

**U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523**

**Advisory Committee on Voluntary
Foreign Aid**

**Report of Meeting
January 6, 2000**

**“2000 and Beyond: Creative Approaches for Reaching
New Constituencies for Development”**

ACVFA Quarterly Meeting January 6, 2000

DETAILED REPORT

"2000 and Beyond: Creative Approaches for Reaching New Constituencies for Development"

OPENING REMARKS, William S. Reese, ACVFA Chair

Chairman Reese opened the meeting by welcoming attendees to the first ACVFA meeting of the millennium. The Committee's mandate is to advise USAID and other parts of the U.S. government on foreign assistance and the link with non-governmental sectors. ACVFA dates from WWII and is a good example to the rest of the world on how private sector and government can work together. ACVFA members are present as individuals, not representatives of their organizations. They are unpaid and are participating today in order to distill ideas from the audience and make recommendations for USAID and others concerned with humanitarian assistance and sustainable development. The meeting agenda is Attachment A.

Today's topic is very timely and appropriate to be discussed in public 'in the sunshine.' It has to do with constituency building, message crafting and ways to better engage the public in foreign assistance," stated Mr. Reese. It is an important theme to USAID Administrator J. Brady Anderson, who spoke at the September 8, 1999 ACVFA meeting about how difficult it is for an outsider to understand the foreign assistance message. Former Administrator Brian Atwood and others have also been concerned about this problem which is exacerbated by the end of the Cold War and by a Congress with members who are proud not to own a passport. There is a new world order but a bipartisan void in leadership ranging from benign neglect to a severe attack on foreign aid. Brady Anderson and the Secretary of State say we need new words, a new focus. We PVOs are often viewed as the best constituency for foreign aid, but we are also taken for granted by the public, not appreciated for what we do and have nowhere to go for political support. The middle of the political spectrum is the best place to look, but it lacks in leadership, so there is no constituency.

We are also timid. Like a deer caught in the headlights, we don't know what to do when people criticize us. We need to be able to answer tough questions. We have to get better and do things differently. So what can we PVOs do? In the 60s we said you are either part of the problem or part of the solution. We have to be part of the solution and not wait for others. The money is not just going to come because we are doing good work no matter who is in the White House or Congress. We need to shed self-righteousness. We also need to stop waiting for the President or Congress to show leadership. We must build our own constituency.

We need some new words, but we have to look at concepts, too -- like dignity, self-reliance, democracy, fair shake, equal opportunity... These are things Americans feel good about and understand. Our community has to stop feeling embarrassed to talk

about national security and national interest. We are children of the 60s when coalition building was much used in the civil rights, feminist, anti-war, and environment movements. All these grew out of people who had a message and built a coalition. Today we need to build coalitions with people who aren't necessarily always aligned with us, like the business community and other groups that are a part of our community, like youth. Young people today know certain things about the world that we didn't. When we were kids the human rights movement didn't exist. There are kids today writing letters for Amnesty International. Yes, these groups have some zealots and single-interest people, but there are also people we can link to. We share some interests with them but we don't bring them in. There are new ethnic groups in the U.S. -- are we reaching out to these groups from Africa, Asia, Latin America? Are we building coalitions with the non-mainline churches? What about universities? They have more foreign students and faculty than ever before. How can we connect their interests with ours?

Do you hear an edge in what I'm saying? Usually I am more mild mannered. I want to get us to see that we have to build coalitions, political alignments, recruit, seek common ground, create a vocabulary and do this at the grassroots.

Panel: How to Engage Constituencies and Build New Alliances: What PVOs and the International Development Community Need to Do.

Today's panel consists of Dr. Steven Kull, Director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland. He has written some of the most important things about American attitudes toward foreign aid. William Novelli is in his third day as Associate Executive Director for the American Association of Retired Persons. He was the founder of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and also served on this Committee. Dr. Jim Henson, an ACVFA member, will provoke us around issues of young people at universities and extension services. After the panel we will divide into three groups so that members of the committee and audience can bring up issues. The idea is to evoke ideas to take back to our own organizations. We are not coming up with a group plan of action.

American Attitudes Toward Development Assistance: Opportunities and Constraints to Getting the Message Across – What's New and Different

Dr. Steven Kull, Director, Program on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland; co-author of *Misreading the Public*.

Dr. Kull stated that over the last five years his project has conducted focus groups and polls about America's role in the world and specifically about how much we should give for foreign aid. During focus groups numerous people make a case against foreign aid. From a psychological perspective, it's interesting to see that people have to work hard to make this case, because the natural inclination is to support helping others. It's not hard to see why-- every major religion endorses some form of charity; children are taught to share; and images of suffering make us feel like doing something about it. Very few people want to entirely eliminate foreign aid. "What I want to talk about "he

said,” is how people create mental constructs against this inclination and build defenses against foreign aid.

How do people resist the felt imperative to help? We approach them as if they don't support foreign aid, or they create a dichotomy between problems at home and problems abroad and then they prioritize. Home comes first. It is not difficult to move people out of this *priority* reference to one of *distribution*—what piece of the pie do they want to give? We ask people, of all the U.S. spending on the poor at home and the poor abroad, what percentage should go to each? The answer usually is 80 percent and 20 percent. The reality is about 93 percent and 7 percent. That information usually moves them through that barrier.

