



USAID
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Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors (SPANS) *Increasing Self-Reliance Within Vulnerable Populations*

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SPANS Comprises Five Congressionally Directed Programs Managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID):

- Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
- Leahy War Victims Fund
- Victims of Torture Program
- Disability Program
- Wheelchair Program



The Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors (SPANS) portfolio works to reduce risks to vulnerable populations, and to reinforce the capacities of communities, local nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and governments to provide services and protection for vulnerable groups. Programs help vulnerable populations gain access to opportunities that support their full participation in society.

SPANS comprises five Congressionally directed programs: Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF), Victims of Torture Program (VOT), Disability Program, and Wheelchair Program. Each provides a dedicated source of financial and technical assistance for projects and activities in their respective programming areas. The SPANS team includes personnel with technical expertise in those programming areas, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Disability Coordinator, who works to ensure that USAID fully complies with its own disability policy.

SPANS programs have been at the forefront of developing innovative and state-of-the-art programming for children affected by war, in setting orthopedic and rehabilitation standards in developing countries, and in improving treatment and healing options for survivors of torture. It has also lead worldwide policy change on barrier-free accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities in family and community.

Each fund has its own purpose and strategy, but they share a focus on providing services to poor and vulnerable people and an emphasis on community. SPANS collectively conducts programs in more than seventy (70) countries around the world.

Included are descriptions of each program. Each description provides information on the level of funding in FY 2010, and the number of countries in which each fund is implementing programs.

In Uganda, a LWVF program participant plays wheelchair basketball. Photo courtesy of Sue Eitel.



Children play in the yard of the Beghurebi shelter for street children in Tbilisi, Georgia. The shelter is part of the USAID-funded Rebuilding Lives Project, implemented by Save the Children. Photo courtesy of USAID/Georgia.

Displaced Children and Orphans Fund

The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund provides financial and technical assistance for projects that help vulnerable children in jeopardy of losing, or those who are already living without, the care and protection of a family. This includes children in institutions, children living on the street, children displaced from their families and communities as a result of armed conflict, and other highly vulnerable children. Some of those children are orphans who have lost both parents; most are not.

DCOF supports projects in difficult environments, such as those conducted during and after armed conflict. Its fundamental approach is to strengthen the capacity of families and communities to protect and care for their most vulnerable children.

Most DCOF projects aim to restore or preserve family care for children. However, because annual DCOF funding is limited in relation to the problems that it addresses, USAID uses those resources selectively to support promising projects that yield lessons that can be applied in other situations. DCOF shares those lessons as widely as possible with practitioners, funding organizations, and governments.

In addition to supporting and learning from projects, DCOF increases the impact of its limited resources by helping build networks of key actors that can improve policies and the state-of-the-art in programming to benefit vulnerable children and families. It has played a catalytic role in starting several technical networks.

In FY 2010, DCOF's budget is \$13 million. It currently supports programs in twenty-three (23) countries.

DCOF programs fall into two major categories:

- Community-based programs that implement strategies to assist in family preservation:
 - Strengthening families economically
 - Through work with street children
 - Through family reunification
 - Through reintegrating children affected by war, including child soldiers
- Programs that develop national child protection systems:
 - Through collaboration with UNICEF's child protection unit
 - By improving care
 - By strengthening evidence of what works
 - By decreasing the number of children who are institutionalized

Leahy War Victims Fund

The LWVF promotes appropriate prosthetic and orthotic technologies and supports international accreditation and training standards for rehabilitation professionals. LWVF funds support the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs that provide evidence-based guidance to those designing programs for civil victims of war and other people with disabilities. It also works to develop models for programs that when deemed effective on a small scale can be replicated to assist people in other regions and countries.

Additionally, LWVF funds are used to influence the state-of-the-art in rehabilitation technology, policy, and laws of host-country governments, as they pertain to people with disabilities.

The LWVF recognizes that the provision of medical services is often only the first step in the rehabilitation process. Once quality care is made available, LWVF also works to support programs that help survivors integrate into society, their communities, and family. Central to this is support of initiatives to address appropriate vocational rehabilitation and to advocate for, and change, physical and social barriers in transportation, infrastructure, and political participation.

