MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN AFRICA: 1996-2021

"USAID has been a remarkable force for progress in the world. We have helped nations eradicate smallpox, turn the tide against HIV, Malaria, and Tuberculosis and snuff out Ebola. We've helped billions… and helped transform societies."

- USAID Administrator Samantha Power, 2021

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Cover Photo by Douglas Gritzmacher for USAID

Making A Difference In Africa: 1996-2021

On November 3, 2021, we celebrated USAID's 60th birthday. For the past six decades, USAID has worked hand in hand with countries across Africa to deliver remarkable results. We've helped lift 700 million people out of extreme poverty since 1990, dramatically reduced deaths from HIV and malaria, stopped Ebola in its tracks, and helped the continent increase primary school enrollment at a rate greater than any region in the world.

With 54 countries, more than 800 ethnic groups, 1,000 languages, and a land mass 3.5 times the size of the United States, Africa is diverse, complex, and an increasingly important contributor to the global economy. With rich cultural heritage and natural resources, Africa is a dynamic continent, brimming with incredible opportunity and a growing, young population.

Yet the continent also faces some of the greatest development challenges in the world, from climate change to conflict and violent extremism. USAID helps civil society shore up democratic institutions and address the drivers of violent extremism. We help meet the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, build resilience to extreme weather patterns caused by a rapidly changing climate, and combat the spread of infectious disease. Our work has helped women and girls in Africa lead more empowered and healthier lives today than they did at independence. USAID has also increased the number of people with access to power in Africa while expanding trade and investment between the United States and Africa, boosting the quality of life across the continent.

When we last published the *Making a Difference in Africa Report* in 1996, the world was in the earliest stages of the technology revolution that has made Africa more accessible and connected to the rest of the globe, and the world economy far more interdependent. What hasn't changed through the years is our commitment to the people of Africa. As we move into the future, USAID will continue to engage African countries as partners, pursuing our shared interests and values.

Diana B. Putman
Acting Assistant Administrator,
Bureau for Africa

USAID's Evolution 1996-2021

Timeline: 1993 — 2001 — 2009 — 2017 — 2021

1993-2001
CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

USAID reorganizes headquarters, closes some overseas missions, and reduces the total workforce.

2001-2009
BUSH ADMINISTRATION

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Millennium Challenge Corporation are created in 2003. In 2006, the Director of Foreign Assistance at State ("F") is established for greater coordination in foreign assistance across federal agencies.

2009-2017
OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

USAID Forward is launched, ushering in a more results-oriented approach to development. F is no longer dual hatted as USAID Administrator, and USAID specific budget and policy capacity returns to reside separately within USAID.

2017-2020
TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

USAID launches the Journey to Self-Reliance, a set of reforms focused on locally-led development to move partner countries toward self-reliance.

2020-2024
BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

In 2021, USAID turns 60, and Administrator Samantha Power outlines a new vision of "inclusive development."

Josh Estey

Introduction

President John F. Kennedy recognized the need to unite U.S. development efforts around the world into a single agency responsible for administering aid to foreign countries to promote social and economic development. In 1961, he signed the Foreign Assistance Act, creating USAID. Today, USAID is the world's leading international development agency. For the past 60 years, USAID programs have saved lives, reduced poverty, and strengthened democratic governance in more than 100 countries—47 of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the last 25 years, Sub-Saharan Africa has made significant gains in economic growth, democratic transitions, health, education, women's empowerment, and stability. However, progress has been uneven across the continent, with some democratic backsliding, and much of Africa's vast potential remains unrealized. Climate change has led to increased frequency and severity of natural disasters, such as droughts, floods, and locust infestations. Conflict and violent extremism have increased, as indicated by ethnic conflict, sectarian attacks, terrorism, and political violence—resulting in widespread suffering, massive displacement of people, disrupted agriculture activities, and economic and social turmoil.

USAID has worked to address these challenges, build resilience, and create opportunity. We engage with our African partners to pursue shared interests and values—from global health, climate change response, and freedom and democracy to security and shared prosperity. In this report, we describe how USAID has evolved over the last two and a half decades, celebrate our successes, and outline the work that lies ahead.

In 2020, USAID implemented programs totaling $8.5 billion in assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa.[1]

Sub-Saharan Africa receives more USAID bilateral funding than any other region of the world. USAID has more overseas posts in Africa than any other region.

USAID's Evolution 1996-2021: Transforming Lives and Enhancing Partnerships

Since we published the first *Making a Difference in Africa* report in 1996, USAID has improved outcomes across Sub-Saharan Africa in global health, trade and investment, basic education, and other areas, helping drive deep structural change. We have constantly evolved how we do business to improve results and grow local partnerships. Reforms have targeted the structure of foreign assistance, budgeting, strategic planning, and results reporting.

The Bush Administration (2001-09) oversaw one of the largest expansions of U.S. foreign assistance, both in quantity and the number of executive branch entities implementing foreign assistance. Three main changes were the reorganization of foreign assistance in the post-9/11 era, and the creation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, and subsequent engagement of the U.S. military and diplomatic and foreign assistance efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq launched a new era of integration between the Departments of Defense and State and USAID as President George W. Bush recognized that "only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity." For the first time, defense and diplomacy were formally linked with development in Bush's National Security Strategy, which asserted the need to diminish "the underlying conditions that spawn terrorism" and pledged to "expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy."[2]

In 2006, Secretary of State Condolezza Rice announced the establishment of the Director of Foreign Assistance at the Department of State to create greater coordination in foreign assistance across federal agencies. The Director of Foreign Assistance oversees all State and USAID foreign assistance and initially also served as the USAID Administrator.

The Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 established the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) as a new government entity, separate from the Departments of State, Treasury, and USAID, to provide assistance to developing countries committed to pursuing good governance and economic freedom, and investing in their citizens. Africa has the most MCC programs and represents the largest portion of MCC funding. Close coordination between MCC and USAID has enabled programming to advance development goals collaboratively.

The U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 created PEPFAR, largely in response to the ravages of HIV/AIDS globally, but in Africa in particular. The legislation also established the State Department Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator to oversee all international AIDS funding and programming. In 2005, President Bush launched the President's Malaria Initiative with the goal of reducing malaria deaths by 50 percent in 15 high-burden countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by expanding proven and highly effective malaria prevention and treatment measures.

In 2008, the Defense Department created the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), a new type of combatant command, with combined military and civilian leadership, and a partnership approach for working with local governments. USAID has a team based at AFRICOM to inform civilian-military cooperation and provide USAID expertise on humanitarian and development assistance and foreign assistance policy considerations.

The Obama Administration (2009-17) modified U.S. foreign assistance architecture by making the USAID Administrator separate from the Director of Foreign Assistance and reinstituting budget and policy analysis and decision-making at USAID.