Another defense mechanism is the belief that the United States is already giving too much. People grossly overestimate the foreign aid budget and it is not simply a matter of misinformation. The mis-estimation is overwhelmingly in one direction even among the well informed. Why do they have this perception? They need to create a defense against the imperative to give. In focus groups we told people that the U.S. spends 13 percent on foreign aid. Some people's attitude changed immediately; others found another defense and changed their minds later on. Some people argued that the U.S. gives more than its share in relation to other countries. When you tell them that as a percentage of GNP, the U.S. gives the least, they shift to a broader framework saying that the U.S. has done so much in the Cold War, etc. This defense is declining a little now, but it is still an important factor. Most people do think that the U.S. should play a role and do its “fair share” in foreign assistance.

Another resistance mechanism is the belief that foreign aid is ineffective. This belief is compounded by the over-estimations of what the U.S. spends. If we really did spend what people think we spend, hunger would be eliminated. People don't understand why the problems have not been eliminated. In the act of giving, people want potency not just virtue. This is why the child adoption technique has been successful-- there is a clear relationship between the effort and the outcome. This is not true in the public mind for foreign aid in general.

In our focus groups we asked participants to imagine a conference where scientists figured out how much it would cost to eliminate hunger in the world. It would require all people in all developed countries to increase their taxes by \$100 per year for five years. We asked focus group participants if they would be willing to do that. They said of course they would. So there is a desire to have a result and a willingness to pay for it.

Another problem is that people think foreign aid is a check given by the U.S. Government to foreign governments. We need to communicate that a large part of foreign aid money goes to PVOs. Americans also need to know what the motives are for groups engaged in foreign aid. We found that PVOs have a good image and the confidence of the American people.

Why do people put up these defenses against foreign aid? It's not that they want to be selfish and are coming up with excuses. It is because Americans are afraid that they will be overwhelmed by feelings of guilt. If there is one hungry child in the world, they will not be able to enjoy their steak. It's wrong to approach people as if they don't care because they do care. Approach them with a framework that has limits and boundaries so that they do not feel overwhelmed. We need a new framework to explain what foreign aid is about. We need a new structure. I don't know what this will look like, but based on focus groups and polls – here are some suggestions:

- Use the moral imperative. The world is highly interconnected, so moral imperatives that apply within the U.S. also apply outside. We did a poll asking if U.S. companies in foreign countries should abide by U.S. standards even if the country did not require this and it would cost more for workers. Eighty six percent thought that U.S. companies should be required to do that.
- Promote the message that helping others helps yourself. Americans gravitate towards the idea of win-win solutions. If you help others, it should help you. They come up with this argument in focus groups.
- There is a lot of concern that aid creates dependency. Americans need to hear stories of recipients responding to assistance with their own efforts, which produce results. That helps create a framework in which the need for assistance is limited, not bottomless. There is the idea that there must be balance between helping others and stepping back and letting them help themselves.

Creating Public Support: Strategies and Techniques for Success

William Novelli, Founder, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and Associate Executive Director, American Association of Retired Persons

Mr. Novelli introduced himself and remarked that the research presented by Steven Kull was interesting and helpful.

Mr. Novelli made four points about creating public support.

1. The key is to select and target audiences for our message. We don't need 100 percent of the audience, but we need to have enough of a constituency so that U.S. leaders recognize that there is support. At the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, we tried to target activists. We found that 19-20 percent of adult Americans are activists. These people want to do local things, and they want to do it in groups. They are segregated geographically and therefore they can be targeted and spoken to. Older people are interested in foreign affairs and the presidential candidates know it. Older people are interested because they care about the future for their children and grandchildren. It's up to you to make sure the candidates know your constituency is out there.

2. In marketing terms we talk about the exchange concept—what do I get if I buy your product, service, idea, cause, etc? InterAction had this well defined several years ago: trade with developing countries creates jobs; America's leadership will be enhanced; and there is the moral imperative that foreign assistance is the right thing to do. Here is a new idea: more and more Americans own stocks, so stability in trade and global prosperity are important to them. We need to align these messages with the right audiences. Get the message right and get to the candidates.
3. Be aggressive. We need to make news, exploit news and attack bad guys. If there isn't a "bad guy," define one. With the anti-tobacco campaign, people told me I had an easy enemy, but only a few years earlier people were saying that Big Tobacco was invincible. A few days ago there was an article in the paper about NGOs disagreeing with the U.S. policy in Sudan. This made it into the news. It got visibility. There is no substitute for being aggressive, making news and noise. Bill Reese said that the development community could be timid. The world is full of causes and if yours is not heard, someone else's will be.
4. Build strong grassroots constituencies. Don't rely only on the national level and the media. I learned this lesson through experience. In the beginning, we did not have the grassroots constituency that could compete with the constituency created by Tobacco. Create a group of people who want the U.S. to be involved in international development and are willing to ask questions to candidates. Remember that grassroots constituencies differ. A constituency in California will be different from one in Florida or New York.

In conclusion, it may be hard to see the progress, but it is there. Senior officials of the tobacco control programs used to smoke in meetings. Now we have prohibitions against smoking in restaurants and airplanes. There has been a great deal of change. Change happens faster with big ideas, good plans and lots of muscle.

