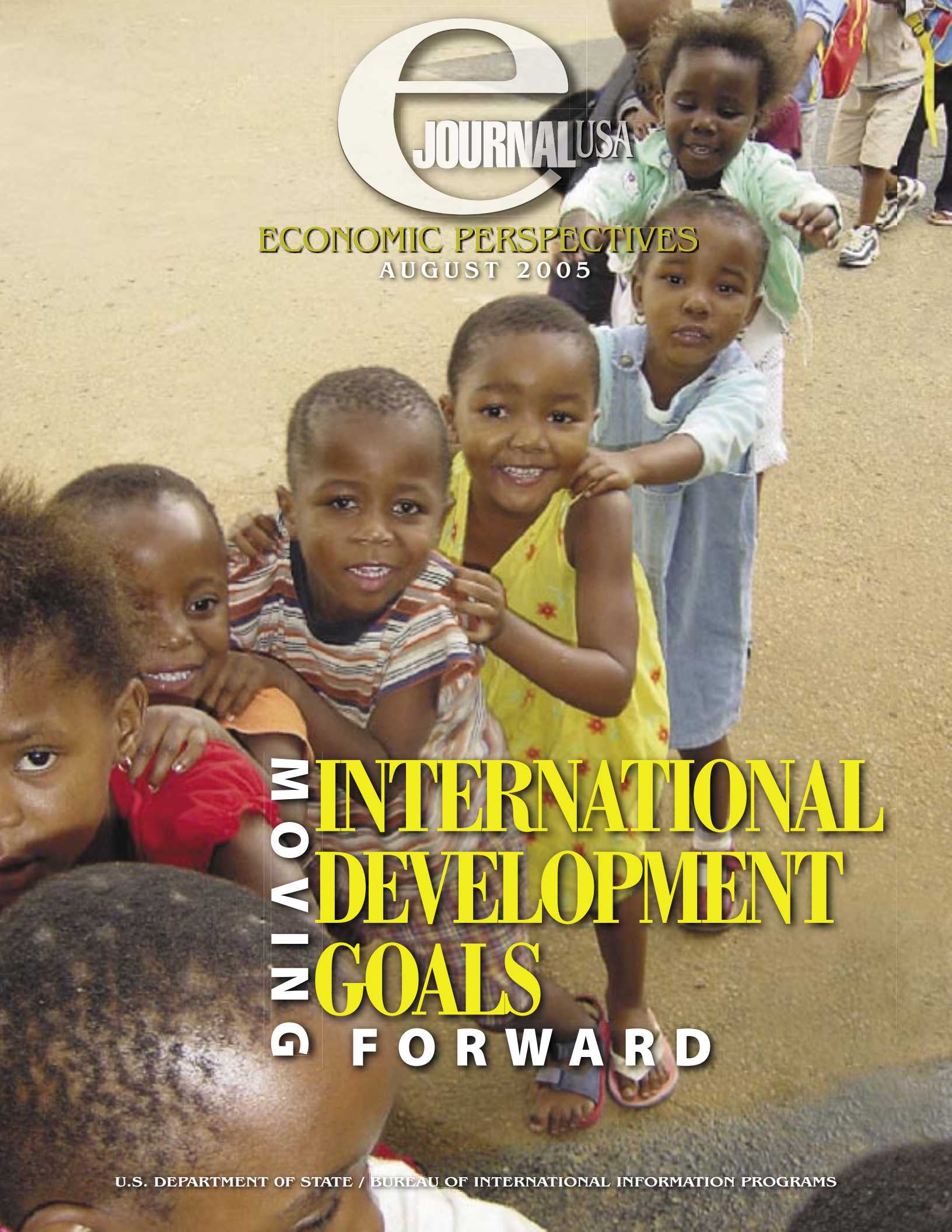

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AUGUST 2005

MOVING INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS FORWARD

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ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

It is up to developing countries themselves and their governments to take the lead on development. They need to decide, plan, and sequence their economic policies to fit with their own development strategies, for which they should be accountable to all their people. ... We need to support sound development strategies with better aid, to ensure it is used most effectively.

— G8 leaders, July 8, 2005, Gleneagles, Scotland

Leaders of the world's eight major economies (G8), at their annual meeting in July 2005, called on all nations to recommit themselves to supporting economic progress and good governance in the developing world, particularly in Africa—the only continent not on track to meet by 2015 any of the goals agreed on at the international Millennium Summit in 2000 and put forth in the Millennium Declaration. The leaders of the G8—the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United Kingdom—agreed that further progress on attaining the goals must be based on sustained and consistent progress toward peace and security, better governance, improved health care and education, enhanced growth, access to markets, and added resources through trade, investment, and increased official development assistance.

The United States is doing its part. It is the world's largest donor of official development assistance, the largest donor of emergency humanitarian relief, the largest donor of private charitable funding, and the chief source of private financial flows to the developing world. Through the Millennium Challenge Account, the United States will continue to make resources available to countries that provide incentives for economic growth through policies that promote good governance, trade, and investment. Growth also requires healthy, well-educated citizens who can enjoy economic opportunities and political freedoms. Here, also, the United States is doing its part by advancing the largest health initiative in the history of the world to combat communicable diseases.

Much of the U.S. development initiative is conducted through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its many partner nongovernmental organizations. This journal provides a glance at some of the individual U.S. development projects throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America that seek to address the key objectives of the Millennium Declaration: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality and improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development. The editors of the journal hope that you will take from these project descriptions information that might be useful in formulating development projects in your own countries.

The Editors

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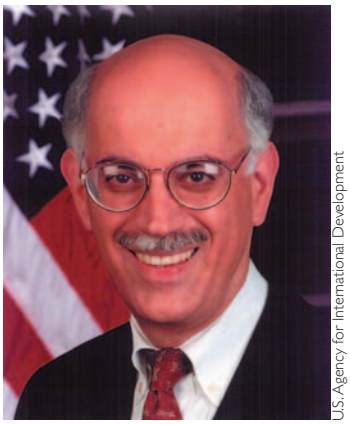
Andrew Natsios, Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development



U.S. Agency for International Development

Andrew Natsios

In September 2000, 189 nations agreed to join forces in a fight against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, child and maternal mortality, disease, and environmental degradation. These countries, including the United States, pledged to take bold decisions to make development a reality for all nations. On September 14, 2005, five years after that historic meeting, leaders from more than 170 nations will gather at the United Nations in New York City to take measure of the progress made to date. While much remains to be accomplished, the progress has been substantial.

The 2000 meeting gave the political impetus for reform, but it was two years later, at the 2002 United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Financing for Development held in Mexico, that leaders agreed to the definitive framework for successful development called the Monterrey Consensus. At that meeting, developing countries and donors alike, with input from civil society and the business community, embraced good governance, domestic ownership of development strategies, trade, and private investment as key elements of economic growth and prosperity.

In Africa, for example, many leaders are now working through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) process, linking poverty eradication to policies that promote sustainable growth and trade, good governance, and the fight against the pernicious evil of corruption.

For its part, the United States has increased its official development assistance (ODA) even beyond President Bush's 2002 Monterrey pledge. Since 2000, American assistance has nearly doubled, rising from $10 billion to $19 billion in 2004. That constitutes one-quarter of the ODA from the 30 industrialized member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

History has shown, however, that the amount of development assistance is less important than the uses to which it is put and the implementation mechanisms used to carry out programs. It is essential, therefore, that increases in ODA be matched by increases in effectiveness and sustainability.

Countries that have proven their commitment to change and reform, governing justly, investing in their people, and maintaining policies and institutions that support market-led growth will receive billions of dollars in the coming years from another of President Bush's initiatives: the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

But the United States gives far more development assistance than is reflected in ODA statistics. Contributions from the private sector, for example, whether corporations, private voluntary organizations, or nongovernmen-

tal organizations, are not counted as official development assistance. And yet these private sources of capital account for a large percentage of what the people of the United States contribute to development every year. According to figures released by the Hudson Institute, a nonpartisan policy research organization, U.S. private donations to developing countries exceeded $62 billion in 2003.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has tried to take advantage of these new sources of development assistance in recent years, joining forces with socially responsible private sector organizations in our Global Development Alliance. Since 2002, we have invested $1 billion in 290 public-private alliances in 98 countries, while our private sector partners have contributed more than $3.7 billion in total resources.

Too often, humanitarian relief has been treated as if it were somehow separate from development and the achievement of the goals set forth in the 2000 Millennium Declaration. It is not. The failure to respond to food emergencies in countries in Africa and elsewhere can only lead to further instability and make their development even more difficult.

To help states caught up in crisis and conflict return to stability and put their economies on the path to sustained growth, President Bush recently announced that the United States will provide an additional $674 million for humanitarian emergencies in Africa this year. This is beyond the approximately $1.4 billion already committed.

As a founder and largest donor of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the United States also provided $459 million to the fund in 2004. The U.S. contribution for all of its HIV/AIDS programs totals more than $2.8 billion in the current fiscal year. In addition, we provide approximately $435 million annually for voluntary family planning and maternal health care to 60 countries.

Achieving the goals articulated in the Millennium Declaration is very much in the interests of the United States and central to the mission of USAID. As the first-ever bilateral development agency—and still the largest—we have had considerable stake in the process and more than 40 years of experience in what works and what does not. That is why we put so much emphasis on economic growth. Simply put: Without trade, there can be no sustained economic growth. Without economic growth, there will be no increase in tax revenues to support improved public services. Without growth and services, there will be no increase in wealth and reduction in poverty. Unless foreign aid contributes to economic growth, it is failing to achieve its primary mission.

There are several components of a successful economic growth program. One of the most important, we have learned, is trade. The United States has long led the world in trade liberalization, and USAID devotes substantial resources to helping countries participate successfully in trade negotiations and enter the World Trade Organization (WTO). Liberalizing trade laws and participating fully in the global economy does not just benefit developed countries. The completion of the WTO Doha Development Round could add $200 billion annually to developing countries' incomes and lift more than 500 million people out of poverty.

For several years, the United States has been at the forefront of the movement to ease the Third World's debt burdens. The United States and other G8 countries have called for 100 percent cancellation of many debt obligations owed to the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. This could result in approximately $40 billion in immediate debt relief—and it could reach more than $56 billion if all the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries* become eligible.

Another immense source of potential revenue for the developing countries of the world lies within their own borders. The report of the U.N. Commission on the Private Sector and Development—*Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor*—estimates that developing countries have $9.4 trillion dollars in private financial assets that cannot be fully mobilized for development, largely because of corruption and inadequate legal protections for property and contracts. Further, as the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto has shown in a number of his works, the inability of millions of Third World people to capitalize on their homes and businesses due to overly rigid property and titling regulations suggests that a great reservoir of wealth remains to be tapped in many developing nations.

A competitive, well-regulated private market is indispensable because it is the most effective institution ever devised for allocating resources efficiently, for fostering innovation, and for communicating information that helps consumers and producers make decisions. It is no coincidence that the wealthiest and most developed countries of the world are all free market democracies. Regulatory frameworks that build confidence in private markets, protect property, enforce contracts, and generally respect the rule of law are essential if developing nations are to achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

According to a World Bank study, in one developing country, it takes 203 days to register a business, while in another enforcing a contract takes 1,459 days. With barriers to business formation and entrepreneurship such as these, businesses remain small and in the informal sector. There is no point in debating whether official development assistance should be $68 billion or $100 billion or $195 billion when the most basic policies for generating wealth are not in place.