In 2010, USAID launched USAID Forward to maximize the Agency's impact by pursuing a more strategic, focused, and results-oriented approach. The reforms focused on seven main areas: rebuilding policy capacity, restoring budget management, strengthening monitoring and evaluation, leading on innovation, supporting capabilities in science and technology, building local capacity, and attracting and retaining talent.[3]

As part of these reforms, USAID introduced Country Development Cooperation Strategies—five-year country plans tailored to optimize growth and development. USAID also introduced guidelines to integrate more adaptive programming, including hands-on management with regular assessments to keep up with changing conditions and encourage quick course corrections.[4] USAID restructured and rebuilt its budget capacity to link budget decisions more explicitly to policy priorities, strategic plans, and evidence-based results.

USAID Forward renewed the Agency's focus on evaluation and delivering results—introducing in 2020 the USAID Evaluation Policy that requires unbiased, transparent, and rigorous evaluations. USAID also made its evaluation data publicly available online to increase transparency.

During the Trump Administration (2017-20), USAID launched the Journey to Self-Reliance, an approach focused on supporting locally led development and increasing collaboration and nontraditional partnerships to move partner countries toward self-reliance. USAID developed a matrix of 17 indicators to quantify countries' progress toward ending their need for foreign assistance. This approach enabled tailored, country-level programming, while establishing common metrics to compare progress across countries.

This was accompanied by an increased emphasis on working with the private sector, which built on long-standing efforts to leverage the resources of nongovernmental actors to advance international development. The Private Sector Engagement Policy infused the idea of creating partnerships with the private sector across all programming.[5]

In 2019, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation was established, merging the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (created by President Richard Nixon in 1971) and USAID's Development Credit Authority into a new institution that partners with the private sector to finance solutions to the world's most critical development challenges.

As USAID turned 60 in the fall of 2021, USAID Administrator Samantha Power outlined a new "vision of inclusive development" in a speech at Georgetown University: "First, we have to broaden our coalition to allow people from more diverse backgrounds and partners of all kinds to participate in our mission. We must make aid more accessible. Second, we must shift our thinking to be more focused on the voices and needs of the most marginalized. We must make aid more equitable. And third, in confronting some of the biggest challenges of our time—COVID-19, climate change, growing authoritarianism—we must listen to what our partners in the countries where we work are asking of us. We must make aid more responsive" 'she said.'

U.S. Interests and Priorities in Africa

Promoting Africa's Development is in the U.S. National Interest

The United States partners with African countries to pursue our shared interests and values—from security, global health, gender equality and inclusivity, to climate change, freedom and democracy, and prosperity. The challenges facing Africa—such as terrorism and pandemics—can adversely affect the United States, while opportunities in African trade and investment can benefit both the U.S. and African economies.

USAID's Assistance Program to Africa Mirrors U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives

Over the past 25 years, successive U.S. Administrations have developed specific strategies for Africa.

The State Department and USAID Africa Bureau Joint Regional Strategy outlines four goals for U.S. engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa:

- Advance peace and security through U.S. leadership and revitalized alliances and partnerships to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy.

- Increase mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment.

- Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity to build strong, accountable, and democratic institutions.

- Build Africa's resilience to meet post-pandemic challenges and promote inclusive development.[6]

While U.S. government regional strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa have evolved with each Administration, all include goals of promoting peace, economic growth and trade, democracy, inclusive development, and mutually beneficial programming.

Boniface Musembi

Challenges to Sustainable Development

Several complex issues challenge sustainable development in Africa:

- **Climate Change:** Africa is disproportionately affected by climate change, with 17 of the world's 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa. As rain patterns become more erratic and extreme, Africa is increasingly at risk of drought due to reliance on rain-fed agriculture, limited irrigation infrastructure, land degradation, and desertification. Rising temperatures and sea levels are also a growing threat. According to World Bank projections, Sub-Saharan Africa is anticipated to have between 56.6 and 85.7 million internal climate migrants by 2050.[7] While Sub-Saharan Africa currently produces only about 4 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions, its energy use will increase drastically in the coming decades, making climate adaptation an even more urgent issue.

- **Conflict and Violent Extremism:** Rising violent extremism threatens the continent's stability. Increasing violence from militant Islamists (a political ideology not part of Islam)—including against civilians—is evident in several countries, including Somalia and Mozambique, and in sub-regions including the Sahel. Ethnic violence continues to plague a number of countries, as recently seen in Ethiopia. Conflict and insecurity are exacerbated by democratic decline marked by unconstitutional changes of government and restrictions on civic and political freedoms. Freedom House in 2021 characterized 41 percent of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa as "Not Free."[8]

- **Youth Population:** Africa's large youth population is growing rapidly and expected to more than double by 2055.[9] Youth have the potential to bring about positive change, but unmet expectations from stalled economic growth and lack of opportunity for political participation has led to disaffection and violence. Currently, young people account for 60 percent of the unemployed population in Africa.[10]

- **Debt:** Increasing debt limits the ability of governments to respond to the needs of their citizens. Debt is rising across the region, particularly debt to China. From 2010 to 2018, Sub-Saharan Africa's average public debt increased by half, from 40 percent to 59 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), making Africa the developing region with the fastest growing debt accumulation.

- **HIV/AIDS and Malaria:** HIV/AIDS infection rates are among the highest in the world. All 20 of the world's highest HIV prevalence countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Malaria incidence and mortality rates are higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world.

- **Food Insecurity:** Despite improvements in Africa's food and agriculture systems, nearly 20 percent of the population remains food insecure. The complex intersection of conflict, extreme weather events, and continuing economic development challenges have a negative impact on food security and agriculture-led economic growth in many Sub-Saharan African nations.

- **Gender Inequality:** Girls continue to face barriers to access education and stay in school. Women in Sub-Saharan Africa lack equal land rights and access to economic resources, while engaging in informal and unpaid work at a greater rate than men.[11] Women are also under-represented in elected positions, particularly at local levels. Women and girls often lack legal protections, or their rights are not enforced.

- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** GBV is pervasive in Sub-Saharan Africa. Almost half of women experience physical or sexual violence from an

intimate partner, with higher rates in countries such as Ethiopia (70 percent).[12] Eighteen of the countries with the highest child marriage rates globally are in Africa. At least 25 African countries have communities where female genital mutilation/cutting is actively practiced. Girls may face school-related GBV that can result in school absenteeism and dropout, and mental health challenges.[13]

- **LGBTQI+ discrimination:** In many African countries, discrimination, stigmatization, violence, marginalization, and exclusionary laws negatively impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people, contributing to poverty, increasing inequality, and undermining USAID's development efforts.

- **Urbanization:** Over the next decade, an additional 187 million Africans will live in cities. Increasing urbanization puts pressure on social services, security and the job market.

In spite of these challenges, USAID programs—working in partnership with local governments, communities, the private sector, and civil society—have improved outcomes in global health, trade and investment, basic education, and governance.