Reaching New Constituencies with Related Interests

Dr. James Henson, Washington State University, ACVFA Member

There are multiple groups of individuals and organizations that all perceive development aid in different ways, based on their own concerns. I'd like to share some lessons learned using one of these groups – universities -- as an example. Some of my points will overlap with what we have already heard.

Universities are plentiful, talented, wealthy, and sustainable organizations whose potential as a constituent for foreign assistance has not been optimized. What are the characteristics of these organizations that can be capitalized on? They have been involved in international development for a long time. Washington State University has been involved with foreign aid since 1948. We recently did a survey about university involvement in development assistance. Of the 250 research universities, there were 183 responses. Forty-eight percent of them had been engaged in development

assistance. Seventy-three percent of land grant universities are involved in development assistance. Ninety percent of those who had been involved said they reaped a benefit from their participation, especially in terms of faculty exposure to development situations.

In universities today there is an increasing emphasis on internationalization of curricula and programs. Universities have to be global to be relevant. This brings together more than ever in the past the interests of development assistance and universities.

Eighty thousand U.S. citizen students will go overseas this year. Of these, almost 70 percent will go to England, France and Italy. Developing countries will receive only about 6 percent of the students. There is growing interest in universities in sending students to developing countries, but parents resist due to fear of disease, war, etc.

Practically all universities have lobbyists or congressional liaisons. They influence Congress for universities, but little of this is about international aid. There are 10,000 faculty in cooperative extension services throughout the country including large urban areas such as Seattle.

There are national organizations of universities that focus on development assistance. Here are some examples, primarily in agriculture, from which we can draw some lessons learned.

- **American Soybean Association.** Ten years ago the Association decided to lobby against development assistance because it was opposed to teaching people overseas how to grow soybeans and become competitors. This has turned around and now the Association is supporting development assistance. Soybeans are not a staple in any developing country. To create a market, they had to develop a desire for soybeans in these countries by developing local soy growing capability. The Association recognized that they had to do this for the U.S. market. It turns out that there is now considerable competition from developing countries, mainly Brazil.
- **Agriculture in U.S. foreign assistance.** A number of universities thought there was a need for greater agricultural support in the USAID portfolio. Former USAID Administrator and Michigan State University President Peter McPherson led a university coalition to bring about change in the Agency and in Congress on this issue. Each university provided money. They hired a lobbyist and progress was made.
- **The Collaborative Research Support Programs.** Universities felt there was not enough support for these programs. They were able to turn out some more support for the program. Universities have also been involved in budget requests for development assistance.

What are some of the lessons learned?

- There has not been a strategic and systematic approach by universities to generating support for international development.
- University support has been driven by self-interest.
- No individual or organization in the university community has taken responsibility for generating foreign assistance support. There is a need for a marketing strategy internal and external to the community.
- Most efforts have been directed at USAID and at Congress. Little effort has gone into creating broad-based support.
- Communication has generally been based on a single message, without recognizing the differences in the audience.
- There is tremendous potential that has not been tapped.

My suggestions are to apply basic marketing strategies. Let's define our expectations and needs -- do we want more money? Different priorities? What? We need to target the population based on their interests: women's groups, education, environment, business. They all have different interests that we have to address. We need a champion and spokesperson to take charge and take responsibility. We need to be effective in designing and packaging a message to reach diverse constituencies. We need to designate who will pay and commit the resources. The effort needs to be long-term and recognized as such.

In summary, let's recognize that the education community is focusing more and more on international education and content. This provides a congruence that we should be able to utilize. We need to begin to teach primary school students about the world and what development can mean to them. You'd be surprised how many primary school students are participating in exchanges. The time is ripe to develop a strategy and the commitment to carry it out.

Discussion

Chairman Reese asked the ACVFA members and the audience for a few comments before the group discussions.

ACVFA member David Brown said he was struck that the focus of all three presentations was on building constituencies in the U.S., when in fact, we are seeing that the most effective influences on foreign assistance have been global efforts. He asked the panel, "What might change if constituency building were seen as global, not just a U.S. effort?"

Dr. Kull responded that the American public is concerned that the U.S. is carrying the bulk of the burden on foreign assistance. Americans do like to hear that the United States is participating in multilateral efforts. It helps to diffuse the misperceptions. Americans feel positive about multilateral efforts.

Dr. Henson said that one way to build global constituencies is to establish sustainable partnerships with organizations around the world and exchange ideas. Dr. Henson had an experience with an organization in Russia that did not see any need to apply its technical knowledge to the community. After working with a U.S. institution they developed an outreach program, using technical expertise to help people in the community. It's an issue of institutional change.

Mr. Novelli argued that we need both a U.S. focus and a global focus. Development involves the global community, but at the same time when we think about U.S. policy we realize that we have to marshal forces in the United States to affect funding.

ACVFA member Kathryn Wolford asked if the discussion is really about increasing foreign aid or about broader issues of the U.S. role in a global community. Many groups in the development community have been interested in mobilizing constituencies for budgetary reasons. Now there is increasing discussion around terms of trade and moving from charity (the foreign aid paradigm) to issues of trade and human rights-- protection of the people we are trying to serve. What do we think the fundamental issues are for U.S. citizens and consumers?

Dr. Kull said recent a poll on globalization found there is overwhelming support for incorporating environmental and other concerns into trade agreements. The pollsters asked if people would be willing to spend more on something not made in a sweatshop. Three-fourths said yes, although it is not clear how they would actually behave in a shopping situation.

