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USAID Developments

VOLUME 3, NO. 1 / FALL 1996

# Now available: The Best Kept Secrets in Government

They are now out in the open and secret no longer. Imagine going to your local bookstore and buying a copy of "The Best Kept Secrets in Government." You will soon be able to do so.

Vice President Gore gave this intriguing title to his annual report to the president on the government's performance. He chose the title because many Americans know little of the recent successes of the government to improve services and cut costs.

The government's efforts to work better and cost less began in March 1993 when President Clinton announced a six-month review of the federal government. He directed Gore to oversee government reforms, an undertaking that became known as the National Performance Review.

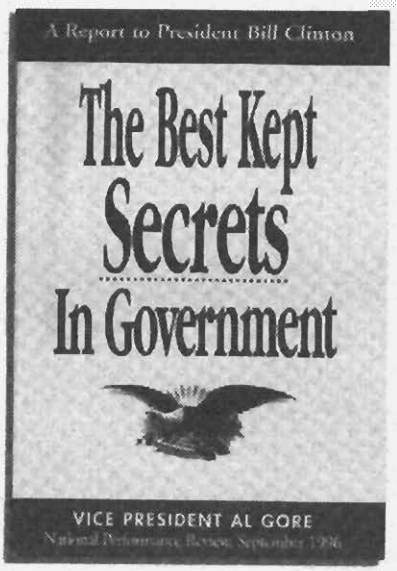
The report, published in September, emphasizes that the government workforce is now the smallest it has been in more than 30 years yet is providing improved customer service.

The report illustrates how government is serving people better by reorganizing internally and changing the way it works with businesses and communities.

The appendices carry summary reports of all U.S. departments (e.g., Agriculture, Defense) and major agencies in their reinvention efforts to streamline and improve services.

USAID Administrator Brian Atwood summarizes the agency's major reinvention highlights to date in the appendix. Three years ago, Atwood offered the agency as an experimental laboratory in the vice president's government reinvention program.

"I promised to focus USAID on fewer, more obtainable goals and to be accountable for measurable results," Atwood said.




Atwood's summary noted that the results have been so dramatic that when the chairman of the commission appointed by President Bush—which had been so critical of the agency in 1992—came back last year, he declared, "This is the most remarkable transformation of a government agency I have ever seen."

Atwood cited a number of USAID achievements, among them the fact that the agency:

- removed unnecessary layers of management, eliminated duplication and overlap;
- made procurement easier and faster;
- developed integrated systems for communications and management of all core business systems;
- reformed basic program operations to improve delivery of assistance;
- improved coordination with other donors;
- encouraged those whose lives are affected by our aid to participate in all aspects of the process, from initial planning through the execution of projects; and,
- reduced the number of country programs and field missions to focus resources better to achieve sustainable development.

*Editor's note:* As we go to press, we learn that "The Best Kept Secrets in Government" is on the National Performance Review's reinvented home page at http://www.npr.gov. Look under "Latest Additions" or the "Library." You may buy the book from the Government Printing Office (Stock #9780160487705). Random House has published a version (without the appendices) that will be in bookstores soon.

USAID

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# First lady praises U.S. foreign aid, Lessons Without Borders

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton closed the first national conference on Lessons Without Borders in Baltimore on Sept. 16 with a stirring speech to over 800 international and domestic development practitioners and the students and faculty of Johns Hopkins University. She firmly voiced her support for U.S. foreign assistance, recalling her visits to USAID projects in Asia, Latin America and Europe.

"We have seen in so many instances how USAID—with little money—has been able to spawn a great deal of local support in community efforts and has been able to train people in the local areas to carry on the work," she said. "As we look at the lessons that have been learned from our work overseas, I am convinced that many of those lessons can be learned and applied here."

Her comments capped a day that featured workshops on microenterprise, health care, community mobilization and economic growth.

Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, U.S. Sen. Paul Sarbanes and USAID Administrator Brian Atwood also addressed the conference. The City of Baltimore and USAID sponsored the conference for participants from across the United States and overseas.

Baltimore was the site of the first Lessons Without Borders program in June 1994. As a result, Baltimore applied lessons learned from an immunization program in Nairobi, Kenya, to raise its immunization rates to above 95 percent, one of the highest in the country. In addition, a west Baltimore neighborhood looked to a violence prevention program in Jamaica as a model to help address gang problems closer to home. Since then Lessons Without Borders has been held in Boston, Seattle and Washington, D.C.

USAID is committed to working with U.S. community leaders to bring low-cost, successful approaches developed abroad back to the United States to strengthen our communities.

For more information, contact Karen Anderson, USAID chief of public liaison, at (202) 647-8440.