Ending poverty is a serious challenge. Building effective and equitable economic institutions takes time, persistence, and reform. Policies must be put in place to safeguard the most vulnerable members of society. The good news is that many countries have already blazed a trail and that the United States and the international community will help those prepared to help themselves. With the right choices, we have a good chance of reaching the goals we set for ourselves at Monterrey and in the Millennium Declaration. ■

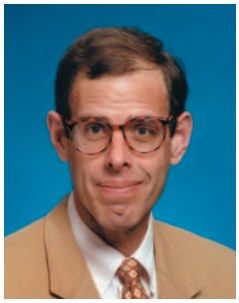
* The HIPC Initiative is a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment and reform programs.

DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

An Interview With Nicholas Eberstadt and Steve Radelet

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt chair in political economy at the Washington, D.C.-based American Enterprise Institute, and Steve Radelet, senior fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Global Development, respond to questions about the goals of the Millennium Declaration and U.S. development policy from the editors of Economic Perspectives.

Steve Radelet


Nicholas Eberstadt

Question: What is your assessment of progress to date by the global community in meeting the goals of the Millennium Declaration agreed to in the year 2000?

Radelet: There has been mixed progress. East Asia and South Asia have made significant progress on achieving the goals, particularly in the area of health standards, whereas countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Haiti and Burma, are struggling to meet the goals.

Some countries—some of the world's largest, such as China, India, and Indonesia—are seeing rapid progress toward development. However, in other countries, there is much less likelihood that the "millennium" standards will be achieved by the 2015 target date.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are helpful in focusing the attention of the international community on establishing targets. This should help both developing countries and industrialized countries focus their attention more clearly on the problems and possible solutions. There is a worry, however, that the goals were set with arbitrary dates for achievement. The goals may have been set too high for some countries.

In the area of increasing primary school enrollment, for example, some countries may see gains, but if they don't have enough resources, they may not be able to achieve 100 percent enrollment. It has taken some countries decades to get from having 20 or 25 percent enrollment to having 50 percent. If they don't achieve 100 percent enrollment by 2015, their success should not necessarily be deemed a failure.

Eberstadt: Five years is not really enough time to judge the MDG program's effectiveness—in part because the data for so many low-income countries are so poor. We should look at longer-term measurements to get data that could substantiate the gains being achieved.

Let's look at development from a historical perspective. The 20th century, on balance, was a tremendous success for development and a huge jump forward in progress against poverty. During the century, life expectancy more than doubled. Over this same period, there was a tremendous increase in per capita income for the world as a whole.

The two greatest exceptions to this pattern of substantial advance were the detour under Communism—which is now essentially over—that affected much of the world, and the terrible record of developmental problems that emerged in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s and 1970s and still continue: long-term economic stagnation or economic decline, poor export performance, continuing dependence on aid, and, more recently, catastrophic health setbacks in many parts of the sub-Sahara due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Q: Where has the most progress been made, and what are the major impediments to success?

Radelet: Where there has been economic growth, we've seen progress on the goals. Yet there are constraints to progress. Africa has significant geographic constraints. It has endemic diseases—significantly, HIV/AIDS—that will affect the achievement of some of the MDGs.

Botswana, for example, had been on track toward achieving the goals, especially in education and poverty reduction. But because of HIV/AIDS, the country's progress in some areas has reversed. Life expectancy in Botswana increased dramatically, going from 38 years to 61 years between 1975 and 1995. But since the mid-1990s, because of AIDS, life expectancy has fallen to about 43 years.

Another constraint Africa faces is that it has more land-locked, isolated nations than other regions. Being land-locked makes it much more difficult to participate in markets, and makes imports more expensive and exports less competitive.

We can see another geographic restriction in Africa. That is, a huge desert (the Sahel) in the west. The thin dispersion of people in this area makes it difficult to deliver services and track progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

However, while several African countries currently are facing very difficult problems, including Somalia, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, and the Congo, it is not all doom and gloom.

For example, we see a growing number of multiparty democracies. In 1990, there were four multiparty democracies in sub-Saharan Africa. Now there are approximately 20. Such countries as Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, Mozambique, Mali, and Burkina Faso have made significant political and economic progress in recent years. This is an enormous shift that most of the world has not yet grasped. Several of these countries are also achieving greater economic stabilization and stronger economic growth.

Eberstadt: In terms of overall development, progress in reducing poverty in most parts of the world has been encouraging, except in sub-Saharan Africa, which has largely been going in the wrong direction. There has also been a reversal in health care indicators because of the HIV/AIDS catastrophe.

China has experienced the most important progress, and India has made substantial progress as well.

In countries with expanding economies, there has generally been a shift from a reliance on natural resources to a greater reliance on human resources. On the whole, natural resources have become less important to national economic growth.

Q: What role in a country's development can foreign aid play?

Radelet: There are two major areas. The first is the support for education programs and health care services to fight major diseases. Aid inflows have resulted in significant improvements in curtailing diseases such as polio and river blindness and in making available oral rehydration therapy. The second is support for efforts devoted to encouraging economic growth.

In the area of health, there has been tremendous progress since World War II around the world, including in developing countries. But in the last five years, we have clearly begun to see life expectancies being pulled down by HIV/AIDS. This disease is reversing the hard-fought gains in the area of basic health indicators achieved over the previous 20 years.

But there are some places where we've seen improvements in reducing HIV/AIDS. In Uganda, for instance, because of local community education efforts funded with the help of international aid, there has been a 10 percent reduction in the incidence of the disease in recent years. Thailand and Senegal are also cited as AIDS-reduction successes, keeping rates of the disease fairly low. In some parts of Zambia, there have been recent reductions as well.

In terms of economic growth, in some cases aid has clearly failed to help achieve that goal, and there is no question that some aid has been wasted. But in some countries, such as South Korea in the 1950s and 1960s, Indonesia, and, more recently, Uganda, Mozambique, and Tanzania, aid has helped support growth. It's fair to say that aid has worked in some countries but not in others, and there is much we can do to make aid more effective in the future.

Three things in the development world have changed donors' focus on aid in recent years. The first is the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which caused donors to see more clearly the link between poverty and terrorism.

The second is the increasing awareness of the seriousness of HIV/AIDS. Not too long ago, AIDS was viewed mainly as an issue of "personal responsibility." Now it is rightly seen as a pandemic affecting nations in every hemisphere.

The third is the growth of multiparty democracies, mentioned before. Whereas in the 1970s and 1980s much aid was spent on allies in the Cold War, more aid today is aimed at supporting countries that are trying to establish multiparty democracies, and the world is slowly evolving in this direction.

Eberstadt: Forms of aid other than the conventional economic official development assistance (ODA) have often been effective in helping countries to develop. Take military aid, for instance. Taiwan and South Korea are two post-World War II success stories that gained much from U.S. military aid. One consequence of this aid was to permit South Korea to move toward being an export economy. More generally, military aid may help create a security environment in which material progress is more likely.

The international economy, through trade, investment, and knowledge transfers, is also absolutely instrumental in economic growth, productivity improvement, and poverty alleviation.

ODA's role in promoting material advance is much more limited—but it can be positive in the right settings.

Q: In recent weeks, the debate over aid levels and the capacity of countries to absorb aid has been in the news. Is there a law of diminishing returns to certain levels of foreign assistance?

Radelet: There is not so much a strict law as a strong tendency. As with other financial investments, we can see diminishing returns as the amount of investment grows. Research shows that aid directed at economic growth has a smaller and smaller impact as the amount of aid grows, but still tends to remain positive until aid is approximately 18 to 25 percent of a country's gross domestic product.

The issue is where the aid is directed. Aid directed to steady economic growth has had a stronger impact on growth than other forms of aid, such as that directed to humanitarian concerns and for hard-to-measure programs like judicial reform. It takes 10 to 15 years or more before results of judicial reform can really take hold. It is easier to measure results of aid for such things as agricultural development and the building of roads, since the results are easier to quantify and generally take less time to be realized.

One of the challenges going forward is to make aid more effective, both in terms of who it is provided to and how we provide it, to make sure we get the strongest impact possible for our aid dollars.

Eberstadt: Aid effectiveness depends critically on the economic environment in which it is introduced. Where disciplined and productive policies exist, resources are likely to generate higher returns.

The critical question is how extra concessional resources can affect the policy environment. The results of aid depend on a combination of timing, the recipient country's leadership—its mode of government—and its history.

One troubling phenomenon since the mid-1990s has been the increasing reliance of sub-Saharan Africa on official development assistance. In fact, heavy aid dependence in Africa's economies has been apparent—even increasing—since the 1970s. We have to wonder whether a surfeit of aid hasn't been "crowding out" export growth and domestic capital formation in parts of the sub-Sahara over the past generation. This might be part of the explanation for the area's strikingly poor long-term economic performance.

Q: What role do you see such programs as the U.S. Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program* playing in the overall poverty reduction strategy?

Radelet: The $40-billion debt reduction deal announced during the meeting of the Group of 8 (G8) in July 2005 is a historic agreement that could end two decades of debt problems for at least 18 poor countries, and possibly for more. The challenge now is to help recipient countries achieve sustained economic growth and poverty reduction so they don't end up with unpayable debts again.

Unfortunately, the deal leaves out many countries that had not borrowed enough to be considered heavily indebted, such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka. A similar deal should be offered to these countries. Aid should be directed to countries that are the poorest, not the most indebted.

The Millennium Challenge Account is a very important program conceptually. The general idea behind it is to have a more favorable and flexible mechanism for providing aid directed at countries that have shown the strongest commitment to good development policies. Its success in practice remains to be seen.

AGOA has been particularly useful, as it is based on the U.S. opening up its markets to African countries, allowing

them to engage in global markets and produce goods that can help support long-term growth.

Eberstadt: The Millennium Challenge Account is a noble concept, but the program has been hard to operationalize so far. The program is too small to have much of an impact through "non-lending." That is to say, the MCA is not a large enough "player" to have much of an effect on the behavior of aid recipients or on the practices of other donors who account for most development grants and loans.

The MCA is intended to embody the World Bank's experimental concept of "selectivity" in deploying resources where they can have the greatest impact. Yet part of the reason donors have a hard time embracing selectivity is that they just can't say "no aid" for many countries. The donors' political relationships with aid-receiving governments are all too often more important than the actual development results achieved through these transfers. Under such circumstances, selectivity is all but impossible.

Q: How important are transparency and accountability to the effectiveness of aid? What can be done to improve governance?

Radelet: Better policies and public institutions both strongly affect a country's growth. Countries with strong institutions and healthy populations can absorb more aid than countries where there is a lot of corruption and people are less healthy.

There have been instances in the past—mainly during the Cold War—in which donors were too willing to give aid to countries where corruption was known to exist. This colored the public's view about the overall effectiveness of aid.

Eberstadt: One factor in corruption or in the misappropriation of aid funds is the political awareness of donors.

There is a positive relationship between economic development and rule of law. Rule of law is an important objective. Where there is more transparency accompanying rule of law, there is less investment uncertainty and lower transaction costs, and it is easier for economic activity to progress.

In many societies, wealth is distributed unevenly. But if a poor person knows he or she has legal protections, there is an almost revolutionary move toward equality.

Q: If fraud is found, should countries be cut off from development assistance?