ACVFA member Charles MacCormack asked Jim Henson to elaborate on his suggestion that we need a leader to upgrade our efforts. As Jim Henson said, we suffer from diffuse and sporadic efforts. The tobacco control movement was dependent on a leadership that brought diffuse opposition into a strategic intervention. In our situation, it's not clear where the leader would be. How would it be funded? What institution? Would there be a directorate? Would it be inside the community or external?

Dr. Henson responded that universities are heterogeneous. The organizations that do exist have not taken this on. Someone or some organization has to say that this is important and I am going to take the leadership and you should join me. I think it will take a group of individuals or an independent entity to organize it. There is a fundamental recognition of the need for global development in universities, but this interest has not been appreciated and focused through leadership.

A member of the audience commented that his group (the Business Alliance for International Economic Development) has been working since 1996 on how to defend foreign assistance to Congress. His research showed Americans are interested in supporting foreign aid but want to know what it would mean to them personally in terms of income improvement, etc. His group's efforts to get other organizations to help found a lot of parochialism. They all want to help but do it their own way. All agencies have to formulate their own plan and message, then foster those with the grassroots and with

Congress. The Business Alliance has approached the candidates and found zero interest. They don't believe there is a constituency. They have a narrow understanding of it. He suggested that the audience not try to create a single organization, but rather obtain unity among their own groups.

ACVFA member Herschelle Sullivan Challenor commented that the profile of the leader is important. It needs to be an independent. Dr. Challenor asked Mr. Novelli to say more about the role of primary school children in the tobacco campaign -- the impact of children complaining to their parents about smoking. Secondly, after WWII there was a lot of interest in helping others. As we move into the new millennium, what is the present context for getting people to care about this?

Mr. Novelli responded that kids did nag their parents not to smoke, but the evidence about the impact is anecdotal. However youth advocacy is a good strategy. Kids move into advocacy maturity at about 6th grade. They think for themselves and it's a powerful strategy worth considering here.

Mr. Novelli responded to the earlier comment about not starting a new organization. There are lots of organizations concerned with tobacco. They are multiple-agenda, multiple-issue organizations. However, it took the Campaign with a single focus for the strategic advances to take place. A central organization should not be dismissed.

Chairman Reese commented that the USAID has launched Operation Day's Work, a program that involves school children in community development and foreign assistance. This program has been very successful.

ACVFA member Martha Cashman returned to Mr. Novelli's comment about grassroots mobilization. She pointed out that her organization (Land O'Lakes) is a large cooperative that does lots of work educating its thousands of members on foreign aid. Public education is where its strength lies as far as influencing foreign assistance, while the Campaign for Global Leadership and others work on different issues like funding. There are specific issues that PVOs and others want to be engaged on. The NGOs and PVOs have to be at the table in business circles (including labor) as well as foreign assistance. How do we engage business leadership on the importance of our issues? The other side is that the business community needs to be engaged with NGO/PVOs. Lastly, Ms. Cashman praised Operation Day's Work which raised over \$30,000 and engaged 100 children at her daughter's school. That is truly the future of changing the commitment of the American people. We need to get behind that effort, she suggested.

At this point the meeting participants broke into three working groups for further discussion.

Reports from Working Groups

Chairman Reese thanked the facilitators and asked the rapporteurs to talk about their working groups' discussions. Summaries of each working group discussion are found in Attachment B.

GROUP A

Facilitator: David Devlin-Foltz, Project Director, Aspen Institute Global Interdependence Initiative

Rapporteur: Dr. Herschelle Challenor, ACVFA Member

Dr. Challenor reported that this group was very exciting and experienced. During the course of the session, the group discussed all the questions on the discussion guide.

1. **Identify important constituencies to be reached.** The working group identified: Youth, Business, Women, NGOs, state and local Government, and faith-based communities. A major issue came up about the role of multi-nationals due to their reach and their resources. We need a redefinition of the relationship between NGOs and the corporate sector. Corporations need to understand that NGOs are not just interested in money, but there are other areas of mutual interest as well. We also need to define a new relationship based on mutual interest among USAID and NGOs and corporations.
2. **Identify compelling reasons and rationale for why the constituencies would support U.S. development policies and programs.** The working group decided that "it's right, it works, it pays and it matters" is a compelling message. We need to change the language of foreign assistance. The message that the United States gives all is not good.
3. **Define mechanisms and processes for generating that support.** The working group had a wide-ranging debate on whether we need a central coordinating mechanism or whether we should let each organization do its own thing. The consensus was that we need both. The central mechanism can help us overcome resistance to action while individual organizations will address their own specific issue. It was agreed that this would take time and resources.

Members of the group offered lessons learned on mobilization activities:

- A key leader who can relate to the constituency to be engaged is essential.
- Most American groups need more information about development activities and even geography.
- People have to undertake action, not just read or hear about something. They have to be engaged in an active process, so we need action not just a message.

- This campaign year is an opportunity to get political leaders to react. Have candidate forums, raise questions, impact the platform committees. Take advantage of the campaign. Also take advantage of millennial activities.

