



# FRONTLINES

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MARCH 2010

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Indonesia is working to reduce resistant strains of TB. See page 6.



Dr. Erlina Burhan of Jakarta's Persahabatan Hospital.

Photo by Roman Woronowicz, USAID

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## AID EXPERTS END HAITI QUAKE CHAOS

By Ben Barber

The death toll from Haiti's earthquake steadily climbed towards the unthinkable 250,000 mark, seven weeks after the Jan. 12 disaster, but 1.5 million survivors were getting food, water, medical care, shelter, and a new start on life, thanks to people like Tim Callaghan.

The head of USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), which sprang into action after the Haiti earthquake, Callaghan was at his home office in Costa Rica when he heard about the Haiti quake on CNN. Within hours he had rescue teams aboard charter planes heading for the stricken capital, Port-au-Prince.

In many ways, an interview with Callaghan, just after he returned to Costa Rica after 44 days in Haiti, is a roadmap for handling a crisis. His expertise is part of a massive U.S. government aid program that can save hundreds of thousands of lives. In Costa Rica, he heads up the regional office of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), which managed the overall relief effort.

"When I saw the devastation on CNN, I activated a team of disaster experts from here in Costa Rica—we procured an aircraft because it was faster than a commercial flight and the airport had shut down in Haiti," he said.

It was hard to follow his rapid-fire words over the phone because "the Chile earthquake got my adrenaline going," he told *FrontLines*. No sooner had he returned to his home base in San José than an even

see HAITI on page 2 ▶

## USAID to Provide Shelter for Haitians

When an estimated 1.2 million Haitians needed shelter after the Jan. 12 earthquake, and the seasonal rains were approaching in another 10 weeks, USAID turned to an expert who has already protected millions of people in disasters around the world.

Chuck Setchell is USAID's "Mr. Shelter." He cut his teeth after earthquakes in Pakistan, China, Peru, Algeria, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Indonesia, where a giant tsunami followed a quake in 2004. Now he is deeply involved in helping the Haitian survivors of the quake that killed perhaps 250,000.

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## Religion Linked to Development

Religion has long been used to fuel conflict, but these days it is increasingly seen within the U.S. government as an effective way to "bridge divides, promote reconciliation, or advocate peaceful coexistence," according to USAID's Neil Levine.

USAID recently reviewed its record of working with religious leaders in building peace around the world.

"USAID experience engaging religion and religious actors to prevent conflict or build peace is modest," admitted Levine.

Despite long-term concerns that USAID not violate the separation of church and state mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the Agency has worked with religious schools and religious leaders around the world, said Levine, director of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, in a publication revealing the new Agency approach.

The publication, also referred to as a "toolkit," was launched at a panel discussion in the Ronald Reagan Building March 8. It



Religious leaders from Israeli Jewish, Arab Christian, and Arab Muslim communities in the Middle East meet under the USAID-funded KEDEM project.

provides case studies of four places in the world where USAID has worked with religious leaders to prevent or resolve conflict:

- ▶ In Albania, interfaith conferences brought together Orthodox and Muslim religious leaders to discuss religious harmony and resolve religious property claims.
- ▶ In Nigeria, Christian-Muslim interfaith gatherings studied conflict management.
- ▶ In Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Islamic judges

and rabbis learned to work together.

- ▶ In Kyrgyzstan, students in Islamic religious schools, or madrasas, learned about religious rights and democracy. U.S. field officers need to know what they can and cannot do because there have been misunderstandings about the legal restrictions on working with religious actors. This is a result of U.S. court decisions that affirmed that the First Amendment's

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Construction of new basic health units brings modern medical facilities to remote areas of Pakistan. See how the country is moving past recession, drought, and energy shortfalls on pages 15-16.

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20523-6100  
Penalty for Private Use \$300  
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PRSR STD  
Postage and Fees  
PAID USAID  
Permit No. G-107

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# INSIDE DEVELOPMENT

HAITI from page 1

larger quake struck Chile—although the death toll was not even one two-hundredth of Haiti's. Callaghan had alerted search and rescue teams to stand by but the Chilean government was not yet asking for U.S. help.

The night of the Haiti quake—it struck around 5:30 p.m.—USAID immediately activated a Response Management Team (RMT) in a crowded operations center atop the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington.

Experts from the departments of State, Defense, Health and Human Services; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency set up their laptops and phones alongside the RMT. Working together, they coordinated everything from ships to fuel to port repairs to journalists to visas to food deliveries.



Tim Callaghan

Urban search and rescue teams in the Los Angeles, Ca., and Fairfax, Va., fire departments were contacted and raced to the stricken city to join Callaghan's team of experts.

"We landed at midnight—no one was there except the DART and the U.N.," said Callaghan. "The DART came in on its own charter from the States with the Fairfax rescue team. No one was there to stamp passports."

Callaghan took over as leader of the DART, and for the next six weeks, he slept on the U.S. Embassy floor and then in a tent in the embassy courtyard. DART teams bring all their food, shelter, and other equipment with them so as not to strain local resources.

In Port-au-Prince, most of the local staff—Foreign Service Nationals—had their homes damaged or destroyed and lost friends and family members. U.S. citizens working for USAID and the embassy also had to deal with scenes of mass death, the smell of decomposing bodies, and the terrible scope of human suffering all around them. (See related story: Your

Voice, "Staff Care in Haiti," pg. 11.)

Callaghan immediately reported to the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth Merten, and the USAID Haiti office director, Carleene Dei, "to brief them on what we planned to do and learn what they needed us to do."

The six rescue teams USAID brought into Haiti to save people from the rubble created the largest DART USAID has ever fielded, said Callaghan—544 people.

These teams gave funds to NGOs and U.N. agencies to supply food, water, medical care, and other aid to the 1.5 million survivors who were left homeless by the quake. By Feb. 25, USAID expenditures on Haiti relief topped \$400 million, Defense Department expenditures reached \$285 million, and more was expected.

"We brought in medical teams from Health and Human Services and USAID gave \$78 million to the U.N.'s World Food Program to distribute food," Callaghan said. "We distributed rice rations with security help from the U.S. military. We helped set up 16 sites for food distribution."

Television showed chaotic pictures in the early days of soldiers throwing bottles of water and bags of food to mobs, dropping pallets of food from helicopters—letting the people fight it out to see who got the food.

"This is not what we do," said Callaghan, and described how USAID turned chaos into an orderly food system.

"Every day we had a meeting with local mayors, the U.N., NGOs, and the military Joint Task Force to discuss lessons learned," Callaghan said. "The mayors provided lists of people from their communities [to receive coupons to get food]. We discussed problems such as trucks running out of fuel. We made sure these things did not happen again. We talked about counterfeit coupons and addressed this issue."

"We constantly looked at what worked well and moved forward in a positive way."

The first days of food distribution, people were nervous and worried they would not get food. But later, they knew that if they had the coupon, they would receive their ration.

see HAITI on page 11 ▶

SHELTER from page 1

About 500,000 people have moved in with relatives and friends outside of the shattered capital Port-au-Prince. USAID was working to help out with the hosts' costs by providing a package that might include relief items, modest shelter assistance, or food.

But for the hundreds of thousands living in homemade cloth tents in open spaces of the capital, Setchell proposed a range of shelter options, including building simple 10-by-20-foot transitional shelters with corrugated metal roofs nailed onto wood or metal frames. Heavy-duty plastic sheeting encloses the sides, and the floor is raised slightly above the ground using crushed rubble from the quake and a smooth skin of thin cement slurry, Setchell said in an interview.

More than a tent, but less than a permanent house, transitional shelter is emergency shelter designed to jump-start or expedite recovery and reconstruction.

Setchell had just returned from five weeks on the ground—literally, as he slept on the floor, in an office or in a tent at the U.S. Embassy, all that time. However, he argued strongly with Haitian President René Préval and other officials that tents were not the way to house homeless families, especially during the many months it will take for reconstruction.

In fact, it was important to "think outside the tent," for not everyone could use or needed a tent, as some had already started to rebuild their homes or were living with host families in undamaged housing.

Instead, Setchell said USAID would build 25,000 transitional shelters and provide other forms of assistance to an additional 25,000 families. Each shelter would hold the average Haitian family of five and cost at least \$400. Other aid agencies such as the American Red Cross and Oxfam would build another 100,000 shelters.

A half-scale model shelter was set up in the USAID public information office on the mezzanine of the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington. Its sturdy wooden frame and thin metal roof are light



This transitional shelter, built to half-scale at USAID headquarters in Washington, has a metal roof and wood frame, with heavy-duty plastic sheeting on the sides.

Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

enough so that even if another quake should hit, and the shelter was knocked down, it would not kill people inside. And unlike tents, which often end up cluttered with blankets, food, and clothing, the framed shelters allow residents to attach shelves to store possessions off the floor, opening up more usable space.

Setchell oversaw delivery of similar earthquake resistant shelters in the mountains of Pakistan after an October 2005 earthquake killed 73,000 people, leaving 2.8 million in need of transitional shelter.

Since many Pakistanis died when heavy 8-inch-square roof beams fell on them, aid workers taught people how to recycle the beams and saw them into lightweight 2-by-4-inch studs, nailed together into a light peaked roof topped with thin corrugated metal.

In Pakistan, the goal was to keep people warm in the winter. In Haiti, the goal is to prepare dry housing before the rains and the chance of a hurricane in the summer.

Already boats are landing in Haiti with lumber from Canada, the United States, and elsewhere to build the frames. Some aid groups planned to use metal braces or plastic piping instead of wood.

Aid experts also were working with Haitian officials to pick shelter sites in the crowded capital. Setchell and other aid officials say that the question of land

ownership remains an obstacle as few owners want their property turned into camps for a year or two. There is limited public space.

In addition, rubble from damaged housing is being dumped into drainage areas and could lead to increased flooding during the rains. It will take three years to move the estimated 30 million to 70 million cubic yards of rubble left by the quake, some of which could be used to build a new pier at the port. While USAID is paying some teams of Haitians to haul away rubble, the larger cement buildings that collapsed will need foreign demolition experts.

Setchell said perhaps two-thirds of the housing in Port-au-Prince remains standing and that 40 percent of it may be safe for people to move back in. So engineers are visiting these houses and marking the ones that are safe.

Most hurricanes pass to the north of the capital but if one should hit, the transitional shelters could withstand a level one storm since they are built with hurricane straps holding the wooden frame together. The plastic sides may blow out or withstand the storm if people add woven mats, salvaged iron, and other materials. For stronger storms, people will be moved to group shelters, said Setchell, who works with USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. ★ — B.B. 📷

## MISSION OF THE MONTH



A PTA meets in Djibouti.

## DJIBOUTI



the situation. If a parent says, 'I don't have money but I can fix an electrical problem,' that is one small part that a parent can be responsible for."

### Results

Since the PTAs formed, many school improvements have been carried out. Parents now share their specialized skills in farming, fishing, artistry, cooking, couture, electrical engineering, and other disciplines to augment school functions. Garden projects in southern districts, library projects in northern districts, and latrine and water projects in every district have all been executed with the help of parents.