Radelet: In many cases, yes, but not always. The fact that institutions in some counties are rife with corruption is at least partially because of poverty itself. It takes both strong local commitment and money to help build strong institutions that can work to prevent corruption in various sectors. It is not just a matter of internal political will.

Donors need to be much more specific about what they expect from aid.

Eberstadt: It depends entirely on what the objectives of the aid are, such as if aid is being allocated for military or political security purposes. When appropriation of funds is being compromised, there is a much stronger argument for ending humanitarian relief programs.

Q: What are the problems with policy conditionality? Some have argued that while fiscal restraint, trade liberalization, deregulation, and privatization are good things, the speed and the depth of such measures are critical to the success of development policy.

Radelet: We have learned that donors cannot just impose reforms from the outside, nor can they "buy" reforms with promises of more aid. Countries must be committed to strong reforms in the first place. Aid can be used to help provide support to good policies, but it can't force the implementation of those policies.

Eberstadt: Conditionality is desirable. But donors have a poor track record on achieving conditionality. Conditionality cannot occur where aid cannot be "cut off"—but how many examples can we find over the past generations wherein recipient governments have suffered aid cut-offs for adverse performance on their development programs?

Q: Any number of schemes have been forwarded to finance development—an International Finance Facility, global tax, SDRs (special drawing rights) for development purposes. In light of the huge demands on countries, what do you think are the best approaches to financing development?

Radelet: It is always good to think of innovative new systems for helping countries develop economically and reduce their debt. But no one system is a "silver bullet."

And none of these new ideas will wholly substitute for traditional aid flows or for private sector flows, which have become particularly important in middle-income countries.

The World Bank and the African Development Bank should provide more money as grants rather than loans, especially to the poorest countries. Countries with average annual per capita incomes below a certain level should get grants because they face the deepest development challenges and are most vulnerable to economic shocks.

But grants should not be just giveaways—they should be performance based. They should be clearly aimed at achieving specific targets, such as building certain roads or establishing certain numbers of health clinics. Donors should reward success in achieving goals with more aid, and penalize countries that do not meet specified goals.

Eberstadt: For highly indebted low-income countries with debt servicing problems, we have to remember that the contracted loans have usually been been highly concessional, but the returns generated on these loans have all too often been abysmally low.

In many low-income highly indebted countries, economic problems will not be solved simply through debt forgiveness. The problem with repaying concessional loans indicates a problem of overall economic performance.

It is more important to investigate first why rates of return are so low, rather than head immediately toward the idea of debt forgiveness. I'm not convinced that debt reduction is such an important tool in development. ■

* The HIPC Initiative is a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment and reform programs.

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Public-private partnerships are proving effective in targeting funds and in providing new technologies, intellectual capital, market presence, and business expertise to address today's development problems around the world.

This article is excerpted from the U.S. Agency for International Development report Global Development Alliance: Expanding the Impact of Foreign Assistance Through Public-Private Alliances.

The Global Development Alliance (GDA) was launched in May 2001 as a new business model for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—one that relies on public-private alliances to multiply the impact of official U.S. development assistance abroad.

Since inception, the GDA has grown from a mere handful to hundreds of partnerships supporting economic growth, health, education, democracy and governance, environment, and conflict resolution. In fiscal years 2002-2004, USAID engaged new partners across nearly 300 alliances. A U.S. government investment of more than $1.1 billion toward these alliances leveraged more than $3.7 billion in resources from partners.

Not all partner resources come in cash. New technologies, intellectual capital, market presence, and business expertise are equally as important in addressing the development problems we face today.

But alliances could not exist without mutual advantage among all participants. A major source of value that partners gain from USAID include access to government stakeholders and a network of local contacts through our global presence of more than 80 country and regional missions. Other comparative advantages include USAID's development expertise, convening and coordinating authority, a ready menu of buy-in options to an existing development portfolio, and additional funding capability.

The following are a small but representative sample demonstrating the actions of committed individuals and organizations across all spheres of action-reducing poverty and encouraging democratization, economic reform, and civil society.

Creating Broader Access to Financial Services

Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans sent more than $16 billion to Mexico in 2004, an amount far greater than total U.S. foreign aid to that country. But high transaction costs hinder the potential to leverage personal remittances for sustainable development as well as household support. Even a 1 percent reduction in transaction costs would leverage hundreds of millions of dollars in additional resources for Mexico. There is also a dearth of financial services for the aspiring poor: An estimated 40 percent of Mexicans lack access to banking services enabling savings, loans, and other wealth management opportunities.

The Remittances for Economic Growth Alliance joins USAID with the World Council of Credit Unions and Mexico's credit union network to lower the costs of personal remittance transfers and create broader access to financial services such as savings, credit, and mortgages. Partners are training local credit union staff in Mexico and providing updated technologies for money transfers. The network includes Mexico's largest credit union, Caja Popular Mexicana.

Reducing Malaria Through Commercial Sector Partnerships

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 2 million people die each year as a result of malaria. Most victims are pregnant women and children under the age of five. Insecticide-treated mosquito nets are one of the most effective methods for preventing malaria. Their use has decreased severe malaria by 45 percent, premature births by 42 percent, and all causes of child mortality by 20 percent.

The NetMark Alliance represents a time-limited investment by USAID to reduce the burden of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa by increasing the commercial supply of and public demand for insecticide-treated nets. The alliance brings together international and African commercial partners, nonprofits, and ministries of health to build local commercial capacity and meet the demand of those willing and able to pay for bednets, thus enabling limited donor resources to provide for those unable to af-

ford lifesaving nets at any price. This is achieved through a coordinated market segmentation strategy, including an extensive discount voucher program in partnership with ExxonMobil. The successes and lessons learned from NetMark's multidimensional effort to achieve equitable and sustainable public health objectives are now assimilated into what is called a Full Market Impact™ model of foreign assistance.

Building Democracy in Southeastern Europe

Transparent, accountable, and effective governance, as well as respect for human rights and broad citizen participation in decision making, are essential foundations for mature democracies. These factors contribute to regional stability and foster integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The Balkan Trust for Democracy is a grant-making initiative designed to support good governance and increase civic participation in Southeast Europe. The Balkan Trust awards more than $2 million annually in grants to civic groups, local nongovernmental organizations, local and regional governments, think tanks, educational institutions, and the media in the Balkans. Investing in local groups and civil society strengthens democratic institutions and political processes and supports the region-wide political and social development required for long-term stability. In addition, the Balkan Trust helps raise the profile of the region and fosters its acceleration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

Restoring Angola's Agriculture and Economy

Angola's 27-year civil war left the country with 2 million displaced persons, an agricultural system in disarray, and a shattered economy. Though a net exporter of food prior to the war, Angola now depends on foreign aid to feed its people. In addition, the ability of lower levels of government to provide public goods and services is weak, while onerous regulations stymie efforts to jumpstart the economy through business creation.

Following the 2002 peace accord, President José Eduardo dos Santos challenged Chevron Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Dave O'Reilly to consider the company's legacy after decades as Angola's largest investor and biggest employer. O'Reilly responded with the Enterprise Development Alliance, through which Chevron and USAID each committed a minimum of $10 million to fund initiatives in agribusiness development; small, medium, and microenterprise development; financial sector capacity building for expanded access to credit services; and financial and technical support services to agribusiness activities such as seed multiplication and crop diversification. Chevron and USAID are exploring opportunities for a second-generation partnership that will continue to invigorate the economy and realize Angola's potential.

Bringing Clean Water to West Africa

Nearly 20 percent of the world's population—1.2 billion people—lack access to clean drinking water, and 2.4 billion lack access to adequate sanitation. In 2000 alone, 1.3 million children under age 5 died from diarrheal diseases caused by unsafe water and sanitation. Throughout the developing world, the poor suffer from preventable water-related diseases, including guinea worm, river blindness, and trachoma—the world's leading cause of preventable blindness. In the poor and vulnerable rural communities of Ghana, Niger, and Mali, health and livelihood issues associated with water resources are critical. Food security and the health of ecosystems—upon which all life depends—require sustainable sources of clean water that so many in developed countries take for granted.

USAID partnered with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, World Vision, and several other international organizations to form the West Africa Water Initiative, a $41-million program to provide water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services in Ghana, Mali, and Niger. Partners are working nationally and locally to increase access to safe water and sanitation through wells, alternative water resources, and latrines. The alliance also builds awareness of waterborne diseases and promotes sustainable water management through community-based outreach.

Guaranteeing Preharvest Trade Credit for Coffee Cooperatives

Many small-scale specialty coffee farmers in Latin America and East Africa struggle to compete in the worldwide coffee market. Because they often cannot get the financing they need from local banks to properly invest throughout the production cycle, local middlemen can purchase coffee at harvest time at prices that do not allow producers to expand their businesses or, in many cases, even provide enough for their families. But with growing global demand for higher-quality, higher-priced natural products such as specialty coffee, farmers have opportuni-

ties to significantly boost their incomes through access to credit, international market linkages, and price premiums for environmentally friendly production.

The Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade partners USAID with alternative lenders such as EcoLogic Finance and other socially responsible importers, roasters, and independent ecolabeling and social auditing organizations. The groups work together to increase timely access to financing for farmer cooperatives whose products are grown, harvested, and processed in ecofriendly ways. Loans are made directly to cooperatives that have signed agreements with buyers. The cooperatives can then secure cash on hand to pay farmers as soon as they deliver their crops. The business model not only finances cooperatives but also links them to final buyers such as Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and Starbucks—companies committed to securing the sustainable supply of a global commodity whose production and trade provides a livelihood for millions in the developing world.

Mentoring Arab Youth

Arab nations have some of the world's youngest populations, but also suffer from the highest youth unemployment rates. Though an estimated 100 million jobs must be created over the next 20 years, national education systems are not adequately preparing graduates for the needs of today's workplace. The problem is particularly acute in oil-producing states that fail to adequately diversify their economic base.

INJAZ-Arabia is a private sector-led initiative to mentor and cultivate the next generation of business leaders. Leading corporations, USAID, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and ministries of education have joined forces to send senior-level corporate volunteers to share their professional experience, know-how, and success stories with Arab youth. Students learn how the banking sector supports business and industry, how to manage their own budgets and follow stocks, and even how to set up a model enterprise with a business plan from company startup to final liquidation. Both in-country and multinational businesses have shown increasing interest in participating in INJAZ as an exercise in good corporate citizenship.

Lighting Up Muslim Mindanao

The southern portion of the Philippines archipelago has experienced civil unrest and violence for three decades. Economic neglect and exploitation fueled a guerrilla movement in this predominantly Muslim area. In 1996, a peace agreement between the national government and the insurgents created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, promising to bring social and economic development to the region. For such development to occur, however, electric lighting needs to be cheaper and more widely available. The islands of the southern Philippines are a great distance from the national energy grid, which handicaps income-generating activities and causes the local population to rely on carbon dioxide-emitting kerosene lamps.

The USAID Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy (AMORE) provides solar-powered compact fluorescent lights and street lamps in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Community development groups maintain these renewable energy systems. AMORE's efforts are helping to increase outdoor safety and significantly increase business and educational productivity by allowing work and study to extend into evening hours. The energy systems also enable aspiring entrepreneurs to pursue new small business projects such as mat-making and other local crafts.