Some other points that came up in the working group include:

- Once people get engaged they begin to take their own initiatives.
- The resources cannot come from USAID alone. Anyone with an interest should pay some of the cost.
- Activists do act. Just give them some guidance and they will respond. People respond for different reasons- morality or self-interest or others.

GROUP B

Facilitator: Carolyn Reynolds, NGO Liaison, Public Affairs Department, The World Bank

Rapporteur: Kathryn Wolford, ACVFA Member

ACVFA member Kathryn Wolford reported on this working group's discussion. The group focused on two things: mapping out the constituencies and ideas for action.

In addition to the constituencies already named, they talked about reaching out to minority groups, especially recent immigrants to the United States; state and municipal economic development organizations; university alumni associations; media in general, and media that address minority communities.

In terms of action ideas, working group members came up with the following suggestions:

- Mobilize broad public interest by getting people to go overseas themselves—commit time and resources. Operation Day's Work and people-to-people exchanges are good examples.
- Move from broad-based support to mobilizing activists who are willing to get into spheres of influence--foundations, business, local communities.
- Provide advocacy training. Give people the tools to access the spheres of influence.
- Reach out for substantive dialogue with emphasis on business (e.g., through the curriculum of business schools) to engage that community.
- Build on the diversity of the U.S. population--use immigrant history.
- Clarify our message; gear it to specific target audiences.
- Use success stories of clear impact and results to show that it works.
- Commit to write letters to Congress and presidential candidates, saying we care about these issues.
- Emulate the United Way model of setting targets in fund raising and education.

- Recognize that there is new momentum in the foundation community to shape and mobilize constituencies around global issues. Use our own spheres of influence to advocate with foundation leadership that this is an important direction to take.
- Establish a campaign or coalition as an energizing force to unify the constituency and the message.
- Use new technologies, such as the Internet.

GROUP C

Facilitator: Ritu Sharma, Executive Director, Women's Edge

Rapporteur: David Brown, ACVFA Member

ACVFA member David Brown reported on the third working group, saying that the participants were very diverse, leading to a rich and detailed conversation.

Three kinds of strategies were represented: awareness building at the grassroots for local people to understand development; the role of business; and political strategies to influence policy makers.

The group discussed how to construct messages that resonate locally and nationally. It is clear that there won't be one message, and that successful messages will not use jargon.

The group talked about how the development education budget has declined. The PVO community needs to take on more of these efforts with its own resources, but also needs to point out the value of this program to Congress.

The group also discussed the media. International stories in the media should not just be negative stories. If we can frame development stories as having a local link they will get more attention. To be effective, these strategies have to be framed as local issues. Mr. Brown said his own sense is that there also needs to be a global strategy. If local issues are going to sum into something larger than local action, they need to be coordinated by a central mechanism. However much we might want someone to tell us what message to project, it's going to be a messy, conflicted, negotiated process. There is a major role for NGO/PVOs in that process. Now what is needed is a process to engage with each other and partners in other countries.

Discussion

Chairman Reese asked the Committee members and audience for their comments.

ACVFA member Jane Pratt said she was struck by the overwhelming consensus for the need for some kind of central person or organism providing leadership. It will be a challenge to identify who will take the lead and to follow up. Secondly, the proposals

about the need for training in advocacy are critical and must be followed up. She proposed a challenge to InterAction and some of the other overarching organizations to take this up as a theme, and for the rest of the audience to think about how the PVO/NGO community and the private sector could provide the resources.

ACVFA member Jim Moody said his working group agreed that we need a better mechanism for coordination, but we also need a lot of voices to be expressed. The metaphor they used was a Christmas tree on which many ornaments can hang but the tree needs to be there to hold the various messages: trade, jobs, moral imperative, etc. These are different ornaments and different groups will do a better job at them. It's not either/or; it's both. InterAction wants to ratchet up its advocacy component. It has created Advocacy Councils in eight states, and members of the Senate want to meet with InterAction to discuss the issues. The Senate is important but not the main problem. The problem is the House. Mr. Moody challenged all the people in the room to help in their own states.

ACVFA member Ted Weihe shared lessons from the Campaign to Preserve U.S. Global Leadership:

- It is possible to mobilize around the resource issue. Congress looks at this. The appropriators and budget process drive the assistance levels.
- In bringing this coalition together, the Campaign tested the message on members of Congress and found that *global leadership* was the key message, not *development*. Regardless of political party, members of Congress want U.S. global leadership.
- The coalition strategy is important. Members of Congress are astounded to see groupings of different organizations. They say, "You can't be together!" In the Campaign's case, the message on humanitarian relief was better delivered by the business people because they get to the members who are more receptive to business needs.

David Devlin-Foltz talked about his experiences at the Aspen Institute's Global Interdependence Initiative. In its first year there was a diverse group of organizations around the table. It was very difficult to identify specific policy outcomes that all would agree on. But everyone agrees that we are all disadvantaged by a disengaged public. The challenge is to identify core underlying values to re-engage constituents. What are the decorative motifs on the ornaments? What are the core value messages? We need to identify the underlying bass notes that will resonate with many Americans. The Initiative is making a 10-year commitment to developing a message readily adaptable by a diverse group. It may not be possible to get to a single policy outcome or message in the first two or three years. It will be necessary to take the time to build trust and come together over a few core themes and outcomes.