In FY 2010, the LWVF's budget is \$14 million. It currently supports programs in sixteen (16) countries; it also provides students in more than thirty (30) countries with scholarships to study prosthetics and orthotics and rehabilitation in accredited schools.



In the municipality of Nebaj, Guatemala, community members give dignified burials to loved ones whose remains were hidden in clandestine graves. Photo courtesy of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation.

Victims of Torture Program

The Victims of Torture Program works to enable people and communities affected by torture to resume their roles within family and community, and to protect individuals against future incidents of torture. VOT primarily supports projects that help heal the psychological and physical trauma caused by torture. It recognizes, however, that communities, along with survivors, need to heal and recover. To this end, it supports programs that affirm the dignity of the survivor by restoring his or her position as a functioning and contributing member of the family and the community.

VOT works through NGOs that (1) provide direct services to survivors, their families, and communities; (2) strengthen the capacity of country-based institutions in their delivery of services to survivors; and (3) increase the level of knowledge and understanding about the needs of torture victims.

In keeping with the program's mission, USAID follows five principles in its programming for torture survivors: 1) improving access to and quality of services available to torture-affected communities; 2) targeting individuals who suffer reduced function due to direct or indirect exposure to torture, and communities with many such persons; 3) building on existing community networks and resources; 4) breaking the silence experienced by individuals and communities affected by torture; and 5) strengthening public response to torture in order to protect individuals against future incidents of torture.

In FY 2010, VOT's budget is \$10 million. It currently supports programs in eighteen (18) countries.



Wheelchair Program

USAID's Wheelchair program provides a dedicated source of financial and technical assistance for persons who require the use of wheelchairs, including the production, provision, and distribution of wheelchairs.

Mass produced and delivered chairs are generally ill-suited to the rough urban and rural environments of low-income countries, and they do not provide long-term solutions to the individual user or to local industry. USAID therefore supports projects to provide wheelchairs that are suitable and appropriate for use in developing countries, and that are adaptable and can be fitted to the needs and requirements of the individual.

While numerous NGOs endeavor to provide wheelchairs, few attempt to establish sustainable wheelchair services. Shipments of appropriate wheelchairs may benefit a group of people, but the benefit will be short term if support services, including repair, are not provided in country. USAID-funded projects aim to develop or increase the capacity of national programs to produce and repair wheelchairs.

The utility of a wheelchair is linked to the training and expertise of the individuals fitting the chair, assessing the needs of the user, and training the user to handle the chair safely and effectively. Therefore, USAID supports projects that provide training to a range of wheelchair service providers.

Finally, the provision or production of wheelchairs is only a first step in enabling wheelchair users to improve their quality of life and play roles within their community. USAID-funded projects bolster the abilities of local disabled people's organizations and self-help groups to work on behalf of wheelchair users, and they work to increase opportunities for wheelchair users to attend school, work, and participate in family and community.

In FY 2010, USAID provides \$10 million in funding to projects in more than ten (10) countries.

Disability Program

In September 1997, USAID adopted a groundbreaking policy, which addresses the needs of people with disabilities (PWD) in two ways: It states that 1) USAID will not discriminate against people with disabilities and 2) will work to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in USAID-funded programs and activities. The policy also calls on USAID missions to challenge their in-country partners to lead a collaborative effort to end discrimination against, and promote equal opportunity for, PWDs.

To implement its disability policy, USAID works to educate its employees on disability issues through courses and workshops. It provides tools and technical assistance to its field missions as they institutionalize the policy, and it has developed self-reporting mechanisms to track the Agency's progress in implementing the policy in Washington and overseas.

USAID has also established a grants program to fund inclusive programming worldwide. This program provides funds directly to USAID missions, encouraging them to engage in inclusive development activities. The Disability Fund provides support to health, education, economic growth, democracy and governance, and humanitarian assistance projects. Projects works to reduce barriers that may limit people with disabilities' participation in society, community, and family.

In FY 2010, the budget for USAID's disability programming is \$5 million. It currently supports programs in forty (40) countries.

For more information, contact:

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