Building Community

Unsustainable human activity—such as slash-and-burn farming and firewood collection—has depleted millions of hectares of forest cover in Africa. Removing trees exposes the ground to drying winds and rainfall until the topsoil is eroded. Farmers then move to other land, clear trees, and repeat the destructive cycle until local ecosystems fail. This yields drought, famine, increased incidence of disease—including HIV/AIDS—and eventual collapse of once sustainable communities. Few alternatives exist for those trapped in these devastated landscapes.

USAID's International Small Group and Tree Planting Program (TIST) responds to problems initially expressed in 1999 by Tanzanian subsistence farmers participating in small group sessions facilitated by faith-based community development outreach. TIST offers participative encouragement, training, organization, technology, and accountability that centers on tree planting to restore healthy ecosystems and sustainable rural communities. By building on local successes, TIST empowers rural village groups to improve their lives and the environments in which they live. TIST participants measure and record their progress with battery-powered global positioning systems and personal digital assistance technologies. ■

FIGHTING POVERTY WITH PROFITS

Zenia Tata

International Development Enterprises (IDE) has been providing affordable agricultural technologies and access to markets for 25 years. It says that limited access to water and the control of water are the main obstacles faced by impoverished farmers throughout the world.

Zenia Tata is the executive director and director of development for IDE-USA. She is originally from Bombay, India, and has 15 years of experience working with nonprofits in India and the United States.

More than 900 million people on our planet barely survive through subsistence farming. These farmers are dependent on erratic and seasonal rainfall, and they usually are not able to grow enough food for their families over the year.

During the past 25 years, International Development Enterprises (IDE), a worldwide nonprofit organization, has been alleviating poverty among subsistence farmers by providing them with affordable technologies and connections to markets. These two dimensions of IDE's work allow the farmers to grow enough food to feed their families and generate income from the sale of their surplus.

Since 1981, IDE has brought more than 2 million families permanently out of rural poverty. IDE's mission over the next 15 years is to enable 20 million additional rural families to escape the confines of poverty. By annually doubling, and even tripling, income, farmers can provide their families with nutritious meals, lifesaving medicines, education for the children, and all the other benefits that come with improved economic conditions.

The Business of Poverty Alleviation

IDE treats poverty alleviation as a business, using as its guiding principle the belief that people, when given the opportunity, will invest in their own lives in order to permanently escape the ravages of poverty. IDE envisions all farmers as participants in the global marketplace and conscientiously implements a strategic plan that allows them to achieve this.

The lack of available water resources throughout the year is the main obstacle faced by impoverished farmers. Simple, low-cost pumps and low-cost drip irrigation technologies are integral to improving the agricultural production of these farmers. IDE develops low-cost versions of known technologies so that poor, rural farmers can afford these life-changing technologies: A $50 treadle pump is re-engineered to cost $7; water storage systems that enable farmers to irrigate plants during the dry season are re-engineered to cost $10.

IDE also enhances supply chains to deliver these technologies to the poor and facilitates the creation of markets in which farmers can sell their bounty, thus creating a sustainable market system that benefits the rural farmer.

This approach of giving farmers a hand up rather than a handout has significantly impacted the lives of more than 12.5 million individuals. In Nepal, with an initial investment of $50 each, vegetable farmers were able to recoup that amount and earn an additional $300 within one year. In Zambia, by investing only $120 in an irrigation pump, even farmers who had lost all their cattle to disease were able to dramatically increase their incomes, thus enabling them to feed their families and educate their children. (In Africa, the $120 cost of the treadle pump includes the cost of drilling a tube well.)

IDE's approach is strongly supported by funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which to date has invested more than $4 million in projects in Nepal and Zambia.

Creating Opportunities for Nepali Farmers

Nepal's agricultural performance lags far behind that of its neighboring countries. The Smallholder Irrigation Market Initiative (SIMI) project is a USAID-funded partnership between IDE and the nongovernmental organization Winrock International in nine underdeveloped districts in Nepal's midwest and western regions. The goal of this project, which began in 2003, is to enable 27,000 impoverished farm families (135,000 people) to increase their incomes by 50 percent over three years through the sale of profitable crops such as cauliflower, cabbage, and peppers. USAID's contribution of $3 million for this project has been matched by $1 million from Winrock International and IDE.

Courtesy of Winrock International

A woman operates a bamboo treadle pump in Nepal.

The Nepal SIMI project promotes micro-irrigation to help subsistence farmers escape poverty. This program helps develop supply chains to build the capacity of equipment manufacturers, dealers, and installers, as well as seed and fertilizer suppliers. Through local social mobilization programs, SIMI is increasing farmers' awareness of new opportunities and enabling them to increase their links to appropriate markets.

While income generation is central to the Nepal SIMI project, hygiene has been integrated into the program as well. Training has been provided to consumers regarding such personal hygiene practices as washing hands and the hygienic use of latrines.

Water sources are employed for multiple uses, not just for irrigating crops but also for drinking and household use. Additionally, SIMI has a gender and disadvantaged group training program focusing on literacy and on facilitating farmers' access to low-interest loans. In its first year, this program directly impacted 15,700 households—more than 100,000 individuals—some 47 percent of which were represented by women. Within one year, the average income of each household increased by more than 50 percent.

Despite the worsening Maoist insurgency, this project has been able to increase overall economic wealth. In all, farmers invested $207,000 of their own money in equipment, and realized sales of $2 million. And this is just the beginning of their journey out of poverty and into profit.

Creating Markets in Zambia

In 2003, with help from USAID and other partners, IDE initiated a two-year effort in Zambia called the Smallholder Market Creation (SMC) project. This project was initiated by IDE and implemented with the help of Winrock. The objective of this venture is to integrate 2,000 farm families into agricultural markets where they will have access to appropriate micro-irrigation technologies and high-quality seeds and fertilizers. This will enable the farmers to produce and sell profit-making crops and earn an extra net income of $300 per year.

The project is envisioned as the first phase of a comprehensive six-year program that will reach more than 10,000 households, or 50,000 individuals. After six years, it is expected that each household will be earning an additional annual income of $500 per year, which represents an enormous increase above subsistence living.

The project in Zambia began by targeting markets located in densely populated areas with a demand for high-value crops such as paprika and cotton. A strategy for accessing water and marketing micro-irrigation technologies was implemented. Over the project's first six months, 1,070 farmers were recruited to grow rain-fed paprika crops to be sold in both the rainy and dry seasons. The farmers accomplished this by purchasing 390 treadle pumps to irrigate their fields during the dry season. This facilitated the production of two high-value paprika harvests instead of one, thereby doubling the farmers' annual incomes.

The SMC project has conducted capacity-building training sessions and provided market links to 1,143 farmers, 27 percent of whom are women. With an initial investment of $120, farmers were able to realize enough profits to earn their way toward economic self-sufficiency.

IDE's focus is to create sustainable market support for subsistence farmers as they embark on the journey toward self-sufficiency. The farmers participate, as equal partners, in a viable marketplace. By tapping into the entrepreneurial energy of these farmers, IDE is revolutionizing poverty reduction by empowering the rural poor to increase their food supply, create new jobs, and generate enough income to earn their way out of poverty forever. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

EXPANDING ETHIOPIA'S AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

Kristina Stefanova, U.S. Agency for International Development

Women and children pick green beans at the Dodicha Vegetable Cooperative. The beans will be sold to a local exporter, who will sell them to supermarkets in Europe.

In Ziway, Ethiopia a few dozen women and children pick fresh green beans in mid-afternoon, occasionally munching on them. They fill their baskets, weigh them, and pour the contents into plastic crates that are hauled away by tractor to a nearby farm.

There the beans are graded, packed, and shipped to the airport in Ethiopia's capital city of Addis Ababa. In a few days, a shopper in a European grocery store will be able to purchase fresh Ethiopian green beans.

Until recently, farmers in Ziway worked independently on small plots, selling their produce locally for about 12 cents per kilo. Meanwhile, an exporter, Ethioflora Horticulture Farm, was losing potential sales because it could not produce all the beans demanded for export.

That changed when a $1.1-million project of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) began helping farmers organize into cooperatives, improve irrigation, and produce high-quality beans to sell to Ethioflora at four times local market prices.

Now that the program is increasing production on small farms, Ethioflora has expanded sales in Europe and successfully lobbied the Ethiopian government to allow more cargo flights into Addis Ababa.

"We had a lot of problems before these linkages were made," says Ethioflora manager Mulugeta Abebe. "The farmers were not coordinating ... they needed to learn how to cultivate and use irrigation. All of these things were not possible to do before, but have been done now through ACDI/VOCA." [ACDI/VOCA is a nonprofit group that promotes agricultural economic growth in developing countries. It was formed in 1997 through the merger of Agricultural Cooperatative Development International (ACDI), which was founded in 1963, and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA), founded in 1970.]

Often when small-scale producers link to an international buyer, they are unable to meet production demands because of outdated technology, lack of skilled labor, or a shortage of transportation. ACDI/VOCA helps them overcome these obstacles.

Ayu Deme's life has changed since she joined the Dodicha Vegetable Cooperative four years ago. She is one of 155 members who together cultivate 68.5 hectares.

In 2004, the cooperative began supplying green beans to Ethioflora, earning a significant profit. Deme, 35, says she is now able to send her older children to school, buy clothes for the family, and purchase oxen.

Helping improve livelihoods for rural producers is a major aim of the agricultural cooperatives program and the horticulture market linkages program, both of which emphasize linking farmers to markets. Through the agricultural cooperatives effort that began in 1999, ACDI/VOCA has helped some 650 cooperatives with more than 673,000 members. Cooperatives receive technical assistance to help understand and meet quality export standards, operate on sound business principles, and learn to be market driven. In five years, the value of food grains, coffee, and sugarcane sold through cooperatives has gone from $1 million to more than $20 million.

One component of the program involves working with coffee growers. The cooperatives operate as private associations, providing services to their members. One coffee cooperative, for instance, helps its members access de-pulping and other specialized machines that help create a better quality coffee bean. The cooperatives also help farmers realize better market prices for their products.

Ethiopia produces some 270,000 tons of coffee per year, nearly half of which is consumed locally. ACDI/VOCA is helping cooperatives tap into international markets, where coffee fetches a higher price. From an export base of just under a few hundred tons in late 2000, Ethiopian coffee cooperatives in 2004 sold almost 7,500 tons of high-quality coffee to specialty markets around the world. In the last four years, some $2.3 million in dividend payments has gone back to Ethiopian coffee farmers.

For Bekele Mantala, a member of the Wottona Bultuma Cooperative in Yirgalem, the additional income has brought several changes. Bekele, the father of two young children, now leases additional land on which he grows coffee and maize. He bought land recently and built a new house, leaving the old one to his three younger brothers. And in July 2004, he opened a small shop where he sells coffee and maize.

Bekele is paying for his brothers' education and has big plans for the future. "I need to improve the shop and add products like grains and barley," he says. "And I can lease more land." ■

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, prepared by Kristina Stefanova, deputy managing editor of the USAID publication *Frontlines.*

THE AFRICA EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Laura Lartigue

Millions of children in sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of them girls, do not have access to primary school. And those children who are able to attend school often receive such poor quality instruction that they fail to acquire even the most basic skills of reading and writing. In response to this situation, President George W. Bush in 2002 announced the Africa Education Initiative, a multiyear, multimillion-dollar program designed to provide training and materials for teachers and students throughout Africa. Guinea is among the many countries already benefiting from the initiative: Teacher training is ongoing, textbooks are being developed and distributed to elementary school students, and young girls are continuing their educations thanks to a component of the initiative known as the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program.