An audience member stated that this is an encouraging meeting. There seems to be a new life coming into this movement. Ten years ago there were more organizations involved, more USAID efforts at development education. It is a shame that USAID

cannot do more in development education. We need to learn from past experience why things went downhill. If you look back, a slew of coalitions came up and went down. So how to make something last is the problem. We all tend to reinvent the wheel--it's human and you can't avoid it, but there are lessons to be learned. There is a lot of experience outside the United States. We are talking about educating Americans internationally, but we have virtually no contact with efforts in other countries. Europe has a vigorous, active public education movement, which might explain why they give larger proportion of their budget to international development.

Another participant commended the rich discussion where participants have learned from each other. She urged the audience continue this, to do advocacy training, and to mobilize as a group interested in furthering development activities. She thanked ACVFA and suggested again that advocacy training be a priority.

ACVFA member Peggy Curlin suggested seeking opportunities to involve people in planning advocacy strategies. The easiest way to engage people is the personal way. Bringing groups to developing countries and bringing groups here is an excellent way for people-to-people exchange, which is most effective.

ACVFA member Martha Cashman shared an idea from her working group. The Group suggested that each ACVFA member bring a non-traditional constituent to ACVFA meetings. It also would be interesting to have Operation Day's Work bring in its national steering committee to talk about its experience and how the development community can connect with that constituent base.

Facilitator Carolyn Reynolds expressed her concern about asking USAID to come up with more resources. That is not where it will happen. Congress restricts the amount of money that USAID can spend on development education. The commitment has to come from the PVO/NGO communities and their constituencies and business contacts. It must be their commitment to invest resources and efforts in advocacy. This is a public debate and advocacy is allowable.

A member of the audience pointed out that it costs a lot of money to get into public dialogue. Each organization should consider carefully its objectives and then focus its resources, he counseled.

Another participant from the audience talked about success stories and advocacy. Ms. Reynolds pointed out that NGOs can do lobbying. We need to provide training and resources for activists. None of us would send our organization's leaders to a meeting without talking points or a speech. Yet we expect activists to go out and we don't help them. We have to provide information. One actionable step would be to invest more in the creation and dissemination of compelling success stories. We must have tools to give people something to say. Several years ago the InterAction Forum took on vitality when there was an advocacy day. She suggested that InterAction build in opportunities for Forum participants to create op ed pieces, letters to the editor, and other actionable

resources. InterAction could also hold special workshops to produce media resources like fact sheets on success stories.

Chairman Reese thanked the assembly for a spirited discussion and announced that ACVFA would analyze the matter further and make recommendations.

ACVFA Members Present:

L. David Brown
Martha Cashman
Herschelle Sullivan Challenor
Robert Chase
Susan Cox
Peggy Curlin
James Henson
Joseph Kennedy
Louis Mitchell
Jim Moody
Jane Pratt
William Reese
Elise Smith
Lester Salamon
Kathryn Wolford
Ted Weihe
Noreen O'Meara, USAID

Attachment A

Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid
Quarterly Public Meeting
January 6, 2000
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
525 - 23rd Street, N.W.
Auditorium A

**“2000 and Beyond: Creative Approaches for Reaching New
Constituencies for Development”**

AGENDA

8:45 **Opening Remarks**, William S. Reese, ACVFA Chair, *Auditorium A*

9:00 **Panel: “How to Engage Constituencies and Build New
Alliances: What PVOs and the International
Development Community Need to Do,”** *Auditorium A*

Speakers:

**“American Attitudes Toward Development Assistance:
Opportunities and Constraints to Getting the Message Across -
What’s New and Different”** Dr. Steven Kull, Director, Program
on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland;
Co-author, *Misreading the Public*.

**“Creating Public Support: Strategies and Techniques for
Success”** William Novelli, Founder, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
and Associate Executive Director, American Association of
Retired Persons.

“Reaching New Constituencies with Related Interests”
Dr. James Henson, Washington State University, ACVFA Member.

10:00 **Working Sessions: “New Strategies for Building Alliances:
Practical Solutions to the Challenge of Creating Popular Support
for Development”**

Three simultaneous breakout groups will discuss new ways of reaching important constituencies on a sustained basis. The group's task will be to develop a list of next steps that they as individuals and organizations can take to engage these constituencies. Resource people who have been successful will participate in each group.

GROUP A (*Auditorium A*)

Facilitator: David Devlin-Foltz, Project Director, Aspen Institute Global
Interdependence Initiative

Rapporteur: Dr. Herschelle Challenor, ACVFA Member

GROUP B (*Room B*)

Facilitator: Carolyn Reynolds, NGO Liaison, Public Affairs Department,
The World Bank

Rapporteur: Kathryn Wolford, ACVFA Member

GROUP C (*Room C*)

Facilitator: Ritu Sharma, Executive Director, Women's Edge

Rapporteur: David Brown, ACVFA Member

11:45

Action Plans from Working Sessions and Panelists' Responses

Moderator, William S. Reese, ACVFA Chair

1:00

Adjourn

Attachment B

**Working Sessions: New Strategies for Building Alliances:
Practical Solutions to the Challenge of Popular Support for
Development**

GROUP A

Facilitator: David Devlin-Foltz, Project Director, Aspen Institute Global Interdependence Initiative

Rapporteur: Dr. Herschelle Challenor, ACVFA Member

A broad range of participants, ranging from small non-profits to large foundations and membership organizations, attended this working group. Facilitator David Devlin-Foltz initiated the discussion by asking group members to focus on two key themes for discussion:

- Suggestions of new ideas and approaches, emphasizing a positive outlook; and
- Sharing of constituency-building experiences that have worked.