All future projects will be approved by the PTAs.

Zahra Ali Ismael, the program officer with USAID's implementing partner, the Academy for Educational Development, said, "[the decree] encourages community participation to the projects decided upon and developed with the Ministry of Education and other partners. Parents understand their role as supporters, not replacements [for school staff]."

USAID's training for school staff and parents is continuing. Former Chief of Party Alpha Souleymane Diallo, said: "We want to see all PTAs aware and involved. It's a grassroots approach with a legal framework that empowers PTAs to improve the quality of education in schools."

Officials say it has taken a long time to build confidence and formally recognize the role of communities in assisting in school management. Now they are reaping the rewards for their work. An evaluation of the program concluded that: "The radically different way in which communities now relate to Djibouti schools through government recognized PTAs made a positive difference in the way schools are managed and supported, especially in rural areas." ★

Omar Guelleh signed the decree and formalized the partnership between parents and schools.

The decree calls for primary and secondary schools to establish PTAs made up of school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Each PTA is to meet once a trimester to decide on activities that meet the needs and desires of the school and students.

The PTAs decide upon objectives and activities for the year, design a plan of action, adopt a budget, and create working groups to complete projects. The PTAs are also charged with advising the school on attendance, the integration of girls, special needs students, school hygiene, security, child safety, monitoring, and maintenance of school equipment.

By acknowledging the need for parent-teacher partnerships, the decree protects the authority of school leadership while placing responsibility in the hands of the parents through the PTAs. The new approach is a response to parents who expect the school to handle every issue as well as a call to action for those who long to improve conditions and help the schools with additional support.

Mohamed Yacin Yonis of the Ministry of Education, said: "When problems arise in the school, the parents will know they have a role in improving

## PTAs Gain Legal Status in Djibouti

By Brooke Harris

More than four years ago, USAID introduced the concept of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) into the education system of Djibouti, a former French colony in East Africa bordering Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, and hosting both French and U.S. military bases.

At first, some officials at the Ministry of Education worried that parents would misunderstand their role in supporting schools and try to usurp ministry responsibilities. Ministry officials preferred to limit the role of PTAs to supporting improvements to the school environment—such as infrastructure, school canteen services, and the like—and to supporting limited student services.

### Innovative Response

In 2005, USAID introduced the idea of parents working with teachers to benefit Djibouti's schools. The Agency provided training and technical assistance to these associations and the schools they served. USAID staff also worked with the Ministry of Education to help draft a decree that would define and legalize the PTA's role.

After four years of work that included ministry officials, parents, educators, and USAID staff, President Ismail

## INSIGHTS

### FROM ADMINISTRATOR DR. RAJIV SHAH



USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah sat down in his office on March 2 with FrontLines Editorial Director Ben Barber to discuss his hopes for the Agency in the coming years.

**Q:** What are your immediate priorities for USAID?

**SHAH:** The immediate priority is to re-establish USAID as the world's premier development agency. We need to do that in a way so we can produce results on behalf of the most vulnerable people in the world, protect our national security interests, and fulfill our moral obligation as a great nation.

We have a unique opportunity to do that. We have strong support from a president, a secretary of state, a secretary of defense, the Congress, and, perhaps more importantly, the American people. They understand our world is smaller. We're more connected.

College kids oversubscribe global health classes. Master's degree students want global development degrees. More than half of all American households contributed to the relief effort in Haiti.

**Q:** How can USAID have the most impact in situations where you can't possibly handle everything?

**SHAH:** It comes down to fundamentally changing the way we work and working smarter. First, we need to work in partnership with countries, a broad range of organizations in civil society, the private and public sectors to help achieve a clear set of goals. Together, we will leverage our resources and make sure that we invest in a focused way. That will allow us to make an impact at a much greater scale than we traditionally have achieved.

Second, we need to make tough decisions that let us focus our work on areas where we can generate real results. For example, if we're trying to help small farmers in Rwanda rise from poverty, then you need to look at the full population and say: What does it take to achieve outcomes in a scale that will reach 80 or 90 percent of small-holder farmers? It means not doing a lot of smaller programs and projects that may not have the cost basis or the strategic plan to reach that larger scale.

**Q:** Have you met with the former administrators of USAID? What advice did they provide?

**SHAH:** I've talked with a number of former USAID administrators and their advice has been invaluable and something I hope to count on in the future. They are deeply committed to this agency and to our ability to, on behalf of the American people, generate real results for the poorest in the world, and to do that in a manner that supports our national interest.

The first thing they told me was that the greatest resource we have to achieve our goals are our talented Foreign Service, Civil Service Officers, and our Foreign Service Nationals. I see that every day. Our community recognizes that development is a discipline, not simply a good deed. The challenge they faced still remains: getting our amazing team the tools they need to be successful and effective in the field.

A second consistent point they made was to strongly represent USAID in government meetings. USAID has advocates throughout the government who value the role we play. Our task is to be a good partner in a way that maximizes our resources and to lead at what we do best.

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# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

## BRIEFS

### Chile Recovering from Massive Quake, Tsunami

The powerful 8.8 magnitude earthquake and the resulting tsunami that struck Chile Feb. 27 have left about 500 dead and 500,000 in need of emergency housing.

USAID has given \$10 million in assistance, including satellite phones to restore communications, water treatment units, and some relief supplies. The aid includes \$8.6 million for a U.S. Air Force emergency health unit that began operating March 9.

Haiti, struck by a 7.0 quake Jan. 12 that killed close to 250,000 people, is the poorest country in Latin America and the focus of a massive international relief effort. Chile, which had a much smaller loss of life, is one of the wealthiest countries in the region and has significant capacity to care for its stricken regions on its own.

The Chilean government, which was planning to provide temporary housing for the homeless, reported March 8 it would need to spend \$4.8 billion in reconstruction of bridges, hospitals, roads, and ports.

Looting in quake-hit areas ended after Chile's army restored control in Concepcion and other cities.

### Haiti Director Dei Tells of Quake Relief

When the earthquake struck Haiti Jan. 12, USAID's Haiti director, Carleene Dei, had just taken over as head of 130 people working to assist

the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

The number of U.S. government employees ballooned to 600 as rescue teams and relief workers raced in. Two months later, Dei told *FrontLines*, many of the rescue workers were gone, as were some of her own team.

"We are trying to recruit people we lost," said Dei. "We have 12 vacancies."

Dei works with the Office of the Response Coordinator led by Ambassador Lewis Lucke who was assigned to coordinate "a huge presence" of U.S. assistance workers from the military, the Disaster Assistance Response Team, the mission, and other U.S. agencies, she said.

"We are doing anything you can imagine," she said. "We started with water and fuel and getting the port and airport functioning. Then road clearance and food distribution. Emergency medical care—trauma, operations, mostly orthopedic.

"We have a massive health program—all NGOs. It was primary health care and AIDS before the quake."

Some U.S. and other emergency teams are still there. Haitians also are getting care at hospitals that were upgraded by U.S. assistance such as a University of Florida medical unit by the airport. A number of NGOs also upgraded and expanded services using private donations by U.S. citizens. And departing relief medical teams left behind surgical equipment and supplies.

The Obama administration was expected to ask Congress for supplemental funding to continue the relief work, build shelters before the May rains begin, and begin reconstruction.

The U.S. government had spent \$755 million as of March 12, of which \$470 million was spent by USAID and the rest by the U.S. military.

### Nepal Forms Security Force with Ex-combatants

The Nepal Cabinet agreed March 2 to form a new national security force, the National Forest Conservation Corps, which could accommodate up to 6,000 of the 19,602 Maoist ex-combatants living in cantonments since 2007.

The idea for the Corps—which would be mobilized for wildlife protection and conservation in and around Nepal's National Parks—was developed in discussions between USAID's director in Nepal, Dr. Kevin A. Rushing, and Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation Dipak Bohara,

The People's Liberation Army combatants (Maoists) will leave the cantonments and serve in constructive activities. They have been in the cantonments since a 2006 peace agreement ended a 10-year insurgency.

### Clinton Says Honduras Aid to Resume

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica—Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said March 3 that U.S. aid to Honduras that had been suspended after a coup last year would be restored, the Associated Press reported.

At a regional meeting in Costa Rica, Clinton urged Latin American leaders to recognize the new Honduran government which was elected to replace one installed by a coup. She called for Honduras to be readmitted into the Organization of American States and said

she had notified Congress that U.S. aid to Honduras would be restored.

### Somalia Militants Ban Aid Group

Somalia's main militant group ordered aid workers from the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) to leave the country, CNN reported March 1.

The militant Al-Shabaab group released a statement Feb. 28 accusing WFP of distributing expired food and undermining local farmers, said Peter Smerdon, a WFP spokesman. The United Nations says about half the population—or nearly 4 million Somalis—is starving. The United States is the principal supplier of food to the WFP, which had suspended work in southern Somalia in January, saying rising attacks and unacceptable demands from armed groups had made it impossible to work in the region.

The group continues to deliver food to other parts of the country, including the volatile capital, Mogadishu.

### Thousands Flee Nigeria After Attacks

JOS, Nigeria—Nearly 3,000 people fled Plateau state for neighboring Bauchi state after at least 200 people, mainly Christians, were slaughtered over the March 6 weekend, aid officials said, according to the Associated Press.

In January, more than 300 people were killed, most of them Muslims. Nigeria is almost evenly split between Muslims in the north and the predominantly Christian south. Thousands have perished in Africa's most populous country in the last decade due to religious and political frictions.

### Global Foreign Aid Hits \$107B but Falls Short

Many of the world's rich donor countries will fail to keep promises they made five years ago to increase assistance to the developing world, according to a new analysis by the official organization charged with monitoring aid—the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—reported the *Financial Times* Feb. 16.

The group said that its rich member countries will give \$107 billion in aid this year, measured in 2004 dollars. But promises made in 2005 at the Gleneagles summit of the Group of Eight countries implied a pledge of almost \$130 billion by this time.

The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand appear on track to meet their various targets. But France, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Greece, Italy, and Japan seem likely to fall well short, the OECD said.

### 130,000 in Mozambique Flee Flooding

MAPUTO, Mozambique—Mozambican authorities say about 800 people are trapped by rising floodwaters and in need of rescue, the Associated Press reported March 11.

Three districts in the central Zambezi valley have been cut off due to worsening floods. The government is evacuating approximately 130,000 people living on the banks of three main rivers in central Mozambique, after the flood alert level was raised to "red."

*From news reports and other sources.* ★

## FRONTLINES: MARCHES PAST

**1970:** The March 25 edition of *FrontLines* reported on the airlift of 12,000 Laotian refugees from the Plaine des Jarres area of northern Laos to the capital of Vientiane. From the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, the Plaine des Jarres was the scene of

heavy fighting between the Pathet Lao and U.S.-backed troops.

**1980:** *FrontLines* reported on a USAID-funded small loan program for the "Retornados" of Portugal. The Retornados—a name given to an estimated 750,000 refugees coming to Portugal from its former colonies—received up

to \$2,000 to start or expand a small business. The article noted a high repayment rate, much like repayment rates in USAID's current microloan programs.

**1990:** USAID's activities in Eastern Europe were noted in two separate *FrontLines* articles. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance provided a "C-141 aircraft bearing about

\$250,000-worth of medicine and medical supplies" and sent a Disaster Assistance Response Team to address violence in Romania. Separately, USAID signed an agreement transferring "nearly \$200 million" to the Polish Stabilization Fund, the first activity under the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act.

**2000:** In an issue highlighting USAID's work with women and girls, *FrontLines* described an Agency-supported program in Guinea that encouraged parents to enroll girls in school. The article highlighted the role of religious leaders in supporting girls' enrollment, noting that at public events, they were citing "texts from the Quran in support of girls' education." ★

## Moldova's Farmers Hope to Sell Produce in World Market

By Erin Concors

Farmers in Moldova—a Maryland-sized former Soviet region whose 4.4 million people are Europe's poorest—will get help growing and selling produce for domestic and lucrative European markets under a new USAID project funded in part by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

The project, to be administered by USAID, will improve the competitiveness of Moldovan fresh fruits and vegetables. The Agricultural Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (ACED) is part of a \$262 million MCC grant that also funds road construction, irrigation, and financing. This is the first time that USAID and MCC will be co-funding a joint technical assistance program under an MCC compact grant.

Moldova—which borders Romania—has a climate favorable to growing fruits and vegetables, and its economy has historically relied heavily on agriculture.

"Moldova's rich agricultural soil is a valuable natural resource," said Susan Kutor, USAID's acting country program officer for Moldova.

But the crops from small and medium farms did not meet the standards of European markets. Growers needed not only access to these new markets, but also training on how to sell their goods there.

In response, a previous USAID program helped small farmers increase profits 200 to 500 percent by using modern technology, high quality seeds, and sound agricultural practices in growing fresh fruits and vegetables. The project's 100 demonstration test plots showed tangible results.

The new program will help Moldovan farmers continue to shift to high-value agriculture at a critical time: USAID and MCC research has demonstrated that there are gaps in regional and world markets that producers can fill, given the right education and training.

"The market has changed, and Moldovan producers need to better understand what today's market is, and how they can compete in that market," Kutor said.

New leaders in Moldova's Ministry of Agriculture support the development of high value agriculture.

The MCC compact will improve irrigation, which will help overcome setbacks from recent droughts. Additionally, MCC will fund improvements to a major road in northeast Moldova, easing transport of goods and services.

"This partnership represents an evolutionary milestone in the USAID-MCC relationship that leverages the strengths of both organizations and capitalizes on USAID's long-term presence in Moldova," said Janina Jaruzelski, the director of USAID's regional mission for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova.

Kutor added: "USAID brings long-standing experience in agriculture sector reform, and private sector and policy development in Moldova to the table."

USAID and MCC collaboration in Moldova extends beyond this project. Moldova achieved



Emilia Bazii, a small farmer in central Moldova, introduced drip irrigation and new, higher-yielding tomato varieties in her greenhouse production with USAID support.

eligibility for its MCC compact by improving its performance on the control of corruption indicator with support from a threshold program financed by MCC and carried out by USAID. Although that program ended with the new compact, USAID continues to mainstream anti-corruption measures into its programs to support Moldova's continued eligibility for MCC assistance.

This complementary programming by USAID and MCC to support democratic governance and sustainable

agriculture in Moldova is an example of a "whole-of-government" approach for better development results. ★

## LUGAR SAYS DEVELOPMENT KEY FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) told a meeting of development leaders—including USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, who introduced him—that "development is critical for U.S. national security and that the alleviation of poverty and hunger is a key component."

Speaking at the Society for International Development (SID) annual dinner Jan. 28 in Washington, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said "poverty denies opportunity to the world's young people and breeds extremism and instability that spills over borders."

Along with Lugar, Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-Mass.) was to be honored at the SID dinner, but he was unable to attend due to recent surgery, said Lugar, a long-time supporter of U.S. foreign assistance.

Lugar hailed Shah for tackling the Haiti earthquake response just five days after he was sworn in as USAID chief. "I look forward to supporting his work and that of his agency in the coming years," Lugar said. "I commend all of our

### RELIGION from page 1

Establishment Clause applies to U.S. foreign assistance. As a result, all USAID projects must maintain a secular purpose regardless of whether the partners and beneficiaries are religious or secular.

"USAID-financed activities and programs may not: result in government indoctrination of religion; define its recipients by reference to religion; create an excessive entanglement with religion," reads the toolkit, entitled "Religion, Conflict & Peacebuilding."

The challenge for USAID has been to find ways that do not violate those conditions yet can engage the powerful religious forces that run so deep in many countries around the world—forces that largely preach a love of peace, understanding, and tolerance.

A senior White House official, Joshua DuBois, told the panel that the USAID toolkit has "really helped to catalyze a critical conversation inside the U.S. government."

"Because there has not been an inter-agency strategic vision for our engagement with religion,

many of us do not even know what the U.S. government is already doing in this space," said DuBois, director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Even if some use religion to justify violence and discrimination, "religion can also be a beacon of hope."

The Obama administration is bringing together an inter-agency working group on religion and global affairs, he said, adding that his White House office and the USAID toolkit "share a common goal to strengthen and further clarify the legal provisions associated with U.S. government engagement with religious actors."

A U.S. NGO has already been at work teaching 2,500 leaders of religious schools in Pakistan to bring fresh attention to the messages of peace and tolerance found in the Koran, said Doug Johnston, founder and head of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD).

Johnston told the panel he met with extremely militant madrasa leaders and found them open to

discussion after he recalled the history of Islamic learning and tolerance in the Middle Ages. "We inspired them with their own heritage of tolerance," said Johnston, a former nuclear submarine captain and author of *Religion: the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*.

ICRD, which currently has no U.S. government funding, has trained leaders of 1,500 madrasas, focusing on the most radical ones.

The training aims to improve teaching skills so that madrasa students learn to improve critical thinking skills and eventually can attend Pakistani universities.

"A recent OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] study pointed to the danger of allowing pockets of exclusion in fragile states. We simply can't afford to have religious actors excluded when we are working in these environments," said Levine.

Another panelist, Marc Gopin, director of the Center on Religion, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University, said that it's a

common mistake in the West to believe that religion does not matter and that material factors alone explain conflict.

Gopin, who spent more than five years living in Syria, told of his success bringing together moderate and tolerant Muslim religious leaders around discussions that bridged faiths. He himself is a rabbi.

He said that U.S. government support for some activities within religious institutions abroad could promote peace and tolerance.

"We [give funds to] Catholic Relief Services and World Vision, so why not do hot lunches in madrasas in Pakistan?" he said, mentioning two prominent NGOs that carry out USAID programs overseas even though they were founded by religious institutions.

The USAID publication "Religion, Conflict & Peacebuilding" is available at [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/conflict/publications/docs/Religion\\_Conflict\\_and\\_Peacebuilding\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/Religion_Conflict_and_Peacebuilding_Toolkit.pdf). ★ — B.B.

see LUGAR on page 14 ▶

# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

## Indonesia Fights Drug-resistant Tuberculosis Strains

By Roman Woronowycz

**JAKARTA**—Rohmin\*, 41, drives a taxi in Jakarta, a bustling, overcrowded megapolis. Tuberculosis is common and a cab is an easy place to pick it up.

So when Rohmin began coughing up blood more than a year ago, he sought medical help and was told that he had TB. With a wife and four children to support, Rohmin had little time for treatment.

Twice he took medication and twice he quit after he felt better. The third time the disease returned with a vengeance as multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB): difficult to detect and difficult to cure.

Today Rohmin swallows 28 tablets daily, including vitamins. He will take them for the next two years with little choice. This time he either completes treatment or faces death.

Dr. Erlina Burhan, chief pulmonologist at Persahabatan Hospital in Jakarta where Rohmin is an inpatient, believes that he will complete treatment. “He’s committed,” she said.

She said that Rohmin is monitored to ensure he adheres to an internationally recognized system for treating tuberculosis known as Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant TB (PMDT). The treatment is more intensive than the treatment for standard TB, known as Directly Observed Treatment, Short course (DOTS).

“Most MDR patients have a previous history of TB and have

Each year, World Tuberculosis Day, a worldwide call to combat the disease, is observed on March 24. USAID is working among global efforts to halve TB rates and deaths by 2015.

either taken medication and stopped, or received inadequate doses or counseling,” Burhan said.

Indonesia is reducing its rate of TB, which has fallen from 115 cases per 100,000 people in 2002, when USAID began supporting the fight against TB, to 100 cases per 100,000 in 2008. Currently, 91 percent of those in treatment have a successful outcome.

Yet, even as TB rates begin to slow, the resistant TB is becoming more prevalent.

USAID has provided \$18 million since 2002 to Indonesia’s Ministry of Health for programs through 2010 and is now increasing its focus on drug resistant TB. A new pilot project will identify and treat 100

MDR-TB patients in Jakarta and Surabaya.

Rohmin is among the first 10 patients in treatment.

Dr. Sri Prihatini, a World Health Organization TB consultant, said that the key to success is a referral and monitoring system that connects local doctors and health centers with hospitals in a communication network that ensures patients remain in treatment.

A good program will reduce default cases, preventing new drug resistant TB cases. “TB treatments work better at the local health centers because the doctors and nurses know and track their patients,” said Prihatini. “We need for hospitals to notify local officials when one of their patients becomes a no show.”

The pilot projects in Surabaya and Jakarta ensure that local government health centers and hospitals understand PMDT and how to implement it. Prihatini said that before the pilot projects are rolled out, it will be crucial to train medical professionals in the surrounding areas in the new system. It will be equally important to have enough labs certified in MDR-TB testing.

She believes that adequate preparation is the key to success in fighting MDR-TB. “But it is also dependent on commitment by the local clinics, the hospitals, and the government,” she said. And by the patient, too, she added.

*\*Many Indonesians do not use a surname. ★*

INSIGHTS from page 3

The third thing they urged me to do was to tell our story. We should be proactively describing how the changes we’re putting in place are reaching, for example, more pregnant women or newborn children and effectively reducing maternal mortality. We should be proud of our process of learning lessons as we go and adapting our programs to be as effective as possible.

Andrew [Natsios] said something that has stayed with me. He warned me that a large-scale disaster that requires a strong USAID response would consume a tremendous amount of my time. I remembered that comment through the challenging days we faced as an agency in my first month here. He couldn’t have been more correct.

**Q:** What are the lessons learned from the U.S. response to the Haiti earthquake?

**SHAH:** The scale and the scope of the earthquake and the unique loss of infrastructure and leadership—including the government of Haiti and United Nations and so many of our implementing partners—makes this an unprecedented challenge.

Our response was aggressive, swift, and coordinated with a broad range of global partners. It made a huge difference.