Laura Lartigue is with the USAID mission in Guinea.

Africa's progress also depends on the education of Africa's children. ... If Africa is to meet its full potential, these children must have the chance to study and learn.
— George W. Bush, President of the United States

In June of 2002, President George W. Bush announced that the United States would commit $200 million over the period 2002-2006 to the Africa Education Initiative (AEI). The program, which is being implemented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is intended to provide training and materials for teachers and students throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

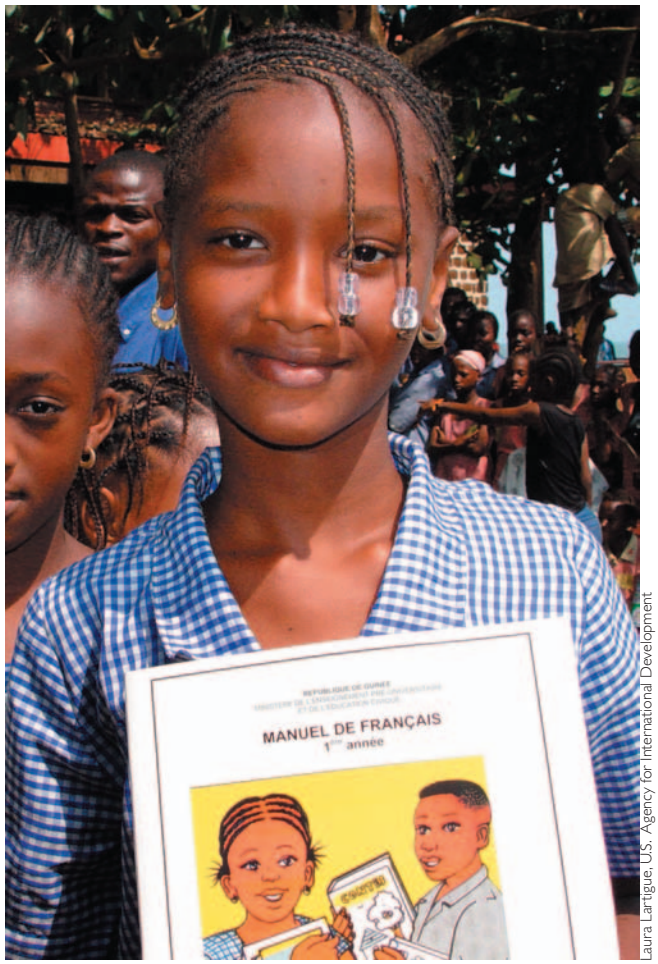
The three primary goals of the Africa Education Initiative are:

• train more than 160,000 new teachers and provide in-service training for more than 260,000 existing teachers;

• partner with historically black colleges and universities in the United States to provide 4.5 million textbooks and other learning tools in their local languages for schoolchildren in Africa;

• provide 250,000 scholarships to enable young African girls to continue their educations.

Additionally, the AEI aims to increase the role of African parents in their children's education by working to make school systems more transparent and open to reforms from parents, and to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on schooling and the education system.



Laura Lartigue, U.S. Agency for International Development

A Guinean schoolgirl with a brand new textbook produced as part of the Africa Education Initiative.

At the time of the president's announcement, schoolchildren in Guinea had no idea that cities in their country would be selected to inaugurate two of these goals. Guinea's capital city of Conakry was the site for launching the textbook component of the initiative in May 2004. And in February 2005, in the village of Tanéné, 12 girls received the first funds and materials distributed in Guinea through the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP).

Textbooks for Guinean Schoolchildren

Singing, dancing, and smiling schoolchildren from all over the downtown districts of Conakry, Guinea, animated a ceremony held at the Frederico Mayor Primary School in May 2004. During the ceremony, USAID handed over 500,000 textbooks destined to be used by students in grades one and two throughout Guinea.

Guinea was the first of six African countries to benefit from the textbook component of the Africa Education Initiative. Textbooks and other learning materials have since been developed for and distributed to children in Benin, Ethiopia, Namibia, Senegal, and South Africa.

The textbooks for Guinea were designed and produced through close professional collaboration between Guinea's Ministry of Pre-University and Civic Education and two historically black colleges in the United States, Hampton University in the state of Virginia and Dillard University in Louisiana. Both schools are continuing the AEI partnership, developing textbooks for additional grades.

Says Kadiatou Bah, one of the Guinean authors of the textbooks: "It was indeed the collaboration that made for a good product in the end. We were able to formulate subject matter and illustrations for the textbooks that are relevant to Guinean children's lives, and the American universities helped us with the printing, which gave us this nice product."

In a country where the adult literacy rate is only about 40 percent and where rural children and girls in particular face daunting barriers to obtaining a basic education, strengthening Guinea's educational system by ensuring the quality of instruction is essential to the country's development.

Galema Guilavogui, who is Guinea's minister of pre-university and civic education, said in his public speech: "Our American partners understand that the success of our educational program in Guinea is a measure of the harmonious development of our country. ... Providing quality textbooks in sufficient quantity helps us fulfill an essential part of our program—improving educational quality—and will help our children succeed in school. We are extremely grateful."

Scholarships for Young Guinean Girls

Dawda Compo, a small farmer from Tanéné, a village outside of Boké in western Guinea, looked proudly at his daughter Fatou, a 12-year-old schoolgirl who had been chosen to receive a scholarship through the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program sponsored by USAID. Said Compo, "I think the scholarship will help motivate her. It also helps take the burden off of us. I am a poor farmer, and I never got to go to school. If my daughter doesn't study, life will be hard for her. If she studies, who knows? She may even become president!"

Like many other community members in Tanéné, Compo has encouraged his young daughter to go to school. Because of the enthusiasm and the commitment of the community to promoting girls' education, Tanéné was chosen as the site for a ceremony to celebrate the nationwide distribution of scholarships to 6,000 girls in grades five and six throughout Guinea.

Twelve young girls in Tanéné, including Compo's daughter Fatou, were given a scholarship package during a February 2005 ceremony in which U.S. Ambassador to Guinea Jackson McDonald symbolically handed out the first of the packages to the girls at Hamdallaye Primary School. Also in attendance were Galema Guilavogui, the governor of the Boké region, American and Guinean education specialists, and representatives from the local parent-teacher association and the Local Alliance for Girls' Education—two groups that provide strong support to encourage young girls in the area to attend school.

Meeting Practical Needs

The scholarships handed out during the ceremony, estimated at $100 each, included money for schoolbooks, notebooks, a dictionary, pens, pencils, fabric to make a middle school uniform, and a small amount of cash to cover school enrollment and health insurance fees—all practical items designed to ease the burden of sending young girls to school and encourage exceptional students to excel.

Through President Bush's Africa Education Initiative, the U.S. Embassy in Guinea and USAID have put AGSP into place. The goals of the program are to promote girls' educational opportunities and to raise awareness of the importance of keeping girls in school until the end of the primary cycle. AGSP will also include a girls' mentoring program, innovative projects focused on girls' education, and celebrations of National Girls' Education Day.

Young girls in Guinea face numerous obstacles to going to school. The inability to pay basic school costs, excessive chores around the house and in the field, the responsibility of caring for younger siblings, and lack of access to a primary or secondary school close to home are just some of the barriers parents mention. Primary school enrollment for young girls in Guinea was 67 percent nationally but only 58 percent in rural areas when the AGSP was inau-

gurated. Unfortunately, the dropout rates for young girls from primary school are quite high.

Selecting Recipients

With this in mind, the selection criteria for the scholarships address the problems faced by young girls from poor families, orphans or young girls who live far from their families, girls who are disabled, victims of early pregnancies, and girls who are infected with or severely affected by HIV/AIDS. AGSP also rewards young girls who are excelling in school, encouraging them to continue their studies and to act as role models for other young Guinean schoolgirls. The overall school and girl selection criteria, from which communities could choose, were developed by a national steering committee presided over by Guilavogui and comprising major organizations promoting girls' education in Guinea.

Says Hawa Sané, president of the Local Alliance for Girls' Education, "The scholarships ease the burden for parents in this community, who are very poor. We think they will also motivate young girls and, hopefully, will encourage other girls to do well at school."

In addition to the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program, a complementary program is being carried out in Guinea by a USAID partner, the Educational Development Center (EDC). By offering more than 2,600 additional scholarships to girls in grades five and six in Guinea's capital city of Conakry, as well as in rural areas of the country, EDC has helped USAID ensure national coverage of scholarships to young girls in every corner of Guinea.

The Overall Impact

Guinea has benefited from the Africa Education Initiative in meeting all three of the initiative's primary objectives. Beyond the textbook and scholarship components of the program, teacher training sponsored by USAID is an ongoing activity designed to improve the quality of primary education in Guinea. To ensure the sustainability and long-range impact of the three initiatives, USAID is working closely with the government of Guinea and is currently the largest bilateral contributor to Guinea's Education for All (EFA) program.

Although Guinea remains plagued by a shortage of teachers and classroom materials, there are signs for optimism. According to the education ministry, during the 2003-2004 school year, the percentage of school-aged children attending primary school grew from 74 percent

Laura Lartigue, U.S. Agency for International Development

Guinean children participate in a lesson.

to 77 percent, and for girls from 67 percent to 70 percent. Increased access was particularly pronounced in grade one admission rates, which jumped from 61 percent to 65 percent.

The government of Guinea's firm commitment to and continued success in improving education sector management are reflected in the inclusion of Guinea in 2003 as one of the seven countries nominated for the Group of Eight's (G8) Fast Track Initiative, which aims to ensure universal primary education in Guinea by 2015.

A Look at the Future

Although the first phase of the Africa Education Initiative is still ongoing, the program is already destined to continue for an additional four years. On June 30, 2005, President Bush announced $400 million for continuation of the AEI over the 2006-2010 period to improve the quality and accessibility of basic education for millions of children in sub-Saharan Africa.

The goals of AEI will be:

• train 500,000 teachers and administrators;

• provide 300,000 scholarships under the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program;

• develop and distribute 10 million textbooks and related teaching and learning materials;

• improve access for marginalized students and teachers to learning, educational materials, and training;

• improve access to education and training for out-of-school youth, orphans, and other vulnerable children;

• improve access to productivity-increasing job-skills training and development. ■

TEACHING A CHILD TO DREAM

Who says you can't teach a child to dream? In rural Senegal, a village is doing just that.

In 2002, teacher Ahmet Fall asked students in the village of Pété Ouarack in northwestern Senegal what they hoped to do when they grew up. "Most girls," he says, "wanted to be maids, and most boys wanted to be vendors in the capital, Dakar." The schools in Pété Ouarack do not go beyond the elementary level, and five of the seven schools are temporary shelters built with wood and millet stalks. Four children squeeze onto benches made for two. Only one school has potable water and latrines. According to village elders, no one in Pété Ouarack has ever earned a high school diploma. Without local role models, students could not imagine anything beyond low-skilled jobs requiring minimal education.

When the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Decentralization and Local Governance Program, initiated a partnership with Pété Ouarack in 2002, representatives of the local council and community leaders quickly confirmed that their top priority was to improve the quality of educational services. At the request of Pété Ouarack's newly elected council president, Mor Samb, USAID organized a training session in Pété Ouarack to clarify the council's responsibilities and possibilities for action with regard to education under Senegal's 1996 decentralization law.