There was a vibrant discussion of strategies and actions that could be pursued by NGOs to win greater support for global cooperation. Many participants shared lessons derived from their work in U.S. communities, including Global Learning's Sustainable Communities work; Women's Edge's advocacy work at the state and local level; and the Campaign to Preserve U.S. Global Leadership's efforts targeted at the business community.

Suggested strategies included:

- Identify leaders in the community, and work with them to gain understanding of the community and acceptance of the ideas to be conveyed.
- Be prepared to educate the community about private voluntary organizations and world geography.
- Mobilize activists and use them to spread the message.
- Ask people to take a specific action, not just hear the message or learn about an issue.
- Maximize complementarity of issues, focusing on global-local links.
- Focus on business leaders who understand the connection between U.S. self interest and global concerns. These leaders have financial resources and they will act, but they need to work in partnership with NGOs, since business cannot go it alone.
- Target women's groups and ethnic affinity groups.
- Design activities that will stimulate the audience's self interest and values; once people are informed they will define their own self interest and will act accordingly.
- Reach beyond the audience to the underlying framework that constitutes their value structure, otherwise they will reject the information.
- Allow people to negotiate and argue about the issues; this is a bonding process that results in cohesive action.
- Develop ways for people to connect with each other, since this is an effective learning tool.

- Develop an "NGO platform" and shop it to the presidential and congressional candidates. A coalition of powerful NGOs could have a candidates' forum that would receive attention.

As the various suggestions were discussed, participants also debated the need for an organizational structure to coordinate the activities of the many groups involved in constituency building. Such an organization might serve as a sort of "warehouse" for different NGOs to organize opportunities for American citizens to engage on various types of issues--environmental, health, etc. These opportunities would give the participants a "counter-reality" of development--i.e., they would demonstrate the inter-connections and benefits of development through direct experience.

Another activity of the clearinghouse, or of a separate coordinating body, might be to facilitate direct partnerships between NGOs and businesses in specific regions or countries. The group emphasized that NGO-business partnerships, rather than grant-making or charitable corporate ventures, were the means for success in mobilizing businesses to act in support of global cooperation in the U.S. interest.

The group's conclusion was that having an overall coordinating mechanism for the activities, as opposed to letting many organizations act separately, was not an "either-or question." There is a need for both.

Finally, the group debated the merits of "a single message or many." While the participants concluded that it would be difficult for disparate groups to agree on one message (as demonstrated by the experience of the Global Interdependence Initiative), there was consensus that one development message does seem to say it all: "It's right, it works, it pays, and it matters."

GROUP B

Facilitator: Carolyn Reynolds, NGO Liason, Public Affairs Department,
The World Bank

Rapporteur: Kathryn Wolford, ACVFA Member

The group represented many parts of the NGO community with some participation by donors. Two strands threaded through the discussion: coalition building and funding. The latter covered funding both for individual organizations and raising overall funding. Strategies were discussed and action steps were identified. As a preliminary step, important constituencies were enumerated:

business community
labor
non-faith based organizations
youth
Latinos/minority groups more broadly
women
farmers
universities/alumni
popular media
media specifically for minority populations
state/municipal economic development associations
recent migrants to the U.S.
older people/special interest groups.

Strategies

- Several organizations identified examples based on the premise that service will generate enthusiasm both for youth and adults.
- Pairing domestic and international organizations in a shared sector where they could both gain by learning seemed to be successful.
- Be judicious in whom you partner with.
- Consider the self interest of the core groups.
- Leadership is a necessary element.
- Communication should be constant and iterative. Some experiences shared by the participants addressed efforts to unify, but others addressed how to deal with disparate and dispersed actors (e.g. listservs).
- Technological solutions must be made particularly relevant to each audience.
- Unifying diverse actors (or potential actors) requires leadership, common methods, key contacts, identifying the right messengers, and training.
- Show the impact of programs. Have an event where leaders meet.
- Advocacy training is important. Training is necessary to advocate with politicians and the media. There also needs to be training in mobilizing people. It is not effective if it is the same community over and over again.
- Need to develop a protocol to establish partnerships with foundations, governments and agencies.

- Need to unify the language of philanthropy.
- Funding was identified as a constraint to coalition building, but there was also some optimism regarding business taking on a social responsibility agenda.
- All PVOs are competing for the same resources. They need to set aside their specific interest. Keep USAID informed. As a community, look at how to help a country. There needs to be a holistic and systems approach which includes humanitarian assistance with economic growth.
- People give to people. They believe messages based on who gives them. Use powerful emissaries. Use returning Farmer to Farmer volunteers, and Peace Corps volunteers.
- Public opinion surveys show that Americans think the appropriate level of development assistance should be 20%. The public doesn't know it is only a half a percent. There is a substantial base of public support.
- Try a United Way type drive, including education advocacy and fund-raising.
- Earth Day as a model? Educational experience allows something to draw on.
- Hone the message, segment the audience. Clarify what makes a difference in Americans' lives or those of their children.
- Approach business schools to have a curriculum addressing development needs. Create a cadre committed to development assistance.
- Design a Web page with concrete data and clear statistics on how much goes overseas, how much stays in the United States, etc.