Learn More: Africa's Needs Are So Much Greater, a Tableau Story

Achieving Results—How We're Making a Difference

The last two and a half decades have been a time of enormous change across the globe, and USAID has evolved to keep pace with this change. USAID has focused resources on Africa's most critical development problems. From health care and education to economic growth and climate change, USAID continues to make a difference in the lives of millions of Africans.

Broad-based Economic Growth Through Trade and Investment
USAID programs help countries access and benefit from regional and global trade and investment, which grows economies and lifts millions out of poverty. African economies have been on the rise over the last 26 years, and with economic growth and associated tax revenues, African countries can finance and implement solutions to solve their development challenges.

A key piece of legislation supporting access is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a U.S. unilateral trade preference program that allows eligible Sub-Saharan African countries to export up to 6,900 products to the United States duty free. AGOA increases trade and investments between the United States and those countries—boosting economic opportunity.

Through its Trade and Investment Hubs in Africa, USAID has helped thousands of African businesses export to the United States under AGOA. The Trade Hubs provide technical assistance to help African businesses improve their standards, navigate AGOA procedures and regulations, match with U.S. distributors, and access financing. For every $1 of U.S. Government funding, the Trade Hubs have mobilized $9 of private investment. They have also increased intraregional trade in Africa, reduced transit times at border crossings and critical ports, and helped countries compete more effectively in African and global markets.

USAID also plays a leading role in Prosper Africa, the U.S. government initiative to substantially increase two-way trade and investment between African countries and the United States. Since Prosper Africa's launch in 2019, USAID has partnered with African and U.S. businesses and investors, closing deals worth an estimated $2.1 billion in new exports and investments, and built a deal pipeline of more than $10 billion. Through Prosper Africa, the U.S. government has enabled a total of 800 deals between the United States and African countries worth an estimated $50 billion in new exports and investments.

Through private sector engagement, USAID creates jobs, drives growth, and fosters shared prosperity. USAID's assistance creates greater opportunities for African countries to participate in the global economy. Since 1997, exports to Africa from the United States have increased by 134.6 percent ($11.4 billion to $26.7 billion) while imports to the United States from Africa have grown by 51.6 percent ($19.9 billion to $30.2 billion).[14]

In July 2021, the U.S. government announced the Prosper Africa Build Together Campaign, a targeted whole-of-government effort to elevate and energize the U. S. commitment to trade and investment with African countries. Working with the private sector, African governments, and multilateral organizations, this new chapter of the Prosper Africa initiative seeks to bolster trade and investment in key sectors, such as clean energy and climate smart solutions, health, and digital technology. USAID's new, continent-wide Africa Trade and Investment program announced in October 2021 will further advance Prosper Africa's goal of expanding two-way trade and investment.

Learn more: US Exports to Sub-Saharan Africa/U.S. Imports from Sub-Saharan Africa

Energy

USAID's early work in the energy sector was focused on rural infrastructure. In 1996, USAID identified energy development in Africa as a strategic imperative to include sustainable energy, regional gas markets, and the potential generation of carbon credits for energy companies. In 2008, USAID began to shift strategies toward private investments on the continent. With the Africa Infrastructure Program, USAID provided transaction support and training and mentoring of local partners to identify and close promising projects. This program achieved $1 billion in private investments with a very modest investment of USAID funds.

As a further expansion of these efforts, the U.S. government in 2013 launched the Power Africa Initiative and in February 2016, Congress passed the Electrify Africa Act. As a U.S. government-wide initiative, Power Africa coordinates the resources, talent, and expertise of 12 agencies to partner with African governments, international development partner organizations, and the private sector. Since its launch in 2013, Power Africa has provided more than 127 million people access to cleaner, more sustainable power, and brought 5,523 megawatts of new electricity generation online, more than half of it renewable.

By leveraging $23.5 billion of investment and related expertise, Power Africa has enabled 135 power projects to reach financial conclusion, an estimated 13,000 megawatts of new, productive use electricity. The goals of the initiative are to produce 60 million new electrical connections and to generate 30,000 megawatts of power. Power Africa projects are focused on wind, solar, and geothermal energy. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initiative has also prioritized electrifying health facilities, such as these rural health facilities in Lesotho.

Power Africa's advisors provided technical, legal, and transaction support to the Kipeto Wind Farm project, ranging from grid modernization and project negotiations to a $230 million debt facility from the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and a Biodiversity Action Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment for wind energy.

In South Africa, Power Africa has supported the development of 3,180 megawatts of electricity generation projects. Through South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Program, Power Africa helped 27 projects reach financial conclusion, representing a total value of $5 billion in investment that will create 61,000 jobs in South Africa.

Agriculture

Since its inception, USAID has improved agriculture in Africa through farmer training, scientific research, and policy reform. From 1996 to 2010, USAID agriculture assistance focused on market solutions and promoted farming of high-value, non-traditional crops to increase farmers' revenues. For example, USAID investments helped increase exports of fresh pineapples from Ghana more than 150 percent between 1996 and 2004. Crops such as pineapples

The Lake Turkana Wind Project is the single largest private investment in Kenya's history and has the capacity to generate 310 megawatts, enough to supply one million homes with electricity. USAID partner Vestas, the world's leading provider of wind energy solutions, is manufacturing, delivering, and installing the turbines for the project.

Commissioned on July 5, 2021, and situated 18.6 miles from Nairobi, in Kajiado County, the Kipeto Wind Farm is Kenya's second-largest wind-power project. Comprised of 60 wind turbines supplied by Power Africa partner General Electric, Kipeto is generating 100 megawatts of clean electricity to power approximately 250,000 Kenyan households.

were a particular focus of USAID's work as they increased employment opportunities and had more stable pricing than crops such as cocoa, which can be subject to major price swings.

USAID's agriculture work in Africa is part of the United States' whole-of-government approach on global food security as required by the Global Food Security Act of 2016 and articulated in the Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS). The interagency initiative Feed the Future, which was launched in 2010 and is led by USAID, implements the GFSS across a number of countries in Africa.