Through contact with school administrators and teachers, parents, women's associations, and local organizations, Samb learned that the entire community was eager to participate in improving education, and its members offered innovative ideas to achieve that goal. School staff, parents, and community leaders formed an education corps committed to identifying, planning, and implementing a school charter. Some of its main goals are to build new schools with facilities such as toilets and washrooms, raise funds to buy textbooks and school supplies, and promote adult literacy.

The education corps includes a vibrant teachers association and a parent-teacher association (PTA) that provide important opportunities for dialogue and sharing of skills and ideas. The corps developed an education action plan that outlines practical actions to improve schools and educational quality, such as parent involvement and public education campaigns. With this comprehensive plan in hand, the rural council has also found it easier to approach government and donor partners for assistance.

Richard Nyberg, U.S. Agency for International Development

Young Senegalese students.

The education improvement project has changed the attitudes of Pété Ouarack's residents, who now clearly understand that education holds the key to their community's future. Through the revived PTA, parents and teachers easily discuss children's progress—previously an intimidating process for parents.

Community organizations are donating funds to cover such projects as fees for students entering junior high school, and the rural council's office now helps students obtain necessary identity papers that allow them to take exams to further their education. In July 2004, the community celebrated the academic achievements of its students, giving certificates to outstanding students.

Students and parents recognize the value of school achievement, and they have begun to dream of previously unimaginable careers. Bator Diaw, a 10-year-old girl, wants to be a minister of the state, and Balle Dieng hopes her four-month-old daughter "will one day be president." These are laudable dreams that dynamic local government and civic leaders in Pété Ouarack are helping realize.

Says Djibril Seck, the deputy inspector of primary schools in the Louga region of Senegal: "We see a high level of enthusiasm of students and parents. There has been a change in [the] mentality of the population." ■

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, prepared by Richard Nyberg, USAID/Senegal.

EDUCATING GIRLS IN KENYA
New Horizons

Making the most of economic opportunities will require broader and better education, especially among women who have faced the greatest disadvantages.
— President George W. Bush, May 9, 2003

Three Kenyan girls of the Maasai tribe realized their goal of completing secondary school and now have expanded their horizons even further. After surmounting cultural barriers to female education at home, the three girls were recognized for academic excellence and awarded full undergraduate scholarships to Chicago State University (CSU) in Illinois. They all hope to become doctors someday and to return to Kenya to serve the Maasai people.

In the semiarid grasslands of Kenya, the Maasai live a pastoral, semi-nomadic existence, grazing cattle as their ancestors have for generations. Education is not always accessible. Girls, in particular, often are not educated, but rather are kept in the homestead to care for younger children and assist older women with domestic duties. They are also often betrothed at very young ages and sometimes married as early as 9 or 10 years old. But through the work of one U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) partner—a Kenyan organization called Maasai Education Discovery (MED)—hundreds of Maasai families are beginning to realize the value of educating their daughters.

The "Big Three"

In December 2004, three of these families, with tremendous community support, spent much of their time preparing their daughters for a journey from their Maasai homesteads to Chicago to begin college more than 12,800 kilometers and a world of difference away.

All three girls have benefited from U.S. assistance for their secondary school education under the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP). AGSP, which is part of President George W. Bush's Africa Education Initiative (AEI), is a five-year, $200-million effort to increase girls' enrollment in school, train teachers, and provide textbooks and other learning materials. AEI also integrates HIV/AIDS awareness and mitigation, as well as community and parent involvement in education, as cross-cutting themes. The program is implemented through USAID in partnership with U.S. nongovernmental organizations and local organizations in Africa. Through AEI, 250,000 scholarships will be provided over the five year-period to enable girls at risk to continue their educations and receive support from community mentors.

Eunice Sitatian Kaelo, age 18, from a polygamous family with two wives and 16 children, is the only one of her mother's children to receive an education. Despite academic excellence, she was faced with early marriage while still in primary school until a teacher intervened and Kaelo was allowed to stay at school. Evelyn Nashipae Nkadori, age 19, comes from a polygamous family of 15 children and is the only girl in her village to ever attain a secondary school education. Nkadori was a leader in school, a chair of the student math club, a peer counselor, a dormitory captain, and a Sunday school teacher. Agnes Kainet Kisai, age 18, is probably one of the brightest of the Maasai's young women. Though her parents are not educated, they have been supportive of her education, even though their financial straits made paying school fees very difficult and, at one point, almost forced them to give her away in an early marriage. While in secondary school, Kisai excelled in sciences, participating in national-level science competitions.

Before embarking upon their journey to the United States, the three girls were honored by their communities and relatives with a blessing ceremony, during which elders come together for the cultural rites of their young people. Normally, girls are prepared for traditional circumcision and marriage. Instead, Kaelo, Nkadori, and Kisai were blessed, presented for schooling, and given land, a rarity in Maasai culture as land inheritances are traditionally reserved for men.

Said one mother during the blessing ceremony, "Traditionally, Maasai warriors are given spears to go and bring us cows and make us proud. Because today you are the man—the first born—God has helped us, and through MED we are giving you a pen so that you can go and make us proud and bring us more cows like the warriors did. Remember that this opportunity we could never have given to you. It is God's work, and we hope you go and remember where you come from." The expectation, as echoed by their respective communities, is that the "big three," as they are referred to, will go and come back armed with knowledge that will help their communities to

"walk with one foot in the Maasai culture and the other outside." They are the first in their communities to receive their parents' support to bypass centuries of tradition and instead go to college.

The Role of MED

Maasai Education Discovery (MED), a nonprofit organization based both in Boston and Kenya, is the brainchild of Ledama Olekina, a Maasai tribesman who received his college education in the United States. In response to the many challenges facing his community, Olekina initiated a series of fund-raising walks across America in 1999 and 2000. He traveled more than 3,220 kilometers on foot and gave lectures to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education and to secure funds to support the development of a university in his home community of Narok, Kenya. Realizing that so few Maasai girls go to secondary school and thus would not be in a position to attend the university, MED began by working with schools and families to recruit about 60 girls and utilize a scholarship program to help them remain in school.

Thanks to the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program, MED has now expanded to include 527 girls. In addition to its scholarship program, MED has been able to build and maintain a multifaceted Community Resource Center that offers distance education college courses to 100 girls, some of whom board at the facility; training at a certified Cisco Networking Academy; continuing education courses for community members; and access to a library collection of more than 12,000 books, audiotapes, and videocassettes.

MED relies on a creative and diverse funding strategy to support these activities, including such income-generating activities as a jewelry store stocked with items hand made by the girls and their mothers and an Internet cafe, as well as private donor and community support and sponsorships by such companies as Coca Cola, Eroquad (Belgium), and Diverse Productions (United Kingdom). Hoping to bring the full benefits of globalization to its community, MED is currently exploring an outsourcing subcontract that it hopes will create 200 new jobs.

At Chicago State University

Sensitive to the "brain drain" that contributes to the shortage of trained and skilled professionals in Africa, Chicago State University President Elnora Daniel shares the communities' expectations that Kaelo, Nkadori, and Kisai will receive a first-rate education in the United States and return home to use their knowledge, skills, and networks to contribute to their communities' development. Daniel, who recognizes the plight of African girls and is committed to promoting more international exchanges, sees the CSU scholarships as a "win-win situation" and as part of CSU's overall commitment to developing a community of global citizens.

According to Adama Conteh, executive director of CSU's International Program, for the past five years the university has been helping girls from underprivileged backgrounds and disadvantaged institutions in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa to attend CSU. In 2005, CSU will graduate five girls from South Africa—three in nursing and two in business. As important as the financial investment of nearly $67,500 for each girl's three years of study, the university provides academic and social support by assigning tutors and faculty mentors who often open their homes to offer a nurturing family environment.

Since their arrival in December 2004 in Washington, D.C., and then in Chicago, Kaelo, Nkadori, and Kisai have received an outpouring of American hospitality. Their new community presented them with welcome packages consisting of coats and warm clothing, linens, toiletries, and computers donated by USAID's Leland Initiative. After less than one month in the United States, they had begun to adjust to their new lives. They marveled at the snow and the overwhelming abundance of consumer goods at Wal-Mart.

As the girls ushered in 2005, they shared with their American friends their dreams for the future. In summarizing their feelings, Nkadori said, "I am the new face of the Maasai girl, and I will do all I can to help educate my community and my people positively and to ensure that I am a person who will be regarded as a source of hope in my community."

The three then offered thanks in their native language, Maa, and acknowledged that this journey would not have been possible without the support of many known and unknown faces on both sides of the Atlantic. ■

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, prepared by Aleta Williams and Sharon Mangin Nwankwo, Office of Sustainable Development, USAID.

TREATING CHILD MALARIA IN RWANDAN COMMUNITIES

Julia Ross

Courtesy of The CORE Group

Mothers and children being trained through the antimalarial program in Rwanda.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are playing a critical role in helping countries move toward those development goals that seek significant reductions in child and maternal mortality and progress in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases. In Rwanda, three NGOs have teamed with the national government to introduce effective community-based care for malaria.

Julia Ross is communications manager for the CORE Group, a Washington, D.C.-based coalition of NGOs working in child health and development.

Malaria continues to take a huge toll on global health. More than one million lives are lost to the mosquito-borne illness each year, with the vast majority of deaths occurring in Africa among children under age five.

In the central African country of Rwanda, malaria is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality, accounting for 43 percent of all deaths and 40 percent of health center visits. But the use of health facilities in Rwanda is low, and many children with malaria end up dying at home, without proper treatment. In the Rwinkwavu district, for example, community health workers reported 588 deaths of children under age 5 in 2002, almost three-quarters of which were attributed to malarial fever. Only 42 of these deaths occurred in health facilities.

In a survey conducted in two health districts by Rwanda's National Malaria Control Program, children less than 5 years of age were found to get appropriate treatment for malaria an average of three days after the onset of fever, much later than the World Health Organization-recommended treatment window of 24 hours after onset.

The reasons for this delay include distance from a local health center and the cost of treatment. Many Rwandan parents or caregivers prefer to purchase treatment from local pharmacists and pill sellers who are close by and charge less than health centers for medication, but who often do not provide high-quality medication or proper advice regarding dosing and duration of treatment. These factors account for Rwanda's low use of government-sanctioned health facilities: less than 0.24 visits per person per year.

Additional surveys conducted in 2004 by three NGOs working in Rwanda—Concern Worldwide, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and World Relief—showed that few young children with fever receive antimalarial treatment as recommended by Rwanda's Ministry of Health. Only 16 percent of children included in the study

in the Kibilizi district, 9 percent in the Kirehe district, and 20 percent in the Kibogora district received timely and appropriate treatment. About one-third of children received no treatment.

Five-District Pilot Program

In response to these surveys and the evident gap in delivering treatment to young children with malarial fever, Rwanda's National Malaria Control Program in 2004 teamed with the three NGOs to launch a pilot program for community-based distribution of antimalarial medication in five districts.

The initiative—funded by the CORE Group; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM)—aims to educate parents to identify danger signs associated with malarial fever and treat the illness with help from a nearby community drug distributor within hours of onset, when the chances of saving a child's life are at their highest. For more complicated cases, parents are advised to seek help at a health center.