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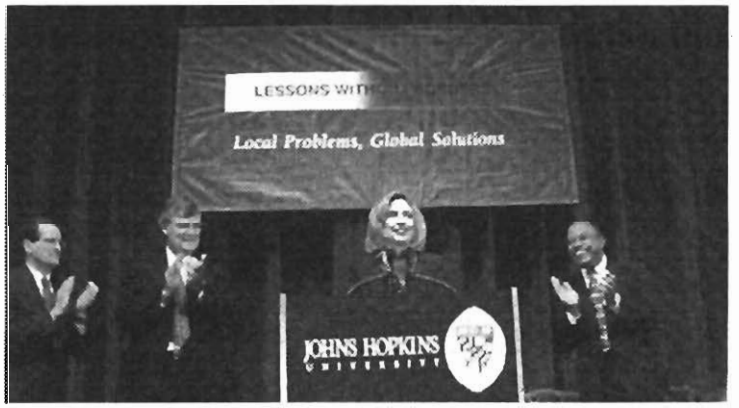



*First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton receives a warm welcome at the conference from (left to right) Johns Hopkins President William Brody, USAID Administrator Brian Atwood and Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke.*

**Excerpts from Mrs. Clinton's speech:**

I have been following [Lessons Without Borders] progress with great interest. I have been extremely pleased to see that the program is already helping to improve the lives of thousands of American children and families.

Over the past four years I have seen, firsthand, many programs around the world that really work. I've come home as somewhat of a cheerleader for USAID and development efforts, because I—like perhaps many of you—was not very knowledgeable about what we actually do in foreign aid.

Now, in the grand scheme of things, America's investments in social development abroad are small, but the difference that they have made in our global economy in world peace and prosperity and the lives of men, women and children are immeasurable.

America's ideals and interests cannot be divorced from the political, economic and social cross-currents swirling around us. As this conference demonstrates, our engagement represents opportunities for ourselves at home—not just obligations abroad. I would hope that every American who hears about this conference will understand that it is a two-way street, that the money we have invested in social development abroad is being brought home in the sense that we are learning what works and applying it to solve our own problems here.

These lessons, I believe, are invaluable and will more than pay for themselves. They are proof that this country—the strongest nation on Earth—cares about the smallest child, the littlest problem. We care because we understand how interconnected we are today.

We must also, I hope, understand our potential will be enhanced the better educated, and the better the economy is, in places very far from here. At its heart, America's interests lie in making sure that as many people as possible on this Earth look forward to waking up in the morning because they are going to have some control over their destiny. So Lessons Without Borders is a way of saying we have learned from what we have done. We want to continue showing the way as to how our problems can be solved so that we can build a better future for everyone.

# USAID's Web page wins awards

The USAID Internet home page recently won major awards. The commercial Internet company Point, which annually publishes ratings of top World Wide Web pages, ranked USAID in the top 5 percent of all U.S. Web pages dealing with government and politics.

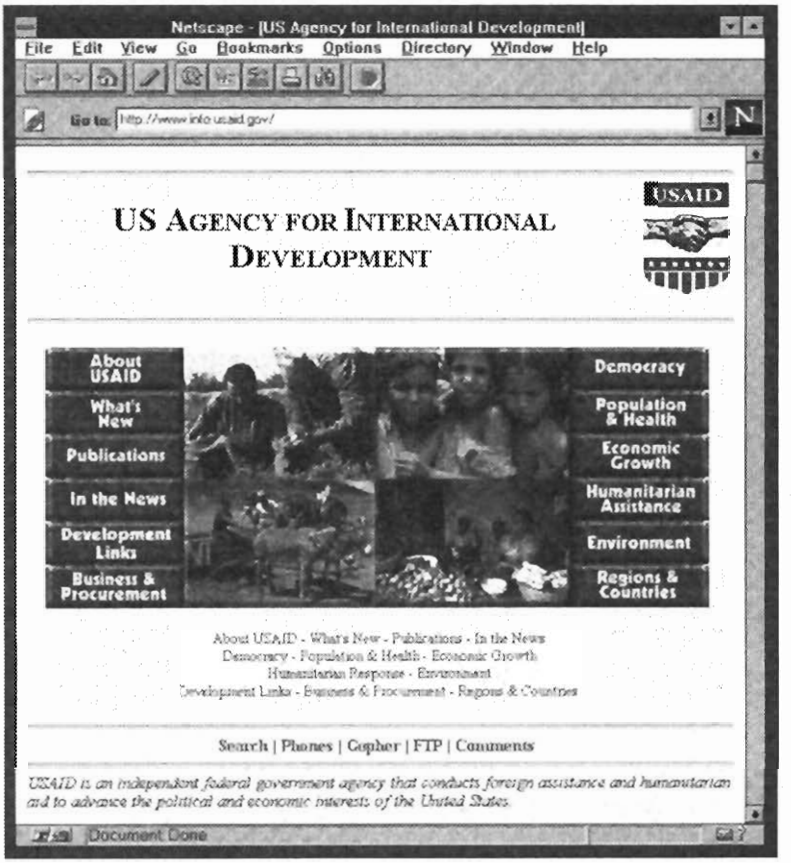
Using a rating system of 0 to 50, with 50 points being the highest score, Point scored USAID's home page at 40 for content, 30 for presentation and 32 for experience.