GFSS seeks to facilitate inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth, strengthen resilience among people and systems, and nourish populations by improving food systems, market systems, and farmer livelihoods, as well as the knowledge and practices needed for agriculture-led economic growth.
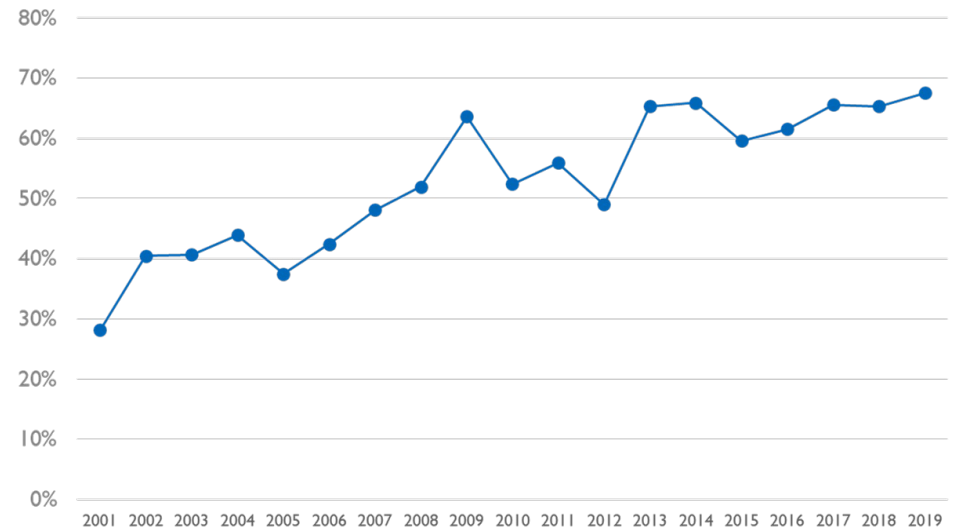
In Ethiopia, USAID worked with the Ethiopian Government, communities, and private sector to help reduce poverty by 19 percent between 2013 and 2018 in some of the country's poorest areas. Programs invested in smallholder agriculture and reduced hunger by 33 percent in those areas.

In the Senegal River Valley, Feed the Future programs helped smallholder farmers access high-quality seeds and mechanization services, enabling them to double their productivity and add a second growing cycle. As a result, their average rice production increased 123 percent from 2012 to 2018. Feed the Future also unlocked $64 million in loans in a single year for Senegalese farmers, wholesalers, millers, and financial institutions.

Education

Education is fundamental to fostering human development, economic growth, positive health outcomes, and democratic governance. USAID works to expand access to high-quality education and workforce development. The chart below shows the impact of USAID education programs by highlighting the increase in female primary school completion rates from 28 percent in 1996 to 68 percent in 2019.

Female primary school completion rates in sub-Saharan Africa **have more than doubled** in the last 20 years. USAID assistance has helped ensure more girls can attend school and receive a high-quality education.

Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education, 2021

USAID has been a pioneer in innovative education programming since the late 1990s. Today, the 2018 USAID Education Policy and the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education provide a framework for 20 bilateral programs in Sub-Saharan Africa and offer a holistic approach for addressing systemic education challenges. The approach includes focusing on and monitoring learning outcomes and increasing equitable access to educational opportunities, leveraging interventions in health, governance, and workforce development, and other assistance that encourage ministries of education to increase their funding and systems-level reforms.[15] It also promotes working with regional networks, such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, to promote African ownership of education reform and policy dialogue.

Tackling HIV/AIDS and education jointly was especially important in the 2000s, as HIV/AIDS left many children in Sub-Saharan Africa vulnerable and less able to access education. USAID worked with governments to manage and mitigate the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on labor, school enrollment, and orphans.[16]

> From 2011 to 2017, USAID education programs directly benefited 50.5 million learners in Sub-Saharan Africa, including 11.8 million children and youth in crisis environments

USAID has made great strides in educating those who live in conflict and crisis through both bilateral support in countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, Mali, Northern Nigeria, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burkina Faso, and multilateral support to the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait global fund.

Amid civil war in South Sudan, USAID reached more than 613,000 children and youth from 2014 to 2020 with literacy, numeracy, and psychosocial activities, and trained 5,000 volunteer teachers. This emergency education program enabled education personnel and community members to provide psychosocial support, prevent gender-based violence, and deliver basic literacy, numeracy, and peacebuilding skills. The program tracked and monitored effects of conflict on education, including child recruitment into armed forces; destruction, looting, or military occupation of schools; killing or maiming of students and teachers; and incidents of sexual violence.

Gender Equality
Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment has been a key part of USAID's work. Women and girls are crucial to accelerating development progress across sectors and advancing global security and prosperity. The economic potential of women in Sub-Saharan Africa is enormous. Closing the gender labor gap in the workforce could add $721 billion to the region's GDP. When women earn a competitive income, they invest heavily in their communities—in food security, health care, and education.

In South Africa, USAID works to enhance awareness and provision of services for survivors of sexual assault. Since USAID's Increasing Services for Survivors of Sexual Assault program began, the number of survivors going to Thuthuzela Care Centers (one-stop facilities introduced as a critical part of South Africa's anti-rape strategy) has remained steady or increased. Five more centers now offer services 24 hours per day, and 1,908 service providers have been trained.[17]

The Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) initiative is implemented across PEPFAR programs in Africa. In Zimbabwe, girls are empowered to continue education, maintain health, and plan for the future. The DREAMS program has reached more than 20,000 girls and women in Zimbabwe. By providing training to make sanitary pads, girls no longer miss school due to menstruation.[18]

In Senegal, the Women's Leadership and Civic Journalism project increases participation of women in decision-making through radio programming. The radio awareness campaigns have made women more knowledgeable about their rights and access to services. Relationships and communication between husbands and wives have improved, and women are less restricted by traditional and religious customs.[19]

Youth
The median age of Africa's population of 1.3 billion people is 19, so Africa's youth are one of the continent's most important resources for developing their communities. USAID youth programs recognize that educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged youth drive economic growth, democracy, and prosperity. Lack of opportunities for livelihoods and education, and the failure to engage youth effectively, have been shown to contribute to violence, instability, unrest, and migration. Countries with large youth populations are statistically at greater risk of conflict and political violence, particularly when combined with a lack of employment opportunities. USAID incorporates youth across most of its activities and has youth-specific programs as well.

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is an important U.S. government program investing in the next generation of African leaders. Launched in 2010 as a Presidential initiative, YALI contributes to youth development through three programs—the Mandela Washington Fellowship, the YALI Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs), and the YALI Network. YALI enhances leadership

skills, bolsters entrepreneurship, and connects young African leaders with one another, the United States, and innovative leaders in the private, civic, and public sectors.

Since 2015, USAID's principal investment in YALI has been the creation and management of four YALI RLCs located in Nairobi, Kenya; Dakar, Senegal; Accra, Ghana; and Pretoria, South Africa. These RLCs provide transformational leadership training, professional development, and networking training to youth ages 18-35 in Africa, and have graduated more than 202,000 leaders. The RLCs were launched in 2015 as public-private partnerships in response to the overwhelming demand for the Mandela Washington Fellowship exchange program and to provide training to more youth in Africa than could be included in the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

YALI RLCs provide young leaders in business, civil society, and government with state-of-the-art leadership training in three tracks: public management, civic leadership, and business and entrepreneurship. The RLCs have worked with more than 60 organizations and leveraged resources from the private sector, both U.S. and African companies, including partners such as the Mastercard Foundation, Dow Chemical, Hewlett Packard, and Microsoft. RLC Dakar offers training in French; RLC Southern Africa offers training in English and Portuguese; and the other two RLCs operate in English.