With support from the government of Belgium, Rwanda's National Malaria Control Program last fall purchased about 450,000 blister packs of malaria drugs to treat children under age five. Local distribution began in November 2004, with the packs offered at very low cost (10 cents) or on credit. While the Rwandan government provides program oversight, the NGOs and their local partners implement and monitor the drug distribution efforts. Community health workers, chosen by communities and trained by health districts and their NGO partners, are responsible for distributing the drugs.

Promising Results

As of April 2005, program results were promising. In the initiative's first five months, more than 85 percent of children in the five districts were treated within 24 hours of the onset of fever. World Relief trained 329 local drug distributors and reported no deaths among children receiving treatment through these distributors. From November 2004 to February 2005 in the Kibilizi district, Concern Worldwide reported that cases of children successfully treated for fever in the community rose from zero to 795.

The International Rescue Committee reported that, as of May 2005, 280 community distributors in the Kirehe district were treating more than 3,000 cases of childhood fever per month. Dr. Emmanuel d'Harcourt, the IRC's senior technical adviser for child survival, says Kirehe's program has been embraced equally by parents, drug distributors, and health facility staff. According to d'Harcourt, "Health center staff say they have been pleasantly surprised at the care that distributors have put into their work. They say they have full confidence in the distributors and can concentrate on sicker children now that simple malaria is being treated in the community."

"Community-based distribution of antimalarial drugs is a key way to reach the Abuja target of treating 60 percent of kids under 5 within 24 hours," says Dr. Jules Mihigo, former maternal and child health specialist with USAID in Rwanda.

The Abuja targets for malaria reduction were set as part of the African Summit on Roll Back Malaria held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2000.

Rwanda has received funding from GFATM to scale up the five-district pilot program nationwide, beginning with five additional districts in September 2005. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

The CORE Group, a membership association of international nongovernmental organizations based in Washington, D.C., promotes and improves the health and well-being of children and women in developing countries through collaborative action and learning. Collectively, the CORE Group's 38 member organizations work in more than 140 countries.

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE IN RURAL ETHIOPIA

Masame Makebo of Hossana, Ethiopia teaches other mothers in villages about two kilometers away from this southern city how to keep their children healthy.

Makebo is one of 4,200 community health promoters trained through Essential Services for Health in Ethiopia (ESHE), an $18-million, five-year project operating in three regions. The health promoters are community-selected volunteers who work with health professionals to encourage basic health care and immunization. By the end of 2005, ESHE will have trained another 15,000 health promoters.

Ethiopia is one of six nations that together account for 50 percent of the deaths of children under age five. Every year, more than 450,000 children in Ethiopia die from preventable diseases. So Makebo's simple advice on immunizations, breastfeeding, and nutrition can be lifesaving. Anyone who comes to see her also learns about the importance of washing hands before touching food and about using latrines.

ESHE, which began in November 2003, works simultaneously at the local and national levels, with a focus on strengthening routine health services—an effort that is part of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) famine prevention strategy in Ethiopia.

Results in the southern region of Ethiopia are already visible. The level of child immunizations increased from 54 percent in 2003 to 74 percent in 2004. Pit latrine coverage has increased, as has the use of contraception.

Laura Lartigue, U.S. Agency for International Development

Women feeding children.

ESHE developed training modules for its health promoters based on findings from a household survey conducted in 2003-2004. Now, health promoters such as Makebo are at the frontlines of health care, speaking at community health festivals and workshops.

Health promotion through ESHE is also being done over the radio. A four-day workshop with radio stations, local nongovernmental organizations, and government officials in 2004 developed radio spots on children's immunizations. Six spots have aired since, and more are being produced. ■

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, prepared by Kristina Stefanova, deputy managing editor of the USAID publication *Frontlines.*

IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH

Donna Vivio and Barbara Kinzie

Each day, some 14,000 women and girls—99 percent of them in developing countries—lose their lives to complications from pregnancy and childbirth. An organization known as JHPIEGO has contributed to maternal and newborn health and survival in numerous countries, notably through the development of the skilled attendant—an accredited health professional such as a midwife, physician, or nurse who is educated and trained to manage normal pregnancies and childbirth. Drawing on examples of JHPIEGO's work in Afghanistan, Nepal, Indonesia, and Burkina Faso, the authors describe the role of skilled attendants in caring for women, even in the most remote and medically underserved areas.

Donna Vivio is the director of the JHPIEGO Maternal and Child Health Center (MCH), an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University. Barbara Kinzie is MCH senior adviser. JHPIEGO was founded 33 years ago as the Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics. As its mission has changed over the years to include far more than gynecology and obstetrics, it is now known worldwide simply by the acronym JHPIEGO (Ja-Pie-Go).

Each year more than 500,000 women and girls—14,000 each day—lose their lives to complications from pregnancy and childbirth. Ninety-nine percent of these deaths occur in the developing world.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to improving the health and survival of women and children throughout the world through its investment in maternal and newborn health programs. Much of its work to ensure that women have access to the care they need during pregnancy and childbirth is implemented via nongovernmental organizations. JHPIEGO is an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, and one of USAID's implementing partners in the effort to reduce maternal and newborn death and disability.

Since 1998, JHPIEGO has contributed to maternal and newborn health and survival in numerous countries through such USAID-funded global programs as the Access to Clinical and Community Maternal, Neonatal, and Women's Health Services (ACCESS) program and its predecessor, the Maternal and Neonatal Health (MNH) program, as well as through bilateral programs in Afghanistan, Zambia, Haiti, and elsewhere.

Some of JHPIEGO's key contributions to improving maternal health have been through programs and projects that support the development of the skilled attendant—an accredited health professional, such as a midwife, physician, or nurse, who has been educated and trained to proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth, and the immediate postpartum period, and in the identification, management, and referral of complications in women and newborns.

The Creation of the Skilled Attendant

High-quality education and training of skilled attendants fosters practical lifesaving knowledge and skills involving problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making, rather than simply the recall of facts. It also emphasizes the importance of respecting and responding to the needs of women and their families.

The basic components of a program that promotes such knowledge, skills, and attitudes include appropriate pre-service and in-service training curricula and systems that use a competency-based approach; learning materials that are comprehensive, evidence-based, and relevant to local settings; and skilled teachers and trainers who can guide students' learning experiences in the classroom, the health care facility, and the community.

Over the years, JHPIEGO has worked in more than 25 countries to strengthen and develop pre-service education programs for nurses, midwives, and doctors, thus equipping them to save women's lives. An example of one such program can be found in Afghanistan, where JHPIEGO has developed a cadre of midwives.

In great part due to the lack of access to skilled providers, birth complications claim the life of an Afghan woman every 30 minutes—more frequently than malnutrition and war. JHPIEGO, working through USAID's Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-Based Health Care (REACH) program and its lead partners,

Melissa May, Courtesy of Photoshare

A mother and her infant visit a health nurse in West Africa.

Management Sciences for Health and Save the Children, has supported Afghanistan's Ministry of Health in developing a two-year midwifery curriculum and program that includes classroom studies and clinical work at area hospitals. To date, midwifery schools have been established in Herat, Mazar As-Shariif, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kabul, Badakshan, Bamiyan, Jawzjan, Khost, and Takhar, and two classes have already graduated. This program will produce 299 new midwives in 2005, a 64 percent increase over the number of trained midwives in Afghanistan when the Taliban fell.

While some of these midwifery schools are academic schools connected to urban hospitals, five of them are community midwifery programs established so that even women in remote areas will have access to skilled care. By the conclusion of the REACH program in May 2006, 830 new midwives will have been trained. But this is only the beginning. Afghanistan will eventually need more than 5,000 midwives to meet the basic need for a skilled attendant at every birth.

The JHPIEGO program does not just aim to educate a few hundred midwives but is fostering a fundamental shift in the way midwives are selected, educated, deployed, and supported as key players in maternal mortality reduction. The midwives who have already graduated have demonstrated tremendous motivation and commitment to the profession of midwifery and to the many women in Afghanistan who need their help. In fact, in May 2005, the newly formed Afghan Midwives Association held its first meeting, adopting a constitution and electing officers, and receiving recognition from the International Confederation of Midwives.

Bringing the Skilled Attendant to Women

Increasing the proportion of births that take place with a skilled attendant is an internationally agreed goal. Yet lack of access to skilled care keeps coverage by skilled attendants low in many countries.

Nepal is a rugged land of difficult terrain and high maternal mortality (539 deaths per 100,000 births). In 2001, only 13 percent of Nepali women had a skilled attendant present during the delivery of a child. If women in rural areas, where most of Nepal's population lives, are to have the services of a skilled attendant, safe birthing services must be made available in these areas.

JHPIEGO, working as a partner in the USAID-funded Nepal Family Health Program (NFHP), is helping to develop the knowledge and skills of existing auxilliary nurse midwives so that they can provide lifesaving care to pregnant women and family planning services to all women. JHPIEGO is also working to develop the pre-service capacity of schools to produce more skilled attendants who can reach yet more women. The work of NFHP also extends to community health workers and female health workers to create a linkage between the community and the health care workers in "peripheral facilities," which may be district hospitals, health centers, health posts, or sub-health posts, thus making services more accessible to rural women.

Supporting Skilled Attendants

The production and competence of skilled birth attendants does not necessarily mean that they will be able to function effectively to save the lives of women. For skilled attendants to be able to reduce the incidence of maternal deaths, they need an environment that facilitates and supports their work. Critical factors in such an environment are supportive policies, laws, and regulations; effective health system infrastructure; professional associations; and quality education and supportive supervision systems. JHPIEGO has worked with partners around the globe to help create the environment needed by skilled providers.

Clinical guidelines for the management of complications in pregnancy and childbirth are prerequisite to the development of policy that helps create an enabling environment, as well as for the development of clinical protocols and job aids that equip the providers for their

Laura Lartigue, U.S. Agency for International Development

A Guinean mother and child.

jobs. Working with various organizations, donors, and technical bodies, JHPIEGO, through the Maternal and Neonatal Health program, was a key contributor in the development of the World Health Organization manual *Managing Complications in Pregnancy and Childbirth*. This document has been translated into 16 languages—including Spanish, French, Laotian, Bahasa, and Mandarin—and is now standard text in 40 medical schools. It has been used to inform policy dialogue and contribute to the development of national standards across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Thus, governments around the world have a guide to evidence-based lifesaving practices, and health care providers have a manual that tells them how to manage the complications that arise in pregnancy and childbirth.

Professional associations provide support to skilled attendants to maintain the high standards of their profession. In Indonesia, for example, in addition to the MNH program's support of the Indonesian Midwives Association through professional and training activities, the program recently mobilized midwives to respond to the needs of women in Aceh following the tsunami in late 2004. Even with their own families washed away or killed, midwives in Aceh responded to the needs of women giving birth. They used shelters, closets, or any remaining structures to deliver babies and provide lifesaving care to women in need.

Many of Aceh's midwives themselves were killed in the tsunami, and many others were left without the basic equipment, supplies, and facilities needed to provide safe care. JHPIEGO, with funding from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and other sources, is supporting the Indonesian Midwives Association in mobilizing midwives from other areas in Indonesia to train new midwives in Aceh in lifesaving delivery skills. Already, almost 100 midwives have gone to Aceh, and many more have been equipped with the skills necessary to function as skilled attendants.