When President Préval visited the White House, several USAID staff were among those honored for their service, and I think the president said it all when he spoke of being extraordinarily proud of them. Our mission team and embassy staff in Haiti lived through and worked through extraordinary circumstances. People came from different agencies to USAID, led by the response-management team that stayed up all night—and through a giant snowstorm—making sure that we were sharing information and working rapidly to serve needs. It has been an honor to work with everyone through this. We led a whole-of-government response and should be proud of that. We showed that we can work efficiently and quickly to serve the American public and the people of Haiti.

**Q:** In Bangladesh, one of the largest development groups is called BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) and they appear to have some of the scale and impact that you mentioned earlier. Have you seen this group in action?

**SHAH:** BRAC is a great example because they, in many ways, have figured out how to maximize USAID’s investment. They have this organizational culture that’s very focused on scale and impact; they’re interested in innovating and developing new ideas and programs. But when you talk to Dr. [Fazle Hasan] Abed—who leads the program—and others, their real aspiration is to reach as many people as they possibly can. It’s why they’re such a large and respected organization in Bangladesh.

If you look at their cost per child served, cost per microfinance loan offered, cost per health community worker, they have a unit-cost profile that is far lower than most of our implementing partners anywhere. They take on those activities where you know you have a strategic plan to reach 70, 80, 90 percent of the population in need.

As a result, they’ve been able to have a larger impact and better results with very limited resources. Now they are leading certain efforts in Tanzania and other parts of Africa, where they’re trying to adapt and introduce their basic business model and approach.

I hope others will take a closer look at what they’re doing in Bangladesh and take the initiative to adapt the lessons they’ve learned. If we can figure out how to do those things across a broader range of problems, USAID will change the way the development business is done to meet the needs of today—much the way we’ve done throughout our history. Solving challenging global problems is what we do. Our goal now is to do more, do it better, and be an example to those with whom we work. ★



Dr. Lia Gardenia Partakusuma (left), Persahabatan Hospital’s director of general affairs, human resources, and education; and Dr. Erlina Burhan, chief pulmonologist, discuss the hospital’s MDR-TB program.



# SPECIAL REPORT: EL SALVADOR

WWW.USAID.GOV

MARCH 2010

## EL SALVADOR BOUNCES BACK AFTER WAR, QUAKE, ERUPTION

In El Salvador, there is much talk about what has come after.

After the 12-year civil war that began in 1980 and claimed perhaps 75,000 lives. After the destructive, 7.7 magnitude earthquake in January 2001, and the 6.6 quake the following month. After the Santa Ana volcano erupted in 2005 and forced hundreds to evacuate. And after last November's mudslides displaced 15,000 people and buried many buildings.

USAID responded quickly to the devastation from the mudslides, which President Mauricio Funes called "incalculable."

"We were the first ones on the ground when they needed it," said the director of USAID's El Salvador office, Larry Brady. "The groundwork we laid is really paying dividends now."

Sitting between Guatemala, Honduras, and the Pacific Ocean, El Salvador is known as the Land of Volcanoes for its frequent and unpredictable seismic activities. It also has a reputation as a survivor—of natural and manmade disasters.

With a population of 7 million, the smallest of the Central American countries is on the rise although economic progress still hasn't reached many in rural areas.

Last year's election of leftist Funes—the first president from his FMLN party since the end of the civil war—brings with it some uncertainty for U.S. and USAID initiatives.

The biggest challenge the country faces is that El Salvador leads the Western Hemisphere in homicides. "There were 26 homicides last weekend," Brady said in a mid-January interview with *FrontLines*. The figure is typical for any weekend there.

The country is home to an estimated 25,000 gang members. And they exert significant power in the communities where they live, extorting business owners and others and creating mayhem and fear.

They are entrenched, and most officials believe they are a threat to El Salvador's overall security as well as economic and social development.

"It's just tragic," said Brady, noting that the Salvadoran government is working with U.S. agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, State Department, Drug Enforcement Administration, and USAID to address the problem. USAID's efforts focus on prevention in addition to social and economic development.

"We work on the soft side; they work on the hard side," he said. "It is going to take a concerted, multifaceted effort by the United States and the Salvadoran government."

In the 1990s, after a spate of kidnappings, citizens got fed up and the government formed an anti-kidnapping unit to go after the criminals. This could happen again.

Meanwhile, the USAID-backed Mediation Project is addressing the culture of confrontation by attempting to resolve conflicts before they reach the formal court system.

In its first year a decade ago, the project had six cases. Last year there were 38,285 mediation cases in multiple settings, including at the public defender and attorney general office levels and in secondary schools and universities. The largest category of



Ana Marisol Mendez de Franco is part of USAID's Mediation Project, an effort to resolve disputes before they grow out of hand. Death threats are the top complaints that lead to mediation in a country that still bears some emotional scars from its 12-year-old civil war. A lawyer by training, de Franco says the best part of her job is when the two parties reach an amicable conclusion and leave satisfied.

cases that reach mediation centers is death threats. Other kinds of cases include fraud, theft, injury, damage, and various types of confiscation, such as land disputes.

"Mediation takes on a larger role and is really promoting a cultural change," said Eva Patricia Rodriguez Bellegarrigue, chief of party for USAID's project.

"It's a tool in a society where we were not trained for democratic dialogue," she said. "We think that expanding mediation also builds a strong democracy."

Separately, USAID's El Salvador office is promoting exports, economic development, education, health care, and eco-friendly production.

Brady said what often gets overlooked in the country is its turnaround since the war's end nearly two decades ago.

"The untold story here is what USAID did to bring the rebels to the peace table in the 1990s," Brady said, "and what we did to ensure the benefits of a free and democratic process." ★



Tomato farmer Rodolfo Rivera examines tomato vines inside his greenhouse. When they are ready, he will transport the tomatoes to his largest customer, Wal-Mart.

## El Salvador Businesses Profit from Regional Trade Agreement

Rodolfo Papini shares the same challenges as any other business owner attempting to make a profit in the complicated and mercurial world of selling goods to the masses.

"It has been an ordeal from the beginning," said the owner of Pahnas, a company that produces and sells frozen ethnic foods.

"The second year we had to increase production. We had to move from 100 percent manual production to mechanized labor.

"Every year is a different story. You have to adapt and be very flexible."

He said the assistance he received from USAID's Export Promotion Program has been "a blessing," allowing him to expand the family-run business to markets in countries throughout the region and U.S. supermarkets in communities with many Salvadorans.

The effort is linked to the 2006 Central America-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement, or CAFTA/DR, which removed some trade barriers between Central America and the United States.

At first, Salvadorans were not export-minded, said Carlos Arce, the manager of economic growth bilateral programs at USAID's office in El Salvador.

The export program promotes agriculture, and crafts people in small and medium firms. They get management expertise, go to trade fairs, learn about business promotion, and are given technical assistance that can move their businesses into the big time.

When CAFTA came into play, business people here needed a hand to get into the game. Sales of Papini's frozen pupusas and

see **BUSINESS** on page 10 ►

## BLUE OCEAN AND GREEN FARMS BOOST TOURISM AND BUSINESS

Along a 75-kilometer stretch of its southern coastline, El Salvador hopes that going green will be good for tourism and the bottom line.



Luis Fernandez is the owner of San Julian, a cheese processing factory that made use of a \$300,000 USAID Development Credit Authority loan to invest in environmentally friendly “clean production.”

In Barra Salada, tourists are heading for El Salvador’s first nationally protected coastal and marine site, Los Cobanos—20,000 hectares of protected ocean. Rocks and sunken ships jut out from the water and coral formations lie just below.

Another 580 hectares hold mangrove forests and endangered plants and animals. Tourists in chartered fishing boats may see dolphins or whales splashing in the Pacific Ocean.

At Los Volcanes National Park are the majestic—and still active—Santa Ana and Izalco volcanoes. Nearby camp grounds and walking trails are getting a makeover to draw in more domestic and foreign tourists.

Between the two, spread out among large sugar plantations like a patchwork quilt, are 1,000 small coffee farms that use environmentally friendly practices to ensure runoff that eventually reaches the Pacific will do no harm.

Lonely Planet, the travel guide publisher, named El Salvador one of its 10 “hottest

countries” for 2010, citing, among other things, its “pristine forests, active volcanoes and alpine lakes.”

Today, four buoys cordon off environmentally sensitive waters. Park guards protect the flora and fauna and educate visitors and nearby residents about biodiversity.

“Our presentation includes the different species in the community,” said a park guard, Ana Maria Velasquez. “[And we] explain to them the importance of trees and mangroves so they won’t believe a tree is just a tree you can cut.”

Velasquez, 29, and a mother of two young children, said part of her job is to transfer what she knows about protecting the environment to the next generation. The goal is “not only to make money off tourism, but also for visitors to appreciate



This buoy and three others outline El Salvador’s first nationally protected marine site, which encompasses 20,732 hectares in the Pacific Ocean.

what we have... such as the whales, the dolphins, and the coral reef,” she said.

Environmental protection also motivates Luis Fernandez, owner of San Julian, a cheese and milk processor that employs 320 people. He used a USAID-backed loan to automate, modernize, and improve efficiency. Today, the whey byproduct from processing milk is fed to hogs. The hogs’ manure fertilizes coffee fields. And the farm has a waste water treatment plant. San Julian also sponsors clinics and other activities for poor com-

munities near the plant.

“No one is pushing us to do this, but we know we have to do it,” said Fernandez. “Despite the [economic] crisis last year, we grew perhaps 11 percent.”

Approximately 1,000 coffee growers—about one-fifth of them women—have also benefited from a USAID program that teaches about proper shading to improve bean quality, wildlife protection, organic fertilizers, nontoxic pesticides, and efficient milling. Their coffee beans have earned \$6 million in two years and meet quality standards demanded by buyers like Starbucks, said Carlos Hasbún, USAID regional biodiversity specialist.

“I think it has been fairly easy for our program to get buy-in from local farmers on the verge of selling their land,” Hasbún said.

At the top of the watershed in another protected area—between the Izalco and Santa Ana volcanoes—the ATAISI Coffee Cooperative is refurbishing camp grounds and walking trails nestled near the volcanoes. With USAID assistance, the group developed a business plan. Tourism proceeds will be reinvested in the cooperative. ★

## Mother Nature Provides Moms with Plenty of Green

**COMASAGUA, El Salvador**—Women artisans at Arte Comasagua get the materials for their handmade note cards, collages, and larger works from the fertile fields that surround coffee farms and sugar cane plantations around this small mountain town.

Wild flowers, almond leaves, and wild grasses are all used in

works that are popular among shoppers looking for unique, fair trade products. And they are profitable to the all-woman staff.

Arte Comasagua was born out of tragedy. A 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck El Salvador in January 2001, causing more than 16,000 landslides. Comasagua and its residents were decimated.

Architect Ana Rosa Graf, from the capital city San Salvador, wanted to help Comasagua recover.

In 2002, she recruited women to work with the natural elements to craft paper products and sell them in El Salvador shops. She started with seven women, \$6,000, and a vision to make a business making eco-friendly products that would allow the artisans to earn a decent income.

USAID’s Artisan Development Program, part of the El Salvador office’s business development efforts, helped Graf reach U.S. retailers like Whole Foods and furniture chain Pottery Barn.

Graf enrolled in business development programs and then took her skills and art on the road, attending art shows and festivals to get her artisans’ work before the right audiences. The artisans improved their patterns

and branched out from the original designs that were heavy on religious themes. They also added greeting cards to their line of products.

“This was born as a group of women,” Graf said. “We never knew that we would be so successful with this.”

Arte Comasagua sells its products through its own Web site—www.arte-comasagua.com—as well as through Aid to Artisans and Hope for Women.

Half of the income from the cards and artwork goes to the artisans and half goes to Graf. The women almost always work from their homes and say they have more than doubled their income when compared to previous jobs as housekeepers and coffee harvesters.

Maria Magdalena, who is 31, has been an artisan for seven years. She said working from home allows her to better care for her two children, ages 14 and 5.

After collecting the flowers and materials and drying them—either using a solar dryer or by placing the materials inside the pages of a thick telephone book—it takes each woman about 45 minutes to hand-make the smallest works, such as the greeting cards. It can take much longer for the larger pictures.

Graf says the development and business planning has given Arte Comasagua the stability to plot its future.

She wants to expand to other communities to provide an alternative for women who have few economic options. Graf also wants to build a gallery to exhibit some of the artisans’ work and an eatery to make the exhibit space more of a tourist draw. And she’d also like to build a greenhouse—to make collecting the natural materials a little less taxing. ★



Architect and Arte Comasagua owner Ana Rosa Graf started small when she opened the business selling handcrafted works of art made from natural materials, but has since expanded with technical assistance from USAID. She exports the cards, made exclusively by local women artisans, to shops in the United States.



As soon as the gates are unlocked at Centro Escolar Las Lajas, students rush in. USAID assisted the school to encourage administrators, teachers, parents and students to take a more active role in educational offerings.

## Teachers, Parents, and Students Revive Schools

### IZALCO, El Salvador—

The principal of Centro Escolar Las Lajas, Gladys Isabel Ruiz, said that when it came to her annual assignment of drawing up a strategic plan for the 665-student school, she simply copied and pasted the text from the previous year's plan into the new document. Then she put the new document in a desk drawer never to see the light of day again.

That doesn't happen any more. The school, which survived a volcano eruption in 2005 and mudslides in 2009, is part of a nationwide initiative to create school management committees. Teachers, parents, and students work to strengthen basic education, revamp schools into places students want to attend, and encourage more community participation—particularly from parents.

Ruiz said the school was a different place 10 years ago.



Jose Lima, 15, shows off the presentation he helped create to tell the story about his school's transformation. Jose is a seventh grade student at Centro Escolar Las Lajas during the morning session of classes, and returns for the afternoon session as a teacher in the computer lab.

"The school was totally destroyed," she said, sitting in a shaded courtyard during the afternoon session of classes. "The students were unhappy, without interest."

Parents were uninvolved. Attempts to get funding from private companies faltered. Education initiatives came and went. "They lost a lot of confidence in projects," Ruiz said of her teachers. "They didn't trust."

That changed in 2006 with the school management plans, a concept backed by USAID with training, planning guides, and other materials.

"The first step is to do a diagnosis," Ruiz said. "What was

Added Carmen Henriquez, an education specialist in USAID's El Salvador office: "In this case, we are improving [education] through participation of the whole community."

Schools began managing their budgets. They created short- and long-term plans. The committees pinpointed specific problems in their schools—poor attendance, over-age students, repeated grades—and set out specific steps to reverse the slides. Everyone had a say.

Since the committees began working in the schools, National Achievement Test scores for third, sixth, and ninth graders have improved, officials say.

useful were concrete actions."

One of Centro Escolar Las Lajas's teachers said there are fewer dropouts now. A parent said she had more confidence in the principal and the school since participating in the committee. And her sixth grader now *wants* to attend class.

José Lima, a seventh grader who also serves as an informal teacher in the computer lab during afternoon classes, said he is especially proud of the work of the school's technology committee, of which he is a member.

Several hundred schools nationwide now have school management committees, said Academy for Education Development's Maria Harwood, whose company is working with USAID on projects at the national level. Information about school

improvements, for example, is forwarded to the Ministry of Education where officials can use components of successful initiatives to create national education programs.

Principal Ruiz and her 14 teachers say students are happier. Bathrooms have been refurbished and there is new playground equipment for the littlest students during recess. A Salvadoran artist painted a huge, colorful mural that every student passes on the way to class.

And private investors have taken note. Fundación Telefónica, the foundation arm of the Spanish telecommunications provider, has outfitted the school's computer lab with computers, flat screen monitors, and new software. ★



A girl passes by a mural, designed by an artist from San Salvador, near the entrance of Centro Escolar Las Lajas.

# FOCUS ON EL SALVADOR

## OUTREACH CENTERS BREAK THE PULL OF GANG LIFE

**LOURDES, El Salvador**—Gang members aren't allowed inside the youth outreach centers USAID helped establish in El Salvador—but they do drop their kids off to join in the activities inside.

Such is the pull—and the promise—of the outreach centers located in the middle of some of the toughest neighborhoods in the country.

"I was walking around with an active gang member and I asked him if he was going to the center," said Juan José Hernández of Creative Associates International Inc., which is carrying out the USAID-funded project. "He said, 'No way, I am from the street.'"

That same gangbanger, however, insisted that his 3-year-old would some day attend. "That really touched me," Hernández said.

The outreach centers offer refuge from gang life and opportunities for educational and recreational activities. There are five in El Salvador, part of a network of 25 centers here and in Guatemala and Honduras.

Participants are between the ages of 9 and 21, and are either ex-gang members (gang recruitment can start as early as age 7) or children who are at risk of joining a gang. Each center provides classes such as: information technology, computer literacy, crafts, baking, job training, career advice, English, and music. They are also a place to hang out.

"Our goal is that this is a second home for them, where they can learn, have fun, express themselves," said Roberto Martínez, 29, the youthful coordinator of the Lourdes Outreach Center. "Sometimes we need to be their fathers, uncles, older brothers."



Roberto Martínez is the coordinator at El Salvador's Lourdes Outreach Center, which gives local children a place to go and an alternative to gang life.

The Lourdes center is part of the Regional Youth Alliance program, a joint effort between USAID and the Central American Integration System, or SICA, started in 2008 to address the gang problem.

Each center costs about \$18,000 a year for the salary of a single coordinator and operating costs. The community furnishes the center's home—usually a church or unused building—that

should be no farther than a 15-minute walk for the young people who will use it. Teachers at the centers are all volunteers, mostly local community members and university students.

Close to 90 percent of the community partners in the outreach centers are faith-based since religious institutions are widely respected, even by gang members.

Salvador Stadthagen, the Regional Youth Alliance program director, said that "in these communities that have poverty and insecurity, which is a terrible combination, you come to realize the institution is churches."

Gang life is like a prison, Stadthagen said. Once kids join, it is hard to step back with baggage like wicked reputations and larger-than-life tattoos. And many don't want to go back to their pre-gang lives.

Gang members live fast, have money, and demand respect—even if they get it through executions and extortion. Some estimates suggest there are at least 25,000 gang members in the country and several thousand more outside the country, primarily in the United States.

Family life is not an alternative for some. UNICEF estimates 70 percent of children in El Salvador have been abused in their homes. Add in poverty, a condition that describes about half the country's children, and

"the pull for the gang member is very strong," Stadthagen said.

Henry Monroy, 17, is a volunteer at the center and also attends some of the classes there. In April, he plans to enroll in a distance learning program that will allow him to complete his secondary education—he is at the seventh grade level now. He is using the Internet at Lourdes to download study materials.

His story is similar to that of other young people who were at the center on a sunny Saturday morning.

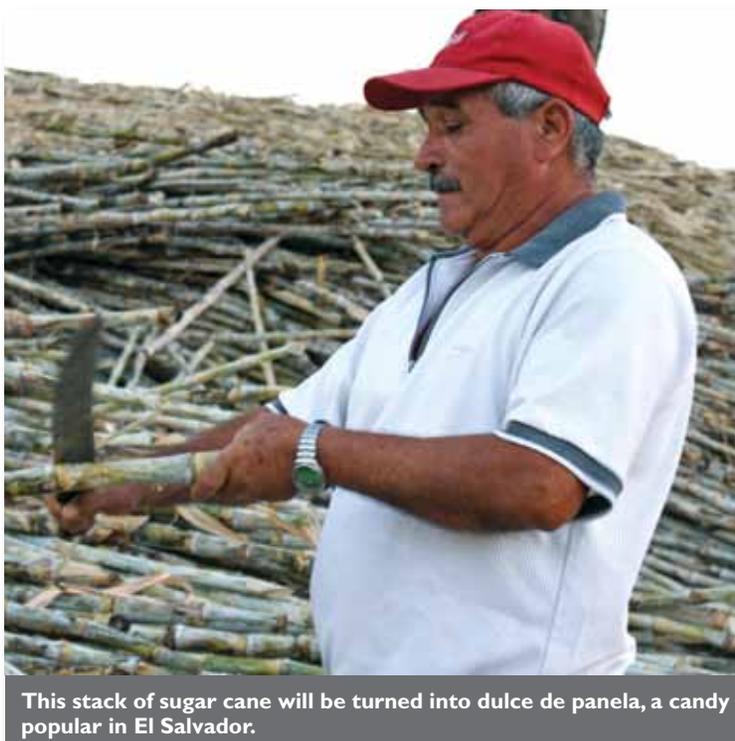
"I didn't have anything fun to do," Henry said. "I have many family problems and then I learned about this center."

"It's beautiful; it's like a second home," he said.

Despite its well-equipped computer room, there has been no crime at Lourdes. "We haven't had any robberies. It belongs to the community," Stadthagen said.

USAID wants to open 10 more in the region. The Agency has spent \$2.8 million on the initiative so far. The centers are partially funded by the Central American Regional Security Initiative.

Organizers also hope to expand the reach of the centers by creating youth-run microenterprises, for example, selling the goods made in cooking classes. ★



This stack of sugar cane will be turned into dulce de panela, a candy popular in El Salvador.

For more articles on El Salvador, see the online edition of the March *FrontLines* at [www.usaid.gov/frontlines](http://www.usaid.gov/frontlines).

### BUSINESS from page 7

tamales, for example, grew from \$200,000 in 2004 to almost \$1 million last year. He now exports to two dozen U.S. grocery stores.

He has learned about the food safety requirements necessary to sell his products in the United States and was issued a certificate by the American Institute of Baking, which is considered a mark of quality production.

Since the program began in 2003, USAID has assisted between 600 and 700 companies to increase exports, and about 3,300 people were trained.