YALI's programming reaches thousands more young people than training numbers demonstrate, including through online leadership training courses available free of charge to anyone interested. One of the most significant impacts of the program has been the multiplier effect resulting from alumni returning to their community, sharing their experiences, and living YALI's values of community service, civic engagement, and ethical leadership. YALI alumni are starting their own businesses and creating jobs. They are also expanding the reach of their non-profits into some of the most vulnerable, at-risk, and remote communities on the continent. Many alumni are influencing policy at both local and national levels—with a number becoming parliamentarians and ministers in their countries.

Meet YALI alumni who are making a difference in their communities across Africa.

Health
Health programs constitute the largest share of USAID programs in Africa, in terms of both financial and staff resources. The programs are focused on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and child health, and family planning, with a cross-cutting focus on strengthening health systems.

Controlling the HIV/AIDS Epidemic
The largest global health initiative in history by any nation to address a single disease, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was created in 2003 by President George W. Bush to control the global HIV/AIDS epidemic in more than 50 countries. As the leading implementer of PEPFAR, USAID has been key to the progress made in combating HIV/AIDS in Africa: HIV incidence rates have dropped from 6.3 in 1995 to 1.6 in 2019, a 75 percent drop.[20] Antiretroviral therapy coverage among people living with HIV increased dramatically from 0.7 percent in 2003 to 69.7 percent in 2019, primarily as a result of PEPFAR interventions, a remarkable achievement in less than two decades.[21] The global decline in deaths from AIDS-related illness has largely been driven by progress against the disease in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Eastern and Southern Africa, where AIDS-related deaths declined by 42 percent from 2010 to 2017. USAID, through PEPFAR, is by far the largest donor in this area.

USAID contributes to these milestones by prioritizing improved access, quality, and sustainability of HIV prevention and treatment services. For example, USAID and its implementing partners pool procurement and utilize generic antiretroviral medicines to drastically lower the price of HIV medicines in resource-limited settings. USAID also provides in-person and virtual support to help patients adhere to lifesaving treatments using mobile phones and other technology innovations.[22]

Significant progress has been made in South Africa, where over seven million people are living with HIV.[23] Since 2003, antiretroviral therapy coverage skyrocketed from 1 percent to 70 percent, and incidence rates decreased from 13 to 4 percent.[24] USAID is transitioning from its initial emergency response to one more focused on sustainable systems, with an emphasis on prevention.

Faith Sashah/USAID

This next phase of PEPFAR will work to identify, implement, and evaluate innovative prevention methods, and to advance science around HIV prevention.[25] Adolescent girls and young women account for 74 percent of new HIV infections among adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through the public-private DREAMS partnership launched by PEPFAR, USAID reduces rates of HIV among this population with interventions that target the structural inequalities that impact girls' vulnerability to HIV.[26]

Combating Malaria

The World Health Organization estimates there were 241 million malaria cases and 627,000 malaria deaths worldwide in 2020. Ninety-six percent of these deaths occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 80 percent of malaria deaths in the region were among children under age five.[27] Launched in 2005 by President George W. Bush and expanded under President Barack Obama, the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) is a historic U.S. government effort against malaria. Led by USAID, PMI is achieving sustained, impressive results in 27 partner countries (24 in Sub-Saharan Africa), protecting 700 million people globally.

In countries where PMI works, global efforts since 2006 have resulted in a 26 percent drop in malaria case rates and a 60 percent decline in malaria deaths. Since 2005, estimated deaths from malaria have fallen by more than 43 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, in great part due to PMI investments. Child mortality has also fallen dramatically across PMI partner countries in Africa, partly due to PMI interventions including the use of insecticide-treated nets, rapid diagnostic tests, life-saving treatments, and strengthened surveillance systems.[28]

Some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been PMI partner countries since the initiative's beginning in 2006, and over time, more have been added.

Since PMI began its partnership with Malawi in 2007, the country's mortality rate for children under age five dropped by 54 percent. This dramatic improvement is associated with USAID's purchase of more than 16 million insecticide-treated nets, more than 12 million preventive treatments for pregnant women, approximately 52 million malaria tests and 60.5 million fast-acting malaria medicines, along with spraying nearly 733,000 homes in targeted high-burden communities around lakes. [29]

PMI is a major contributor to global efforts to fight malaria that have saved 10.6 million lives and prevented 1.7 billion malaria cases since 2000.

With USAID's support, infant and under-five mortality rates in the region have been cut in half over the past 25 years, and maternal death rates have fallen by 39 % since 2000.

More recently, PMI established its partnership with Cameroon, one of PMI's newest official partner countries. Since 2017, PMI has supported two regions in Cameroon to fight malaria, delivering nets, tests, and treatments. The two regions where PMI works are eligible for seasonal malaria chemoprevention, monthly preventive treatment given to children under age five during the rainy season. PMI has delivered 29.3 million seasonal preventive treatments in Cameroon since 2017, which have reduced disease burden and saved lives.

Preventing Child and Maternal Deaths

USAID programs have helped cut in half mortality rates for infants and children younger than age five in Africa over the past 25 years, and maternal death rates have fallen by 39 percent since 2000. USAID works to ensure that women and children live long and healthy lives by:

▶ Strengthening health systems at the community and facility levels. USAID promotes innovation and research on maternal health in national policies and programs and works to scale up high-impact, sustainable interventions.

▶ Increasing access to high-quality care for pregnant mothers and newborns during childbirth and scaling up cost-effective interventions for small and sick newborns. USAID increases access to high-quality prenatal and postpartum care for pregnant mothers and newborns to improve the health of mothers and babies through pregnancy and into the first years of life.

As a founding member of the global alliance Helping Babies Breathe (HBB), a public-private partnership that teaches evidence-based neonatal resuscitation techniques, USAID has played a pivotal role in the scale-up of a simple innovation that saves the lives of newborns who struggle to breathe in their first minute of life. In Malawi, the rate of successful resuscitation of asphyxiated babies rose from 33 to 93 percent in eight months following the use of HBB resuscitation techniques. In one district where HBB was deployed in all 27 health facilities, health workers successfully resuscitated 97 percent of the 350

babies born with asphyxia.[30]

USAID's cross-sectoral work to improve child health, in partnership with local actors, includes insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria; improving water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure and behaviors; providing insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria; ensuring that children get adequate nutrition; and developing routine immunization systems. In 2019, USAID helped communities in nine provinces throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo to revitalize nearly 2,300 community-based sites so that hard-to-reach children could access lifesaving integrated community case management of childhood illness services.[31]

As a longstanding partner of and the biggest donor to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, USAID is committed to reducing the spread of vaccine-preventable infectious diseases and works to ensure that no child is left behind in immunization.