The review states that USAID's Web site is "bottom line: a good resource" and that it "...offers a detailed look at how American tax dollars are spent overseas." USAID scored just one point below the much-publicized White House Web page for presentation.

Point is a division of Lycos Incorporated. The USAID citation can be found at: http://www.pointcom.com/gifs/reviews/1_26_035.html.

The second award was a "top 5 percent of the Web" from Magellan Communications—a Web indexing group like Lycos.

The USAID Internet home page's address is: http://www.info.usaid.gov.




## Correction:

Among the U.S. companies profiled in USAID's video "Foreign Aid: The Business Connection" is General Electric in Pennsylvania, not General Motors in Michigan, as mistakenly reported in our summer issue.

## USAID radio show wins International award

The New York Radio Programming & Advertising Festival's 1996 competition has awarded USAID's "New World Chronicle" radio program the silver medal for Best National & International Affairs Programming.

Entries from 31 nations competed in the New York Festival. "New World Chronicle" finished second only to Radio Netherlands, which won a gold medal for its program titled "Seeds of Death: Land Mines in Angola."

Silver medalists in other categories of this year's competition include: the BBC World Service, ABC Radio News, Westwood One, CBS Radio News and Monitor Radio.

"New World Chronicle" is a weekly public affairs program that focuses on international issues and their impact on the lives of Americans. The show is produced in conjunction with the Talk Radio News Service and can be heard in Washington on WBZS 1390 AM.

The program is now available via our Web page at: www.info.usaid.gov/press/nwc/. To use this application, you need either RealAudio or ToolVox on your computer.

# Spotlight on Kansas and New York

The principal beneficary of America's foreign assistance programs has always been the United States. Close to 80 percent of USAID's contracts and grants go directly to U.S. firms, organizations and institutions for work overseas.

In addition to helping developing countries, foreign assistance programs have helped the United States by creating major markets for agricultural goods, new markets for industrial exports and hundreds of thousands of jobs for Americans.

Two examples of states benefiting from the U.S. foreign aid program:

## Kansas

USAID grants and contracts to Kansas in fiscal year 1994 totaled $4 million.

In 1993, USAID purchased about $86.4 million of Kansas wheat, sorghum, soybeans and edible oils for use in Food for Peace programs. In 1994, USAID purchased an estimated $74.1 million of wheat, sorghum and beans for use in these food aid programs. In 1995, USAID purchased an estimated $81.3 million in wheat, bulgar, corn, sorghum and bean products from Kansas to feed people in 30 nations, including Peru, India, Haiti and Bosnia.

In 1993, shipping and handling of USAID's food and other aid generated $245,000 for companies headquartered in Kansas; in 1994, the amount was $424,000. In 1995, Kansas firms received $3 million for foreign aid transportation services.

USAID helped to strengthen higher education in Kansas in 1994 by sponsoring 251 foreign participants' training at Kansas universities and educational facilities, usually including full tuition and living allowances.

A separate USAID program in Egypt financed $42 million in purchases from Kansas companies in fiscal year 1993; $5.4 million in purchases in fiscal year 1994 and $2.9 million in fiscal year 1995.

## New York

USAID grants and contracts in New York in fiscal year 1995 totaled $658 million.

In helping New York agriculture, USAID purchased about $3.9 million of New York wheat, sorghum, beans and other agricultural products for use in Food for Peace programs in 1993. In 1994, USAID purchased an estimated $6.7 million of rice and vegetables for use in these food aid programs. In 1995, USAID purchased $720,358 in rice from New York to feed people in Peru and Rwanda.

Shipping and handling of USAID's food and other aid generated $129 million in port fees and shipping charges for companies headquartered in New York in 1993; $73.8 million in 1994; and $90 million in 1995.

In strengthening higher education, USAID sponsored 809 foreign participants' training in 1995 at New York universities and educational facilities, usually including full tuition and living allowances.

USAID programs in Egypt, Jordan and Mozambique financed $40.6 million in purchases from New York companies in fiscal year 1994; $7.4 million in fiscal year 1994; and $14.3 million in fiscal year 1995.

USAID

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**Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs:** Jill Buckley

**Chief of Multimedia Communications:** Suzanne H. Chase

**Editor:** Betty Snead

**Gopher Address:** gopher.info.usaid.gov
**Web Page Address:** www.info.usaid.gov
**Questions:** pinquiries@usaid.gov
**Phone:** (202) 647-1850

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