Products range from furniture to aromatherapy remedies to fine crafts to drink mixes to Paax Muul guitars, a hand-crafted instrument known for its quality. El Salvador's service sector is also getting an assist, with promotion for doctors, translators, and consultants among others.

El Salvador products and services are in demand from as far

away as Taiwan, and marquee names like Wal-Mart and Starbucks have put Salvadoran products on their shelves and menu boards.

Alternativa is another success story. Started in 2007, the non-profit provides a place for artisans to sell their wares (tripling their square footage with a move in December to a high-traffic mall location), assists with exports, and offers technical assistance to the artisans so their products can sell internationally. The artisans' work has sold at craft shows as well, including the Wal-Mart Crafts Festival, said Rafael Cuellar, a project manager for the Economic Development Office at USAID's El Salvador office.

Tomato farmer Rodolfo Rivera is a relative newcomer to exports. In 2008, he heard on television about a USAID initiative to produce tomatoes in

greenhouses and took the plunge. His first harvest—from 2,800 tomato plants—was in May of that year. His customer: Wal-Mart in El Salvador.

Through USAID, Rivera learned how to meet Wal-Mart's quality requirements for the kinds of tomatoes he grows, both the larger salad tomato and the tomato de cuisine, which is most popular in cooking.

Rivera has had setbacks. Wind blew the roof off his greenhouse. And his attempts to build and operate a second greenhouse—so he can eventually provide buyers with tomatoes year-round—ran into trouble when water seepage made the floor unstable.

But he believes he will recoup his investment in the near future.

All told, the export program has helped create more than 14,000 jobs in agriculture and handicrafts. ★

## Your Voice

By Michael Henning

**Your Voice**, a continuing **FRONTLINES** feature, offers personal observations from USAID employees. Michael Henning is a democracy officer in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.

### Staff Care in Haiti: Helping Those Who Are Helping Others

When the earthquake in Haiti hit at the end of the work day, all of us at the embassy compound knew that our experience of it in that rock solid new building was just a hint of what must have happened outside.

The exterior wall of one warehouse across the street crumbled, and we could see dust rising in the hills beyond. As darkness fell, the local staff left to find out what had become of their families and homes—we did not hear back for days what manner of death and destruction awaited them.

The scope of the tragedy became clearer as the wounded began trickling in to the compound. Under the leadership of one Centers for Disease Control and Prevention doctor who happened to be on the compound that evening, we bandaged them up as best we could and hoped for the best.

The mission's local staff has seen their lives, their families, their friends, and their city literally disintegrate in seconds. Some Americans at the mission and their dependents were injured when their homes collapsed.

Several American staff and all dependents were evacuated within 24 hours. Those that remained and those that are in Haiti now on TDY [temporary duty] confront the effects of indescribable suffering and loss on a daily basis.

In the face of this horrible reality and the struggles of simply surviving the aftermath, the mission rose to the challenge of providing care, support, and services for all staff.

Some of the first to receive scarce food rations were the drivers who worked incredibly long hours despite also having been personally affected by the disaster. Infant formula and diapers were not available, so we found just enough for local staff with very young children.

Shelter was and remains the greatest unmet need. We worked with charitable groups, the DART [Disaster Assistance Response Team], and our military to secure whatever plastic sheeting and tents that could be had.

Very early on, USAID and embassy financial officers began working on a scheme to pay all staff in cash and on schedule, and succeeded. After the first week, fresh coffee and local fruit were available for all staff courtesy of mission leadership and staff donations. Though we all were sleeping outdoors or on the floors of our offices and cubicles, we showed that life could go on amidst hardship.

Throughout the ordeal, there was a sense of camaraderie. Most importantly, we watched out for one another. In the early days, no U.S. direct hire staff were authorized to return to their residences until the homes had been cleared as structurally sound. As a result, USAID staff hunkered down together in the residences of three USAID staff members living in the Cannes a Sucre compound across the street. It provided an opportunity to re-tell our respective stories and to galvanize and support each other in our 16-hour-plus days. In many ways, the crisis brought out the best in us.

USAID has worked to improve staff care in the world's toughest places. For Haiti, the Agency will put in place its first mission-specific staff care plan that will bring together the various strands of existing and expanded efforts.

Existing efforts include everything from extra time off, enhanced salary, and other benefits; critical quality of life improvements such as provision of shelter; and crisis response counseling. Expanded efforts will include organized off-site programs for counseling, recuperation and team building, and



Michael Henning

Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

most immediately, support to improve shelter for staff and dependents.

Each of these efforts is needed for all staff, American and local.

We should always think and act broadly, creatively, and aggressively to care for all our staff. This is absolutely critical to the success of our mission, and more importantly, to our humanity. One important part of staff care is honoring our colleagues and their families that all give so much to help the Agency.

The first Monday after the quake was Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and despite it being a holiday, or perhaps fittingly so, the local staff that could make it in started coming back to work that day.

That morning, a Navy chaplain held an impromptu memorial service, the first since the earthquake. The embassy was a beehive of activity and getting folks to stop working for even 15 minutes was a major challenge. But the mourning needed to start, and many needed that brief time for remembrance.

We quickly got the word out via the PA system, an email from the ambassador's office, posting and passing out Xeroxed fliers, and word of mouth. I pulled aside everyone that I knew had survived the quake and said, "YOU should go to this service."

The sermon was comforting, but I shall never forget the sound of "Amazing Grace" echoing throughout the embassy, sung by all those worn out yet still beautiful voices and hearts. ★

HAITI from page 2

The DART focused at first on providing food, water, and medical care, and searching for trapped people—47 were rescued by U.S. teams. The DART also provided satellite phones to help with communications for relief workers and the Haitian government, whose offices were destroyed.

To help President René Préval speak to the Haitian people about food distribution, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives set up a press briefing area for the Haitian government and helped local radio stations resume operations.

The DART included experts on water, sanitation, food, and shelter; a medical doctor; nutrition experts; a protection officer to help orphans and other vulnerable people; and six logistics experts to resume airport operations and oversee relief distribution.

"We had a DART member from the Los Angeles County Fire Department who is a logistics officer spend 12 hours per day at the port," said Callaghan. "He identified himself to the U.S. military as a DART member and coordinated ships coming in with NGOs picking up supplies for distribution.

"When you do this for a living and understand what is a humanitarian need, people look up to you. It is important to get someone in early who is experienced."

The major achievement of the U.S. response was getting on the ground within 24 hours with certified search teams, said Callaghan. "We were able to start searching after a windshield survey the night before," he said.

"What they did was heroic. I watched them crawl into buildings that can fall on their heads at any minute with the aftershocks. The United States should be proud of them. I am proud—as a professional and as a taxpayer. People went in and found people whose legs were wrapped around by dead people and it took hours to free them."

Callaghan said that the firefighters looked into the eyes of the parents of some of the people killed at the Hotel Montana and were able to tell them they had searched everywhere for their children.

Asked what the lessons learned are in this disaster, Callaghan said that speed of reaction is vital; and teams from other

government agencies need to come with their own food, water, and other equipment. They also need to learn to operate under the embassy's security officer.

The major achievement of the U.S. response was getting on the ground within 24 hours with certified search teams, said Callaghan.

The Haiti relief teams also debated using tents or plastic sheeting for shelter. "We said 'think outside the tent'" as plastic shelters are waterproof and can be arranged to create a larger living space than tents, said Callaghan. As of March 8, USAID had provided plastic sheeting to 120,000 families, hoping to replace the cotton bed sheets many had set up after their homes were destroyed. Impending seasonal rains made that move vital.

The DART also helped an estimated 500,000 people who left the city to live temporarily with friends and relatives in cities and villages untouched by the earthquake. Cash and food are being given to them so they will not burden their hosts.

USAID also hired thousands of Haitians to clean rubble from the streets—giving them cash for each day's work lets them make decisions about how to cope with the crisis and restores some of their dignity.

Experts in shelter also joined the USAID Haiti team to work on land ownership, earthquake-proofing, rubble clearance, where to dump debris, etc. (see related article, page 1).

Much of the U.S. supplies flowing into Haiti came from a USAID warehouse in Miami. Already, Callaghan was working to replenish the goods sent to Haiti, to prepare for hurricanes and other potential disasters in the area. ★

# THE REGIONS

## AFRICA

### Palm Oil Machine Cuts Toil and Boosts Profit in Liberia

By Nena Terrell, Tate Munro, and Ashley Allen

**MONROVIA, Liberia**—Palm oil was already used in many ways as food and fuel when Liberian farmers found a new, locally made processing machine could make the widely grown palm trees even more profitable.

The primary product, red palm oil, is used in cooking and sweets. Oil from the kernel of the plant is used in soaps and lotions. The fronds are used for brooms. The chaff and kernel shell are used for fuel. And left-over kernel cake feeds livestock.

Half of Liberia's palm oil is produced by 220,000 women and men on small farms—harvested from forests where it grows abundantly.

USAID and partner Winrock International eliminated labor-intensive processing of the plant by adapting technology from projects in other countries.

Under USAID's Sustainable Tree Crop Program, a processing machine was introduced to help harvesters extract more oil from the fruit with less time and effort.

The traditional method for milling palm oil involves mashing the fruit in a rock-lined pit by foot, hand, and stick, then moving the mash into a second pit filled with water to squeeze out and collect the oil.

It is labor intensive and grueling, requiring many trips hauling buckets of water and sending

large amounts of wastewater back into streams. Because the process is so slow, as much as 35 percent to 40 percent of the ripe palm fruit is never harvested, but left to rot in the tree. During oil extraction in the pit, 50 percent of the palm oil is lost.

The new machine, called the Caltech expeller, is known as the "Freedom Mill" in Liberia because of the newfound freedom from toil it provided as well as its role in generating badly needed income and jobs.

It sometimes took Leamon Kolue Dahn an entire day to process just one drum of palm oil until she purchased a Freedom Mill. During the 2009 oil palm season, Dahn and her farm workers were able to process the whole farm, tripling production and earnings. She doubled her workforce to 15, including six women.

"Since I came to own one Freedom Mill, I have been able to construct a house for my family. My children and other relatives living with me now have more food and eat a balanced diet every day," Dahn said. "My worries about how all my palm fruits will be processed on time are all gone."

To preserve the environment, the Liberia Smallholder Oil Palm Revitalization Project rehabilitates old trees—no new forest is cleared or farmland

taken out of food production. In contrast to the traditional method of oil extraction, the Freedom Mill uses as much as 90 percent less water. The project also teaches the millers to burn the processing waste as fuel.

The machine is built entirely from locally available material to ensure access to the technology, spare parts, and technical assistance. Its vertical design and hand-powered turnstile allow for easy transportation from farm to farm without requiring fuel or electricity, which makes it ideal for small farms and tenant harvesters.

Three Liberian metal shops manufacture the machines using roughly 70 percent recycled metal for around \$500. The project promotes the machines through billboards, radio ads, and demonstrations around the country.

Each Freedom Mill retails for around \$800, compared to \$3,000 to \$10,000 for imported machines. There are currently 14 vendors covering six counties.

One Freedom Mill manufacturer, Benedict Sampson, said he sold 32 machines in 10 months.

At a recent trade fair demonstration, an influential palm oil farmer expressed interest in purchasing a Freedom Mill for his family farm: Liberia's Vice President Joseph Boakai. ★

## EUROPE & EURASIA



A tuberculosis treatment center in Kareli before and after renovation.

### TB Patients Benefit from Renovated Clinic in Georgia

By Michael O'Brien

**GORI, Georgia**—As a patient at the Gori DOTS Spot tuberculosis clinic, Giorgi A. knows well the stigma some have attached to people with the disease. His wife burned the educational materials he brought home from the clinic and he feels isolated from his friends and family.

Still, he is thankful for the treatment he receives at the facility, newly renovated with USAID assistance, that uses internationally accepted direct observation techniques (DOTS). "It makes me realize that my situation is not hopeless," he said. "I know every time I come here that someone cares about me."

Giorgi A.'s feelings are echoed by the staff and patients of the clinic, which is comfortable and inviting. This is important since treatment for tuberculosis requires six to eight months of daily visits so patients can receive their medicines. It is crucial that patients complete the treatment or they risk developing drug-resistant forms of the disease, which can be incurable.

Tuberculosis rates in Georgia are much higher than in the rest of Europe. And following the August 2008 conflict with Russia, the uncertainty surrounding the Russian-controlled buffer zone in Shida Kartli, and the future of the internally displaced people, many patients were at risk of missing treatments and others were at risk of not being diagnosed at all.

To curb the public health threat and to jump-start improved treatment in Shida Kartli, USAID expanded its existing tuberculosis program to renovate four treatment facilities there and train medical providers.

At the start of the project, tuberculosis facilities in Shida Kartli were, at best, rundown. Many looked more like condemned buildings than medical treatment facilities.

Thirty-seven-year-old Giorgi B. is another patient at the Gori clinic. He hasn't noticed the stigma attached to tuberculosis that many other Georgians experience. Younger people are more knowledgeable about the disease, he said.

Giorgi B. was diagnosed with a multi-drug resistant form of tuberculosis, and faces up to two years in treatment. The new facility has helped him keep a positive outlook.

"It is a big factor," he said. "It has created a secure, calm, welcoming family. I feel safe and protected here."

Dr. Manana Gongadze, regional coordinator for Georgia's National Tuberculosis Program, said a positive psychological outlook is important for the recovery process, and she has seen the effects on the staff and patients. "It is a long treatment program, and it is easy to get discouraged," she said. "The new facilities help the staff remain positive, which helps the patients to remain in high spirits. The high spirits help the healing process."

Dr. Gongadze hears every day how much the staff and patients appreciate the new clinics.

"It was humiliating to work or get treatment in the old buildings," she said. "These new facilities have helped to restore dignity. They show our patients that people care for them. It gives them hope that they aren't forgotten."

*Last names have been omitted to protect patient confidentiality.* ★



These Liberian palm oil millers and sellers use the labor-saving Freedom Mill to increase their daily palm oil extraction, slash processing time, and raise their income.

## LATIN AMERICA

### Online Crop Database Means Better Prices for Jamaicans

By Ruth Chisholm and Malden Miller

#### KINGSTON, Jamaica—

Through an online database, Jamaicans can now find out current crop prices to help them bargain for better prices in the marketplace.

The Jamaica Agriculture Market Information System (JAMIS), supported by USAID, is the first price collection system available to the public.

Gary Gunning, a farmer and newly appointed extension officer for the Rural Agriculture Development Authority, said that while the system appeared cumbersome at first, he now uses it frequently and sees the value to the sector because it helps users identify what goods are available.

“I use the pricing information on JAMIS to guide farmers on the demand and supply of certain crops. That way they have a better idea of what to plant in response to the demand among potential markets, and I get an idea when they expect to reap.”



An extension officer, right, gets price information from a farmer in Jamaica.

Extension officers are technical advisors who work directly with farmers to communicate government policies, national trends, and best practices. Gunning and other extension officers record production and pricing data from the field and upload the information to the database.

JAMIS places buyers and sellers on a more equal footing. The system is already helping purchasing managers at hotels and supermarkets with their procurement.

Nicolette Casey, produce manager for one of Jamaica’s major supermarket chains, said JAMIS gives her greater negotiating power.

“The Web site gives me a snapshot of prices across Jamaica.

see **JAMAICA** on page 14 ▶



Three girls learn to read and write in the Al-Shukani School's literacy class, Wadi District, Marib Governorate, May 2009.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Yemeni Women Get a Chance to Learn Through Literacy Project

**MARIB, Yemen**—Anisa Mohammad did not have the opportunity to attend formal school as a child. Instead, she was required to stay at home to do the housework, and her father married her off at age 10. Now, at 23, she is the mother of four and is pregnant with her fifth child.

“Ever since I was a child I loved school very much, but never had the chance to go to school like other children. I feel like I’ve missed a lot,” said Mohammad.

Mohammad was the first to register when she heard about a literacy class at Al-Dorrah School in the Marib

Governorate that is supported by USAID. Despite her responsibilities at home, she managed to complete a year of intensive training, including afternoon adult literacy classes, and can now read and write with ease.

Yemen continues to rank last among 134 countries for women’s progress in the economy, education, health, and politics, according to the World Economic Forum’s 2009 Global Gender Gap report. While Yemen has made progress in the past 10 years toward meeting the Millennium Development Goal that calls for improved literacy rates for men and women aged 15 to 24, only 30 percent

of Yemeni women are literate, compared with 70 percent of men.

The plight of women and girls in Yemen is inextricably linked to poverty in a country where 45 percent of the population lives on less than \$2 per day. Women who receive an education are much more likely to ensure that their children are educated, helping to break the poverty chain.

This is exactly what is happening in Mohammad’s case: “I am proud to say that I now personally teach my two kids who are in the first and second

see **YEMEN** on page 14 ▶

## ASIA



Dr. Lai Minh Hien of Vietnam’s Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (center) explains dioxin contamination in Sen Lake, near Danang Airport, to USAID Vietnam Director Frank Donovan; Nguyen Manh Hung of East Meets West; Andrew Herrup, environment, science, technology & health officer from the U.S. Embassy; and Vietnamese officials.

### US, Vietnam Make Progress on Agent Orange Clean Up

By Richard Nyberg

**HANOI**—Vietnam and the United States are working to clean up soil and sediment contaminated with dioxin, a chemical in the defoliant Agent Orange.

A recently signed memorandum of understanding outlines how the U.S. and Vietnam governments will continue to improve environmental, health, and social conditions around Danang Airport, where Agent Orange was stored during the Vietnam War.

Michael Michalak, the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam, said the agreement “marks an important

milestone and a new level of commitment in working together to find new and innovative solutions to a complex problem.”

Signed by Vietnam’s Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and USAID, the memorandum addresses how U.S. funds, currently amounting to \$9 million, will support remediation of dioxin-contaminated sites in Vietnam and carry out health programs in communities near those sites.

USAID’s director in Vietnam, Frank Donovan, added that the memorandum “strengthens an

already exceptional development partnership.”

An environmental impact assessment is the first step in the remediation process. Results of the study, due early this year, will help experts develop the appropriate technical approach to dioxin containment and remediation.

To reduce dioxin exposure, Vietnamese authorities restricted access to contaminated areas at the Danang Airport and prohibited residents from fishing in a lake.

see **VIETNAM** on page 14 ▶

# CONTINUED...

## LUGAR from page 5

responders from all government agencies for their courage, compassion, and skill as they continue their mission in Haiti, and I join all of you in extending our prayers to the people of that nation.”

The senator noted that there are differences of opinion within the U.S. government on who should be performing global development functions.

“As we debate these issues, we should keep in mind that diplomacy and development are two distinct disciplines,” Lugar added. “Although diplomacy and development often can be mutually reinforcing, at their core, they have different priorities, resource requirements, and time horizons.”

Development requires a long term view and often is undertaken for “purely altruistic reasons” in countries that are “of

less, or even minimal, strategic significance,” he said.

“These differences underscore why development must be an independent partner of diplomacy,” Lugar said.

He said he shared the view of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton when she said: “I want USAID to be seen as the premier development agency in the world.” It was a statement that brought the hundreds of development officials in the room to their feet with applause.

Lugar said in the past two decades USAID lost many of its evaluation, budget, and policy experts, reducing its ability to tackle development effectively. In addition, budget and policy decision making was taken away from USAID staff. “Roughly two dozen departments and agencies have taken over some

aspects of foreign assistance, including the Department of Defense and the Department of Agriculture,” he said.

The Obama administration intends to double the volume of foreign aid and, as this takes place, “USAID must have a central role in development policy decisions,” Lugar said. He warned that the new buzzword in Washington—“a whole-of-government approach”—should not be used to justify fragmentation of foreign aid responsibilities and budgets.

“Someone must be in charge, someone must coordinate,” he said.

To assure that the Agency’s staffing and expertise continues to grow, Lugar and Kerry introduced last year, S. 1524, the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act. ★

## YEMEN from page 13

grade. I make sure that my children go to school daily. I follow their lessons very closely. I also encourage my neighbors to send their children to school.”

Rifa’ah Ayed, 45, walks a full hour to reach afternoon adult literacy classes at Al-Sahari School, another school in Marib that is supported by USAID’s Basic Education Support and Training (BEST) Project.

In Majzer alone, the project helped 227 women in six adult literacy classes. “Adult literacy classes not only helped us read and write, but have also helped boost our self-esteem and enabled us to express our self-confidence,” said Ayed.

In the Al-Wadi District of Marib, the project is reaching out to a marginalized group known as the *Akhdam*, meaning “servants” in Arabic. Members of this group often are subject to harassment if they try to get an education and usually are sent to work at an early age as street sweepers or in the gardens or houses of the wealthy.

To encourage women from this group to join literacy classes, the

BEST Project worked with imams of a local mosque to conduct an awareness campaign. In each district, 20 teenage girls and young women signed up to participate in the six-month literacy class.

“I feel lucky to have joined the literacy class; it is an opportunity that has never been available for me,” said 16-year-old Naseem Mohammad (no relation to Anisa Mohammad). “Thanks to our facilitator Kareema, who has been very patient and has been treating us with respect, and thanks to the USAID BEST Project [which] has helped open the literacy class for us.”

In addition to adult literacy classes, the BEST Project supports efforts to improve education for girls and women by: training teachers; building walls around schools and providing separate latrines for women to address privacy concerns among girls and their families; and creating mothers and fathers councils to encourage community engagement in schools.