Family Planning

As the leading donor in family planning in Sub-Saharan Africa, USAID has been instrumental in helping women and couples achieve their desired family size through access to family planning.[32]

Nigeria—where nearly 20 percent of married women of reproductive age have an unmet need for family planning and the population is projected to double by 2050—is a priority country for USAID family planning assistance. Many women in Nigeria live far from health facilities. USAID has invested in integrated family health programs to reduce logistical barriers for these women, and assists local stakeholders to advocate for increased family planning funding from the Nigerian government. USAID has funded social marketing programs in Nigeria to educate people about family planning and encourage the use of modern contraception and family planning products for the health and well-being of the entire family.[33]

Defeating the 2014 Ebola Epidemic in West Africa

The 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa exposed the region's fragile health systems and the global health community's lack of preparedness for responding to severe and large-scale infectious disease outbreaks. As Ebola case numbers rose dramatically in the summer of 2014, the U.S. government ramped up response efforts, mobilizing an unprecedented amount of funding and playing a leading role in launching a coordinated international response. As the primary government agency coordinating the U.S. response (assisted by the Department of Defense, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and others), USAID activated and deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) made up of its top medical, public health, and disaster response experts.

The USAID DART assessed the situation on the ground, coordinated with key actors to identify critical gaps, and initiated a comprehensive and sustained response in all three affected countries (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone). USAID facilitated the rapid construction, equipping, and staffing of new Ebola treatment units to provide urgent care for infected patients. USAID's response also included strengthening infection prevention control and water, sanitation and hygiene capacity at health facilities and hospitals, setting up isolation units, expanding disease surveillance and contact tracing, strengthening testing and laboratory capacity, and mobilizing communities to promote behavior change. Strong civil society partnerships played a key role in enabling USAID's effective response.

After the epidemic reached its peak in November 2014, transmission began to decline in early 2015. By mid-2015, the epidemic was coming under control and USAID pivoted from acute crisis response to recovery and longer-term health systems strengthening to help countries prevent, detect, and respond early to the next infectious disease outbreak through the Global Health Security Agenda (launched in 2014), by partnering with host country governments and international agencies.

Fostering Democracy, Participation, and Accountable Governance

Democratic governance and human rights are critical components of sustainable development and lasting peace. USAID funds democracy, human rights, and good governance in Sub-Saharan Africa through programs that promote the rule of law, free and fair elections, vibrant civil society, and accountable and participatory governments. By partnering with African governments and civil society, USAID programs strengthen institutions and the ability of citizens to engage in democratic and development processes.

In 2006, USAID established the Elections and Political Processes Fund, which has strengthened political processes in dozens of countries, including democratic transitions in countries such as The Gambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and domestic observation of electoral processes in countries such as Ghana and Malawi. To integrate and elevate USAID's longstanding support for democratic governance, civil society and independent media, justice and security, and human rights and non-discrimination, the Agency in 2012 launched its Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance to provide technical expertise to USAID missions in these priority areas.

In Mali, USAID's Women in Governance program worked in 16 communities in 2003-05 to increase the presence of women in decision-making at the local level. The project resulted in an impressive 91 percent increase in the number of women elected councilors in the 16 targeted communities (from 22 to 42), significantly increased women's interest in running for local office, and increased women's active role in public life and decision-making.[34]

Persistent corruption and lack of public accountability erode the legitimacy of governance institutions and compromise the quality and accessibility of services in many African countries. To promote good governance, USAID strengthens the capacity of local governments to deliver services in a transparent and accountable manner and respond to citizen needs.

In Ghana, for example, locally generated funds in targeted districts increased after a reliable database was created with USAID assistance, with one district more than tripling its previous year's income from property taxes. The funds raised were reinvested in district development to enhance service delivery to communities, while civil servants gained skills to track and monitor planning, budgeting, and projects.

Civil society across African countries plays a critical role not only in delivering health, education, and other services, but also in holding governments accountable and advocating on behalf of the public interest. Increasing

restrictions on civil society and independent media have negatively affected the ability of organizations across Africa to operate and express themselves. USAID counters this negative trend by providing opportunities to preserve and, where possible, open political and civic space. In Kenya and Uganda, for example, USAID civil society activities have resulted in the reversal of restrictive proposed laws and regulations.

Preventing Conflict, Promoting Peacebuilding

Since the 1990s, USAID has helped prevent and mitigate the impacts of unanticipated and complex crises through targeted programs. USAID's work in crises and conflict focuses on stabilization and transitions; conflict mitigation and prevention; countering violent extremism; peacebuilding and reconciliation; women, peace, and security; and preventing or responding to trafficking in persons. USAID is committed to strengthening community resilience and addressing root causes of potential conflict to facilitate equitable access to resources, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and conflict mitigation activities among key government actors.

In the Central African Republic, Advancing Solutions for Peace Through Intercommunity Reconciliation and Engagement (ASPIRE) has coordinated with youth and religious leaders to instill peace in the community, specifically among Muslims and Christians. ASPIRE helped create 10 peace committees, inclusive of men, women, youth, Muslims, and Christians. The committees identified 71 intergroup disputes and resolved 69 of them. Twenty socioeconomic activities the committees developed, such as community shops and village savings and loan associations, received financial assistance, helping more than 8,500 people. ASPIRE promoted information sharing among communities with information campaigns reaching more than 11,000 people, and the number who reported that decision-makers heard their perspectives increased from 38.6 percent to 66 percent from 2015 to 2017.[35]

In the late 1990s, USAID aimed to establish security and ensure that basic institutions function to "meet critical needs and basic rights," especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Liberia. In 2005, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism interagency coordination structure among USAID and the Departments of State and Defense was established to combat terrorism in Northwest Africa and the root challenges that create and exacerbate insecurity.

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In 2003, USAID's West Africa regional program developed a framework for future conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions in the Mano River Union, a cross-border region of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. The framework raised awareness and provided psycho-social care to survivors of torture and gender-based violence, and promoted cross-border dialogue through community radio programming.[36]

In 2019, the United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security established a roadmap for advancing meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, countering violent extremism, and post-conflict reconciliation. In Côte d'Ivoire, USAID partners engage women and girls in community-resilience activities to prevent violent extremism in border regions near Burkina Faso and Mali. USAID has also worked with the African Union to advance women's peace and security in the region. Through USAID funding, the number of countries with national action plans on the topic has increased from 19 to 30 between 2016 and 2020.[37]

USAID's nearly 20-year investment to develop conflict mitigation structures at the community and government levels continued with the Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa (REWARD II) program in 2020. The program focuses on strengthening the Economic Community of West Africa States' (ECOWAS) ability to monitor, gather, analyze, and disseminate security information to its 15 member states to support peace and security in the region. Interventions minimize backsliding of democratic processes including political violence, civil unrest, and evolving security threats.

Climate Action and Environmental Conservation

Climate change in Africa has dramatically affected economies, individuals, and communities. USAID's work in this sector has focused on three main areas— conserving biodiversity, reducing wildlife trafficking, and combating climate change.