Action Ideas

- Develop awareness
- Mobilize activists - public policy, foundations shaping global agendas, businesses
- Emphasize advocacy training
- Reach out for more substantive dialogue -- identify new partners
- Put emphasis on the business community and Congress
- Use our own immigrant history
- Clarify the message
- Emphasize Results (including 'success stories')
- Learn from others how to mobilize people.
 - Take advantage of technology
 - Put a human face on what we do
- In the short term:
 - Bring new people into ACVFA
 - Have Congressional staff participate
 - Build common language.

GROUP C

Facilitator: Ritu Sharma, Executive Director, Women's Edge

Rapporteur: David Brown, ACVFA Member

This working group was composed of a diverse audience with interests ranging from agriculture to bicycles, representing organizations ranging from faith-based to labor. Participants shared their experiences and views on three general topics: the message and the media, strategies, and exchanges.

The Message and the Media

- We should consider two words that resonate more with constituencies than *assistance* or *aid* do. They are *responsibility* and *investment*. Responsibility rests with the people we are investing in. They take it very seriously. We need to demonstrate that this investment is worthy.
- It's difficult for the average person to access the information we have because we use words and concepts people don't understand. The development language is academic to most people. Also we need to get more aggressive. When you stand up and yell people see you and know how much you care. Professionals in this field are very reserved and respectable, which works in the halls of government, but doesn't motivate the populace.
- One thing we haven't talked enough about is bringing in the media. We've got wonderful programs and need to get the success stories out. Get the media tapped in and interested. Invite reporters when you have delegates visit and issue press announcements about successes. Invite your congressperson to speak at your events to show them where the dollars are going.
- The media tend to highlight negative things, not the success stories. That is what sells papers. We need a strategy to highlight development successes in the media. Doctors without Borders won the Nobel Peace Prize-- this was a great opportunity to educate the public.
- The Aspen Institute's Global Interdependence Initiative is analyzing 6-7 months of international news and polling people's reaction. They will create a model news piece that puts forward the story we want and gets the reaction we want. They will coach us on how to get these stories in the press.
- The interest in international news is shrinking. The biggest pull is local news. If you can tie it into local news it will get play.
- A mistake we've made over the years is to announce funding of things as if the funding itself is an accomplishment. To the public it sounds like a ton of cash and it's the only thing they hear from us. Instead of announcing money, announce when a program actually does something and what we got back from it.

Strategies

- So many people think that money received by international organizations doesn't get to the right people. We have to dispel this. Americans don't see how global issues touch them. We need to build the connection between the global and local levels.
- One of our goals is to increase the U.S. foreign assistance budget. Another is to increase community awareness and feeling of interconnection. These are worthy, but the budget is shrinking. We need a more powerful strategy. The private sector is where the money is. They are interested in engaging in constructive activities overseas and don't know how to. They are aware of charities but have no knowledge about NGOs and sustainable development.
- At Catholic Relief Services (CRS) we do a lot to help people become advocates on behalf of the work we do. We are trying to build civil society right here in the U.S., developing political will and human capital to engage people. We find people do want to get involved in the political process, they just don't know how to do it. They need help with language. The aim is to develop advocacy capacity in the United States. It's a very political agenda.
- The women's and environmental movements started years ago without much clout. They spent a lot of time educating and becoming part of the national psyche. They hold regular press conferences. It's a part of the culture to care about the environment now.
- We already have a constituency. Americans do believe in giving assistance. The problem is the intensity of their interest-- how do you magnify the constituency's interest? It's very difficult to mobilize popular pressure on Congress because the issues are buried in bills. The simple thing would be to get members of Congress to come to meetings and show them that there is an interest in foreign aid. There are a lot of misconceptions in Congress about what people think! Educate them that there is a constituency.
- We need to exchange ideas more often. Ten years ago there was a more vibrant community doing this than today. All of that has disappeared. There is a lack of sense of community except for these occasional meetings.
- We could learn a lot from what is going on in other countries. We have no idea of what's going on in the UK, Scandinavia, and so forth.

Exchanges

- One effective way to engage people is through an activity or exchange. It's a powerful introduction. The Global Women's Forum is trying to create alliances between women's business organizations here and in developing countries. Both groups learn and benefit economically.
- At the U.S.-Ukraine Association we brought businesswomen and Ukrainian government officials from the Ukraine to Washington and other cities to train. We have found the partnerships to be very beneficial. The Ukrainians show Americans how much they have to offer and the Americans get to see what kind of impact they can have.

- At Catholic Relief Services we are working on how to connect people. We have global solidarity partnerships where a diocese partners with other dioceses in the world. We have Oregon farmers exchange with Kenyan farmers and teachers from the United States going to Kosovo and vice versa. We take people to these countries to get a sense of CRS projects and people there come back here to see how we do our work.
- ACDI/VOCA sends 800 volunteers per year overseas from rural communities in the U.S. When they return we provide them with the means to enlighten their community, how to write articles, give presentations, etc. They are very eager to share once they have had the personal experience. But year after year these things have not changed the big picture. People still think we give 10 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent of the budget to foreign assistance. As effective as our programs are, we still aren't getting the job done, so we have to do something different.

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES