Ana Luisa Pinto** was assigned to **Alternativa Solidaria de Chiapas A.C. (AlSol)**, a local microfinance institution serving 13,753 clients, all women, in rural and semi-urban areas of Chiapas.
  - Ana Luisa strengthened AlSol’s institutional image by creating promotional materials for loan officers’ use in recruitment of potential clients and publishing quarterly newsletters for both staff and AlSol’s network of partners and donors.
- *The First Annual Ethiopian Diaspora Business Conference to be held on September 19, 2007 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa*
  - **The Ethiopian Diaspora Business Conference** aims to make a business case for investing in Ethiopia by illustrating exactly how the Diaspora community can benefit from the investment opportunities that exist in the country.

### Part III. LWA Deliverables

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E reporting was delivered by member organizations. Due to a number of other current issues, analysis of the data was delayed until next quarter and a report on findings will be offered at that time.

#### Best Practice Models

Member organizations continue to submit their Case Studies in Best Practices for this quarter. These Case Studies are collected to provide USAID missions with members’ Best Practices in utilizing volunteers to assist USAID in achieving its goals in economic growth and development. In order to maximize the value to USAID, member organizations and VEGA, the Case Studies in Best Practices underscore both a regional and technical specialty chosen by the submitting organization, yet each Case Study is linked by the common thread of highlighting the successful use of volunteer technical assistance to implement the core of the program. In addition to the

previously submitted Case Studies in Best Practices, this quarter's Case Studies in Best Practices can be downloaded from the Case Studies page at <http://www.vegaalliance.org/best.asp> >> Case Studies.

## **Part IV. Associate Agreements**

### Bulgaria BTD

USAID Bulgaria provided a three-month, no-cost extension for an orderly and managed roll out of Authentic Bulgaria. VEGA finished other program activities and presented a close-out ceremony to honor the work done and provide the official launch of the SME Clearinghouse ([www.informoney.org](http://www.informoney.org) – in Bulgarian). VEGA's Executive Director attended the close-out event.

### Sudan AMED

USAID and VEGA signed a two-year, \$10 million extension to the AMED program at the end of September. The 'new' program will include Agricultural Extension activities and a new set of program indicators.

### Ethiopia AGOA

VEGA's program continued its success with the finalization of the agreement between one of its beneficiaries and Starbucks to provide Ethiopian sourced and produced uniforms for Starbucks retail outlets in the United States. Also, the program finalized negotiations with the US Chamber of Commerce to open an AmCham affiliate in Ethiopia. Roll out is expected next quarter.

### South Africa SAAGA

VEGA continued its grants and grants management program for small businesses and businesses service organizations in South Africa. Audits of closed grant programs were ongoing while new grants were made to several current beneficiaries and at least one new organization. Management of these disbursements with continued obligations upon the meeting of benchmarks will continue into the next quarter.

### MEPI Morocco/Bahrain

Program activities have finished with a final series of seminars in July. The final program report will be issued next quarter.

### Long-Term Business Advisors (LTBA)

VEGA was in negotiations with the USAID mission in Armenia at the close of the quarter for a no-cost extension to provide one more volunteer at the request of the mission. Indonesia granted an extension for another round of LTBA's for ten-month projects. Jordan requested a new round of LTBA's and provided pre-award authorization for spending to place the volunteers at selected

businesses. As of the close of the quarter, the modification required for extending these activities had not been finalized as the mission had yet to receive its funding for the fiscal year. Signing is expected next quarter. All Microenterprise Development volunteers finished their activities and no new volunteers are expected as the final two (in Mexico and Madagascar) finish their debriefs and case study reports into the next quarter.

#### West Africa – Improved Access to Credit for SMEs

This was the first full reporting quarter for the program. While small, the program has already made significant impact and is highly regarded by the Mission. Seminar and training activities will continue and, per the Mission, there may be the possibility for extension and/or expansion of activities in the coming year. The Mission has also stated that they are pleased enough to date that they are looking for other opportunities for VEGA in their own programming while promoting our services to others in the region.

#### Afghanistan - Community Development Agriculture Program in Paktia, Paktika, Khost and Southeast Ghazni (CDA-P2K)

USAID Afghanistan approached VEGA in June with a Request for Program Description for the CDA-P2K program in Eastern Afghanistan. VEGA conducted its internal competition process and a group of 3 VEGA members led by ACDI/VOCA, with the inclusion of one local Afghani organization, won the competition. As of the end of the quarter, the Award had not been signed and negotiations between VEGA and the Mission continued regarding details of this two-year, \$15 million project. The Mission is anxious to begin and VEGA expects finalization and implementation of the program to begin in the next quarter.