Biodiversity

Approximately 1.6 billion people worldwide rely on forests for some part of their livelihood. Natural systems sustain global development by providing food,

fuel, timber, clean and plentiful water, pollination of crops, fertile soils, disease control, and resilience to climate shocks. Biodiversity conservation is critical to the maintenance of natural systems, and an essential component of sustainable development, with "co-benefits," such as diversified livelihoods, promotion of gender equality, increased government transparency and accountability, and contributions to peace and security.

In Africa, biodiversity loss is driven by growing human population pressures, increasing access to once-remote wildlands, globalization, and increasing economic ties between Africa and Asia (the largest global market for wildlife products). Biodiversity loss is exacerbated by poor land management and development planning, weak and poorly enforced laws, corruption, and insecurity.

Launched in 2014, USAID's Biodiversity Policy aims to conserve biodiversity for sustainable, resilient development. The policy goals are twofold: conserve biodiversity in priority places, and integrate biodiversity as an essential component of human development. USAID programs focus on partnering with indigenous people and local communities to help them gain capacity and rights to manage and benefit from natural resources and work with national governments to improve their management of protected areas and wildlife populations. USAID also builds the capacity of government and civil society to increase transparency and accountability in natural resource management, improve the rule of law, and minimize corruption.

Wildlife crimes threaten the security, economy, and biodiversity of East Africa, which has emerged as a global hub for illegal wildlife trafficking in a black market that generates up to $213 billion each year. To address this complex issue, USAID established an interagency agreement in 2015 with the Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program— Partnership to End Wildlife Trafficking in East Africa. This project builds and facilitates capacity within host-country governments, improves national and international networking and coordination, and shares best practices across Eastern and Southern Africa.

Wildlife Trafficking

Wildlife trafficking decimates populations of iconic species and devastates the livelihoods of communities, undermines the rule of law, fuels corruption, and can undo decades of development progress. As wildlife trafficking has become

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more lucrative, it is increasingly conducted by rebel groups and organized international criminal networks that also traffic other illegal items such as drugs, weapons, and humans, and have ties to terrorism.

To combat wildlife trafficking, USAID employs a three-pronged approach: strengthening protected area management and providing support to field operations, including training and equipping rangers; supporting the development of new policies at the national level, and building the capacity of police, customs and border agents, prosecutors, and judges to improve the application of natural resource laws; and reducing demand for wildlife products in Africa and Asia.

In 2016, President Obama signed into law the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act, which is intended to protect increasingly rare wildlife and curb the corrupting and weakening effects on governments of poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking. Focus countries in Africa as of November 2021 are: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.[38]

The END Act required the United States to identify countries that are significant sources, transit points, or consumers of illegal wildlife products or their derivatives, as well as 'countries of concern,' where government officials engaged in or knowingly profited from the trafficking of endangered or threatened species. In 2021, African countries of concern were Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, and Nigeria.

Combating Climate Change

Climate change poses an immense global challenge and Africa is especially vulnerable to the climate crisis, with more than two-thirds of Africans relying on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihoods.[39] With the effects of climate change becoming increasingly severe, increased hunger and vector-borne diseases and declines in GDP, and profound impact on livelihoods are expected.[40] A loss of livelihood or an extreme weather event fueled by climate change may result in forced migration or displacement. The Children's Climate Risk Index ranks countries based on how vulnerable children are to environmental stresses and extreme weather events. Children in the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau are the most at risk.

To combat climate change successfully, USAID is partnering with local governments and communities to focus on three separate but complementary aspects of the problem: adaptation, mitigation, and integration.

Climate Adaptation

Through partnerships with more than 24 countries, USAID has helped communities to independently predict and prepare for climate-related events. This support has minimized losses, decreased stress, and helped local communities sustain their livelihoods, all of which promote stability[41]

As climate change affects each region, country, and community differently, USAID has deployed mission-specific programs throughout the past 25 years to combat specific issues. In Mozambique, USAID works with several of the country's most vulnerable coastal cities to improve municipal planning processes through climate vulnerability mapping, green infrastructure, and mobile-based early warning systems.[42] In Tanzania, the Water Resources Integration Development Initiative has worked to improve water resource management, health and nutrition, and environmental protection in the Wami/Ruvu and Rufiji River basins. In Mali, USAID has partnered with the National Meteorological Agency to increase access to accurate and timely climate data. In Senegal, USAID worked with Climate Information Services from 2016 to 2019 to increase resilience and productivity.

Regional research and development has strengthened USAID approaches for better management of common climate risks. From 2016 to 2020, the Adaptation Thought Leadership and Assessments project built climate resilience and added to the evidence base in sectors where little information was previously available, with a major focus on the health sector and climate impacts such as changing malaria and cholera patterns in Mozambique and Ethiopia.[43] The Learning Agenda for Climate Services in Sub-Saharan Africa gathered evidence regarding the effectiveness of investments in climate information services that supports decision-making and the socioeconomic circumstances that constrain the use of such services in Africa. It also developed business models appropriate for Climate Information Services production and delivery in Africa.[44]

SERVIR, a joint development initiative of NASA and USAID, partners with organizations throughout the world to help developing countries use information provided by Earth-observing satellites and geospatial technologies to better manage climate risks and land use.[45] This initiative has increased access to information and improved awareness of people across Africa.[46] For example, SERVIR partnered with the Kenyan State Department of Agriculture to update cropland maps, helping Kenya's government to better plan where to deliver food assistance during droughts, floods, and other climate-related crises.[47]

Climate Mitigation

To mitigate climate change, USAID aims both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote economic growth through sustainable approaches that produce minimal emissions. USAID's mitigation work focuses on the energy sector and natural climate solutions, which reduce emissions from agriculture, forestry, and other land uses. Through partnerships with other U.S. agencies, USAID has helped developing countries build their capacity and promote low-emission development.[48]

Climate Integration

With developing countries hit hardest by the effects of a changing climate, USAID assists African countries with climate integration efforts, which are designed to help people, communities, governments, and institutions adapt to climate change more effectively. By adding teams of climate change experts to projects around the world and a climate integration lead into every USAID bureau and mission, both new and existing programs are incorporating climate integration into their work. Ethiopia provides a good example of climate integration, where USAID helps local communities build resilience to extreme weather events through the integration of climate science and climate data services into food security programs.[49]

Regional Approaches

Although the vast majority of USAID programs in Africa are implemented bilaterally (i.e., in a single country), there are many cases where a regional approach is necessary and optimal. Issues requiring a regional approach include the management of cross-boundary national resources such as nature preserves, supporting the development of regional policies on trade, and addressing the threat of cross-border disease transmission. USAID has four regional operating units in Sub-Saharan Africa—East Africa Regional Mission, West Africa Regional Mission, Southern Africa Regional Mission, and the

Spotlight on the The African Union

The African Union was established in 2002 and consists of 55 African nations whose aim is to secure Africa's democracy, human rights, and sustainable economy; end intra-African conflict; and create an effective common market. USAID has a long history of engagement with the African Union, with a dedicated African Union operating unit working under the U.S. Mission to the African Union since 2010. The program helps the African Union advance its strategic development objectives, including in areas such as health, democracy and governance, education, trade, and women's empowerment, and helps the African Union achieve the goals outlined in its Agenda 2063 framework.