Staff from USAID’s office in Yemen contributed to this article. ★

## FRONTLINES

IS PUBLISHED BY THE U.S. Agency for International Development,  
THROUGH THE BUREAU FOR LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

*“I realize that there are among us those who are weary of sustaining this continual effort to help other nations. But I would ask them to look at a map and recognize that many of those whom we help live on the ‘front lines’ of the long twilight struggle for freedom—that others are new nations posed between order and chaos—and the rest are older nations now undergoing a turbulent transition of new expectations. Our efforts to help them help themselves, to demonstrate and to strengthen the vitality of free institutions, are small in cost compared to our military outlays for the defense of freedom.”*

—John F. Kennedy, Special Message to the Congress on Foreign Aid, March 13, 1962

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## JAMAICA from page 13

So when a supplier from Kingston calls me offering string beans for J\$254 per kilogram and I check JAMIS and see that in one of the eastern parishes it is available for J\$243 per kilogram, then I can talk that supplier down to get the string beans at a better price,” she said.

Consumers can also create a comparative “shopping basket” online by selecting their produce with the desired weight or quantity and entering their preferred supermarkets.

The database then presents a snapshot of the prices across all the supermarkets entered. This way, consumers can see which retailers are selling the goods at the best prices.

JAMIS is accessible online at [www.ja-mis.com](http://www.ja-mis.com). The site received 84,000 hits the first week it went live. For consumers and other users without Internet access, weekly retail prices are printed in local newspapers.

JAMIS is just one of the ways in which USAID is supporting the agriculture ministry’s efforts to modernize the sector through technology. Through the Jamaica Farmers Access to Regional Markets project, USAID provided

financial and technical assistance, as well as smart phones, laptop computers, and software to develop and implement JAMIS.

The Agency’s support has already contributed to a 23 percent growth in Jamaica’s agriculture sector between September 2008 and December 2009. ★

## VIETNAM from page 13

Subsequent tests showed that dioxin levels in people who live near the airport declined dramatically in recent years.

Since 2001, Vietnam and the United States—under the leadership of the U.S. ambassador and with active involvement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, and State Department—have worked together to address dioxin contamination. USAID joined the dioxin containment efforts in 2009.

The United States has also provided financial and technical assistance and equipment to boost Vietnamese capacity to respond to dioxin contamination and to develop health and environmental strategies. ★

## FOOD RATIONS ALLOW CHILDREN TO STAY IN SCHOOL

The recent economic recession and drought brought poor communities to their knees in rural western Pakistan. Families stopped sending their children to school, and instead put them to work to help pay for their evening bread. The least fortunate took to the streets to become beggars.

Naz Gul, a fourth grade student in a government primary school in Chaghai village in Baluchistan, was one such child. Despite her wish to stay in school, circumstance led her to beg for bread every day in the surrounding communities.

“My parents were extremely poor and could not afford to buy food, so I had to quit and work

with my mother in the fields,” said Naz. “In the evening I had to beg for food.”

A year later, Naz, now 12, was back in school. Her parents had learned that a USAID program was distributing wheat and cooking oil to schoolchildren of Chaghai. Soon after they re-enrolled Naz, she brought home a 50-kilogram sack of wheat and

a quart of cooking oil, enough to feed her family for a month.

The Increasing Food Security program is a three-year, \$22.3 million USAID program carried out by the U.N.’s World Food Program. The program encourages children to attend school by providing food every three months to more than 2 million students in three provinces. The

donation helps each family save 1,200 to 2,000 rupees (U.S. \$12-\$24) per month, enough to purchase an additional sack of wheat. Parents come to school on distribution day to participate in health and hygiene sessions.

“I felt terrible about having to take my daughter out of school because it is important to educate girls,” said Naz’s father. “With the

food she brings home now, we can make sure she is well fed when she attends classes every day.”

Since the start of the program, the Chaghai primary school has seen a 43 percent increase in enrollment. Parents who had given up on their children’s education found a way to send them back to school in the hope of improving their lives. ★



Naz Gul sits outside school in the village of Chaghai with the monthly ration of wheat for her family received from USAID.

Photo by WFP

## Rebuilding Communities in Pakistan

Even before Pakistan’s deadly earthquake in October 2005, the task of inspiring students to learn was not easy for teachers in the remote and rugged northern region of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Educators expressed often that their pupils never seemed interested in getting past rote learning, and that the students had difficulty embracing mathematical and scientific concepts.

After hearing of these learning limitations, USAID officials recognized the need to not only reconstruct a damaged schoolhouse in the town of Gunchattar, but also to provide the teaching staff with new skills to fundamentally change the way their students looked at learning.

The teacher training program introduced a new active-learning methodology to help teachers observe students’ behavior, analyze their unique learning needs and potential, and understand their individual differences.

“In the workshop I discovered how to bring students’ hidden talents out and evoke their curiosity,” said Shafique Khan, a teacher at Gunchattar Boys’ School. “I also learned that



Photo by USAID

USAID programs have introduced interactive teaching and learning to schools in Pakistan.

different students learn in different ways related to their personalities and interests.”

Shafique observed how some students learned more effectively by visualizing different concepts, especially in science, and encouraged them to learn different conceptual models by drawing and labeling them.

Elated at the response, Shafique proposed that his students participate in an upcoming science competition against schools in a neighboring district. Shafique’s students showcased their science projects in front of

a large audience and won first prize.

“Since Mr. Khan changed his way of teaching, we have a totally new attitude about learning,” said Muhammad Abid, a seventh grader at the school. “He takes care of our individual needs and encourages us. Now I want to become a scientist.”

The training was part of the five-year, \$200 million U.S. earthquake response, including reconstruction, education, health, and livelihood restoration and development. More than half the program—\$120 million—rebuilt

destroyed schools and basic health units. Other cross-cutting programs strengthened education systems, healthcare, and livelihoods.

School reconstruction plans include 59 buildings. More importantly, USAID has conducted training for 10,000 teachers, and helped establish 2,300 school management committees. These committees allow parents and community members to get involved in school activities, and help identify and address their priorities and problems.

For children, in particular, the trauma of losing their homes and schools was compounded by the loss of a daily routine of attending classes and socialization. In response, USAID developed 40 “child-friendly” spaces that let more than 2,000 kids engage in creative activities. For three hours a day, the children were supervised by adult monitors and community volunteers as houses and schools were rebuilt.

“At first, the children wouldn’t talk or play with each other,” said Azra Iqbal, a volunteer at the 170-member child center in the village of Malkan. “But in the last six months, there has been tremendous improvement. Without this space, these children would be roaming the streets.”

USAID’s livelihoods project has created more than 6,500 permanent jobs in the earthquake-stricken area. Matching grants to local firms has generated more than \$8 million to rebuild the local economy and create new business in small industries linked to agriculture, such as dairy, or to local tourism in scenic areas.

In health, USAID addressed a near total absence of women health care providers to assist with pregnancies and deliveries. In the last three years, seven of 10 health units in the region have been staffed with female health workers. Now half the units provide reproductive health services, and overall unit performance has improved exponentially.

“After we complete the reconstruction projects, we hope to integrate the social welfare elements of our program into our health, education, and economic growth offices,” said Robert MacLeod, leader of the USAID reconstruction team.

The tragedy has opened the door to development activities previously unavailable to the politically disputed area of AJK. “We’ve had a rare opportunity to work there,” MacLeod said. “We hope the region will remain less isolated than before.” ★



Khanum Bibi and three of her daughters at work.



The largest single USAID program in Pakistan is dedicated to improving basic education for girls.

## Pakistani Women Assert Themselves in Business

By Zack Taylor

**LAHORE, Pakistan**—In most ways, Khanum Bibi is an ordinary Punjabi wife. Married 25 years, she and her husband Nisar raised a son and five daughters in a small village outside Lahore, relying on his income as a day laborer and her work making and embellishing ladies' garments with beads at home.

The family squeaked by until hard times struck last year. In the heart of an economic downturn, Nisar was injured in a street accident and could no longer work. The couple agreed that Bibi should take the unusual step of venturing out of the house and proposed to her neighbors to sell the garments together to get better deals from market vendors.

At just that moment, she got help. A USAID-supported local NGO offered to train her on product design and development, use of raw materials, market demand, and pricing arrangements. The next month, Bibi left her daughters to work at home and became a sales agent—an entrepreneur.

"I have had a difficult life," Bibi said, wiping a tear with her headscarf. "But I feel a tremendous responsibility for my family since my husband's injury. My becoming a sales agent has

improved our condition, and also my confidence. Now that I have this opportunity, I want to maximize it."

USAID's five-year project will increase incomes of at least 120,000 micro-entrepreneurs like Bibi and help NGOs to help them scale-up their operations, identify markets beyond traditional handicrafts, and assure access to higher value markets.

"There's lots of microfinance in this country but not enough business development providing women in business negotiating skills as well as market access and information," said USAID Education Office Director Jim Barnhart.

As for Bibi, she keeps Nisar happy by consulting with him on all her important business decisions, and maintaining her established role in the family as she slowly breaks down some of Pakistan's social barriers. In the end, he appreciates her ability to keep the family afloat.

"My husband didn't give me the right to work," Bibi said. "I earned it. Today we make joint decisions, and the people in our village understand. USAID has given me new ideas and approaches I never would have considered." ★

## US ENERGY BOOST TO GET PAKISTAN MOVING

**RAWALPINDI, Pakistan**—

At 2:00 in the afternoon, the Rawalpindi Flour & General Mills is humming—but the sound is not coming from the plant's equipment.

A diesel generator rumbles and belches smoke to keep the plant's administrative offices functioning, but it does not produce enough power to operate four stories of machines that mill grain into flour.

In a practice known as "load shedding," the city's electric power runs for two or three hours and then cuts off for an hour to spread the pain of Pakistan's 5,000-megawatt energy shortfall.

"We don't know how many hours we'll be able to operate tomorrow," Sheikh Muhammad Shabbir, the company CEO said. "Or how much our monthly electricity cost will be. It makes planning for growth very difficult."

As an industrial consumer, the mill is billed for 24 hours of energy use, plus a variable fuel adjustment charge, despite its use of only a fraction of the energy "purchased." The result is that Shabbir never knows his bottom line, or whether he can fill orders from customers like the World Food Program to supply flour to feed internally displaced populations. Workers must be paid not only for the blackout hours, but also overtime incurred once the power is restored.



A worker bags flour at Rawalpindi Flour & General Mills. Daily power cuts reduce productivity by up to one-third.

A new \$125 million USAID Energy Program will upgrade five major power stations, replace more than 11,000 tube wells producing water for agriculture, and boost Pakistan's overall power production by 10 percent.

The crisis threatens the country's political and economic stability. In volatile Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, day-long power interruptions that cut off the supply of clean water caused deadly riots for several weeks in May 2009.

In mid-January, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke launched the first phase of the energy projects in Islamabad, announcing the

United States will contribute up to \$1 billion to energy.

"The energy crisis affects everyone," Holbrooke said. "Power blackouts cripple commerce and cause suffering in the daily lives of millions of Pakistanis."

Shabbir, who is also a former president of the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said: "Sorting out the electricity situation would create jobs, improve employee benefits, and enhance exports."

"Reducing energy costs to consumers would increase their buying power and give a boost to the economy across the board." ★ —Z.T.