Sahel Regional Office in Senegal. These operating units address transnational, multi-country issues, and work closely with regional organizations such as the African Union, East African Community, ECOWAS, and others.

East Africa

USAID has utilized a regional approach for East Africa since the 1990s, including partnering with key regional bodies such as the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. With some of the world's fastest-growing economies, East African countries are increasingly interdependent and must work together to achieve progress as climate change concerns rise and diseases and violent extremism spread across borders. USAID's East Africa Regional Development Cooperation Strategy for 2016-21 promoted a regional approach for improved economic growth, managing risks that transcend borders, and strengthening East African institutions' leadership, policies, and learning.[50]

Spotlight on the East African Community (EAC)

The EAC is a regional economic community made up of seven partner states: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. USAID expands EAC efforts to improve the quality of life in the region by increasing trade competitiveness; promoting value-adding in production of goods and services; strengthening biodiversity conservation and mitigating climate change; enhancing food security, trade, and investment; and building institutional capacity to establish a competitive power market. Read more about USAID's work with the EAC.

West Africa

USAID's West Africa Regional program began in 2001 with headquarters in Mali, and transformed into the West Africa Mission in 2003 with headquarters

in Ghana.[51] West Africa has extremely high population growth rates and the highest maternal mortality in the world. Problems such as violent extremism, Ebola, COVID-19, and trade barriers transcend borders. Several states in the region are small and landlocked, leading to a reliance on intra-regional trade. The West Africa/Sahel Regional Development Cooperation Strategy 2015-20 adopted a regional approach to improving non-violent conflict management, economic growth, resilience, and health services.[52]

Spotlight on The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), founded in 1975, represents 15 West African member states. Its mission is to promote economic integration in industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, and commerce. ECOWAS undertakes an extensive range of work to coordinate policies, standards, and systems across West Africa. USAID's partnership with ECOWAS aligns with the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative to combat global hunger, supporting countries to develop their own agriculture sector, along with their trade, environment and energy sectors, to generate opportunities for economic growth and investment. Read more about USAID's work with ECOWAS here.

Southern Africa

USAID launched the Southern Africa program in 1995 with the creation of the Regional Center for Southern Africa, headquartered in Botswana. In 2008, the headquarters moved to Pretoria, South Africa.[53] While Southern Africa has seen significant economic growth in recent years, the region has some of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. The Southern Africa Regional Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-25 employs a regional approach by catalyzing economic growth, improving governance, and strengthening

the resilience of people and systems.[54] USAID programs in Southern Africa increase trade, strengthen regional economic ties, address the HIV/AIDS crisis, and mitigate food insecurity. USAID programs also promote democratic processes, advance energy policy and investments, protect the environment, and improve the capacity of the region and people to cope with climate change. USAID has also provided leadership training through YALI for more than 4,000 African leaders younger than 35 from the private, civic, and public sectors of South Africa and the Southern Africa region.

Spotlight on Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
COMESA is a regional organization of 19 African member states, headquartered in Lusaka, Zambia. Its goal is "economic prosperity through regional integration." USAID has maintained a strong partnership with COMESA since 1998 through integrated partnership assistance agreements to increase regional economic growth, integration, and stability. USAID works with the COMESA secretariat to implement its regional integration agenda and engages in a range of activities such as promoting private investment in clean energy in the region, harmonizing trade rules, reducing corruption at border posts in conflict-prone areas, and expanding the continent-wide Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program.

The Sahel
The Sahel is home to some of the poorest people and countries in the world. It is a vast and arid area where rapid climate change is causing natural disasters with increasing frequency and severity. The region has also experienced increasingly violent armed conflicts in recent years with the rapid emergence of extremist groups such as al-Qa'ida, the Islamic State, and Boko Haram. This has led to intercommunal violence that has killed thousands and resulted in the displacement of millions.

In May 2013, USAID established the Sahel Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal, to mobilize a regional response to the complex crisis in the Sahel, with a specific focus on Burkina Faso and Niger. USAID's work in the region is saving and transforming lives, empowering people to escape chronic poverty, earn a living, and increase their chances to live a peaceful life in their communities. USAID also focuses on reducing armed and extremist groups' ability to recruit, especially among youth. Read more about the Sahel Regional Office's work here.

Challenges and Opportunities: The Next 25 Years

African nations have made incredible economic and social progress since 1996. Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, seven of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world were in Sub-Saharan Africa. While the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted those positive trend lines, there are many reasons to think the region is still on the rise. Over the next 20 years, Africa's workforce will become the largest in the world. With vast natural resources and strong entrepreneurial cultures, African nations offer high returns on foreign direct investment. Fueled by a young, rapidly urbanizing population, African countries have a growing tech sector that has benefited from the acceleration of digitization that the COVID-19 pandemic caused. In addition, the establishment of the new African Continental Free Trade Area has the potential to lift millions out of poverty and improve food security. The new market of more than 1.2 billion people and up to $3 trillion in combined GDP has the potential to increase intra-African trade by more than 50 percent and strengthen food security.[55]

The road ahead is not without challenges, however. Violent extremism remains a significant threat and there have been nearly 10 coups in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2019. Instability, fragility, and violent extremism are complex, overlapping, and often rooted in poor governance systems. Long-term, sustainable development cannot take place until these issues are addressed.

The climate crisis is an additional challenge. Even though Africa creates only a fraction of global emissions and pollution, it is the world's region most vulnerable to climate change and will suffer the brunt of negative effects. Finally, some African nations have high rates of debt that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foreign aid alone will not meet Africa's sustainable development goals. Continuing to build on private sector engagement both locally and internationally will be an integral part of building and advancing opportunity in Africa.

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USAID and Africa: An Enduring Partnership

While the challenges facing Africa are significant, the opportunities are boundless. Since 1996, technological change and innovation have created new opportunities for USAID to enhance program effectiveness, improve results management and tracking, and strengthen partnership with governments and other partners across Africa. More visionary interagency coordination has enabled the U.S. government to leverage the expertise of multiple agencies on shared development initiatives, such as YALI, Power Africa, Prosper Africa, and Feed the Future. Applying lessons learned from development initiatives has driven greater program impact and empowered our field missions. USAID will continue to strengthen the use of data in programmatic decision-making to facilitate coordination across the foreign assistance community and improve transparency surrounding USAID activities.

At the same time, the key theme that has driven USAID interventions on the continent for the last half century remains: partner with Africans to improve the lives of Africans. The United States has an unwavering and longstanding commitment to Africa, and USAID is invested in working with people in countries across the continent to address challenges and harness opportunities. Africa will continue to be a priority for USAID, and we look forward to enhancing African-led development over the next quarter century.

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