Linking Skilled Attendants and Communities

One example of a program that effected change in bringing women in contact with skilled attendants is that of the Maternal and Neonatal Health program in Koupela District, Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, as reported by United Nations agencies, 498 women die for every 100,000 babies born, primarily from hemorrhage and infection. The MNH program worked with a variety of partners, including the United Nations Children's Fund, Plan Burkina, Family Care International, the United Nations Population Fund, and the U.S. nonprofit Mwangaza, to strengthen the health care delivery system while empowering communities to demand and utilize services that save women's lives.

The MNH program worked with the Division of Family and Reproductive Health in Burkina Faso to implement a safe motherhood policy that serves as a foundation for all other program activities. Job aids were created for service providers using evidence-based policies, norms, and protocols for safe motherhood. The program incorporated aspects of clinical care and community participation by working with district Ministry of Health committees, health care providers, and the community to establish health care standards and to improve services and performance to achieve these standards. Traditional birth attendants were also brought into the process to ensure that services were culturally appropriate and acceptable to women and families. By 2004, the fifth year of the project, the percentage of women with at least four prenatal care visits had increased from 21 percent to 44 percent, and the rate of births assisted by a skilled attendant had increased from 39 percent to 58 percent.

The Ultimate Goal

Around the year 1870, more than 600 women died for every 100,000 births in industrialized countries. By 1900, the maternal mortality ratio had dropped by half in Sweden and by almost 25 percent in England, Wales, and other parts of the Western world. This was before the advent of modern obstetrics—that is, before the development of antibiotics, blood transfusions, and Caesarean deliveries. Factors crucial to these reductions in maternal deaths were an increased awareness of the problem, adoption of legislation promoting skilled care at childbirth, national programs that trained and deployed adequate numbers of skilled attendants, and the development and enforcement of standards for care by skilled attendants.

U.S. government agencies such as USAID partner with nongovernmental organizations and other groups to build upon the programs and progress made in the past and being made in the present. In the future, thanks to the efforts of these organizations, more women will survive childbirth and have the opportunity to mother the children of the world. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

BATTLING THE AIDS PANDEMIC

Matthew Hanley

Of the more than 40 million people living with HIV and AIDS, nearly three-quarters are in Africa. Clinics and hospitals to treat these HIV/AIDS victims often are located far from rural villages, making them inaccessible for the patients. The cost of treatment for a disease such as AIDS often drains a patient's financial resources. And the scope of the AIDS pandemic has strained the resources of existing clinics and health care services. In response, Catholic Relief Services has initiated programs that enable families and communities to care for those afflicted with HIV/AIDS in their own homes.

Matthew Hanley is HIV/AIDS technical adviser with Catholic Relief Services, the international relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic community.

Neal Deles, Courtesy of Catholic Relief Services

Elinat Masoankhumbria, Moses Chembe, and Manuel Jairos, home-based care volunteers for the Roman Catholic diocese of Dedza, a partner of Catholic Relief Services, visit with Linson Gipton, who suffers from AIDS. They are in the unfinished mud brick house that the volunteers built for Gipton.

Weakened by the effects of tuberculosis and AIDS, Linson Gipton lies on a reed mat, propped up by his elbows. He is surrounded by four walls of mud brick that will soon be a house in the town of Sandu in the southern African country of Malawi. Above him is a latticework of bamboo sticks that will be filled out with reeds to complete the roof.

With Gipton are two men and a woman proudly wearing colorful patterned clothing that identify them as volunteers for the home-based care project of the Roman Catholic diocese of Dedza in Malawi, a partner of Catholic Relief Services (CRS). They care for Gipton, who is their 29-year-old neighbor, bringing health care and support to him so he will not have to travel to a distant clinic.

But these volunteers are taking their service to exceptional lengths: They are building Gipton a home where he will live with his wife and three children.

When asked how these volunteers have helped him, the frail Gipton becomes animated. A big grin spreads across his face. "They are building my family this home," he says. "If I get well, I would like to join the volunteers, to give my time and help other people."

CRS Initiatives and Services

Today, more than 40 million people are living with HIV and AIDS, and nearly three-quarters of them are in Africa. Catholic Relief Services started its first HIV/AIDS programs in 1989 in Masaka, Uganda. Now, CRS has HIV/AIDS programs in nearly 50 countries across sub-Saharan Africa and in the hardest hit areas of Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

Catholic Relief Services promotes community-based programs that respond to the immediate needs of those infected, address the underlying causes of AIDS, and reduce the spread of HIV. CRS engages with its extensive network of Catholic dioceses, health care institutions, and other faith-based organizations to provide a range of services in which care and prevention go hand in hand. Those services include education, initial testing, home-based and palliative care, nutritional support, and aid for orphans and vulnerable children.

An additional ray of hope in fighting this pandemic is the use of antiretroviral drugs, a combination of medicines that help reverse the progression of HIV in the body. In 2004, as the result of a grant by the U.S. government's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), CRS became the lead agency in a five-organization consortium to expand the delivery of antiretroviral treatment to people infected with HIV in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The other members of the consortium are the University of Maryland Institute of Human Virology, the Catholic Medical Mission Board, Interchurch

Chris Thomas, U.S. Agency for International Development

A young Ethiopian girl orphaned by HIV/AIDS is being cared for at a community center.

Medical Assistance, and the Futures Group. The consortium, called AIDSRelief, currently provides antiretroviral therapy to more than 15,000 people in nine countries in Africa and Latin America. The grant to AIDSRelief is expected to total $335 million over five years.

Through PEPFAR funding, CRS is managing other multiyear, multimillion-dollar grants designed to prevent AIDS transmission and to support orphans and vulnerable children. CRS's five-year Avoiding Risk, Affirming Life AIDS prevention program will reach more than 1.35 million beneficiaries (youth, parents, and clergy) with interactive messages on sexual abstinence and mutual fidelity in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda. A separate five-year grant is providing valuable support, mostly in the form of education, food, and psychosocial assistance, to more than 56,000 orphans and vulnerable children in Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Rwanda, and Haiti.

CRS, thanks to funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, also distributes food rations to families affected by HIV and AIDS. Because people with HIV and AIDS have increased nutritional needs, improving their nutrition improves their quality of life and length of life—particularly when combined with antiretroviral therapy.

Many other CRS initiatives are privately funded, such as home-based and community-based care programs. In Malawi, where 16 percent of adults are HIV positive and more than one-third of all Malawian children under the age of 15 have lost at least one parent to the disease, CRS supports home-based care programs in three Catholic dioceses: Dedza, Mzuzu, and Zomba.

Sharing the Hope of Living

The philosophy behind community-based care is rooted in a simple reality of the developing world: Clinics and hospitals are often located many kilometers from rural villages, making them inaccessible for the patients, who usually have no transportation other than their own two feet. In addition, the cost of treatment for a chronic disease like AIDS quickly drains a patient's financial resources. And the scope of the AIDS pandemic has strained the resources of existing clinics and health care services.

So Catholic Relief Services and its partners fill a critical gap in the care of people with HIV/AIDS by enabling families and communities to care for the sick in their own homes. The CRS programs provide counseling, health care training, and supplies such as food, clothing, blankets, and medicines—and the occasional house. By supporting community volunteers in this way, CRS not only helps to reduce the stigma of the disease but also keeps families together and enhances the capacity of community members to care for each other.

Home-based care volunteers may form close bonds with their patients, providing the companionship and compassion that are often the first casualties of the disease. Tiwonge James, age 20, saw her mother and father die three years ago from AIDS. Now she is HIV positive. She struggles to carry on, caring for her three younger siblings—two sisters ages nine and eleven and a brother who is three. Before she became ill, James had a doughnut-making business, but she is too ill now to work and relies on her husband for money. Although she lives with her husband, James has all the responsibility for caring for her siblings.

Once a week, Mercy Kamtambe, a senior volunteer with CRS's Dedza diocese program, visits James, bringing food and nutritional guidance and providing care, support, and help with the three children. "Mercy helps me care for my brothers and sisters, because I am the only

one," James says. "Sometimes I feel lonely. Mercy is my good friend."

Kamtambe says that she tries to lift her patients' spirits and to teach them how to care for themselves and their families. "I am teaching Tiwonge how to cook so she can begin to eat well," she says. "Having HIV/AIDS is not the end of life. People with HIV/AIDS should have the hope of living."

All of these activities are part of the comprehensive approach that Catholic Relief Services is taking toward addressing the AIDS pandemic. The CRS mission statement and guiding principles underscore the agency's commitment to the alleviation of human suffering, the development of people, and the fostering of charity and justice in the world. It is our mandate to provide care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, to prevent additional transmission of HIV, and to mitigate the impact of the epidemic on children, families, and communities. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

EMPOWERING WOMEN
A Wise Investment

Emily Sollie

For many women around the world, and especially those in rural areas, "an all-too-common cycle" of poverty, illiteracy, and oppressive cultural norms and traditions makes it difficult for them "to fully participate and thrive in society," says the author. At one time, this was the case for women in Burkina Faso's rural Boulgou region. But with new technologies and practical business advice from Lutheran World Relief and its local partner organization DAKUPA, the women of Boulgou are tapping into the global market for karité butter. Today, they are enjoying steady incomes and new-found confidence in their ability to successfully manage a community project.

Emily Sollie is manager of media relations and editorial services for Lutheran World Relief, a nongovernmental organization based in Baltimore, Maryland, that was founded in 1945 to respond to the needs of communities devastated by World War II. Since then, it has evolved from a relief agency shipping material resources to war-torn Europe into an agency that works with partners in 50 countries to help people grow food, improve health, strengthen communities, end conflict, build livelihoods, and recover from disasters.

Seventy percent of the world's poor are women and children. This sad fact means that women suffer disproportionately in conflicts. It means that they commonly lack access to education, credit, land ownership, and participation in family and community decision making. And it suggests that transforming the lives of women may be a key to eradicating poverty and building a more just and peaceful world.

In their roles as caregivers, breadwinners, and community members, women are critical to the social and economic development of their families, their societies, and their nations. But women around the world, particularly those in rural areas, face a chronic struggle against discrimination. An all-too-common cycle of poverty, illiteracy, oppressive cultural norms and traditions, and a lack of knowledge about basic human rights makes it difficult for women to fully participate and thrive in society.

Opening Up Opportunities

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and other non-governmental organizations help build connections and respectful relationships with people who suffer from oppression and poverty. By focusing much of our energies on women, we have seen time and again, in every area where we work, newly empowered women become catalysts for change within their families and their communities. Through women, LWR has found ways to change oppressive traditions and cultural norms that deprive people of their dignity.

Even before the United Nations identified women's empowerment as one of the Millennium Development Goals, LWR recognized the powerful impact that women can have on their communities when given the right opportunities, and we at LWR have adopted gender equity as a cross-cutting theme through all of our work, encouraging the active participation of both men and women in all aspects of decision-making processes.

In Africa, LWR and its partner development groups enable women to increase their incomes by teaching them marketable skills and providing loans and training to start small businesses. In Asia, we work to educate women, particularly those from marginalized communities, about their legal rights and how to advocate for their rights at the local and national levels. In Latin America, we respond to the widening gap between rich and poor by helping families increase their incomes through more productive and sustainable farming methods, ensuring that both men and women benefit from our projects. In the United States, we advocate for greater sensitivity to gender equity in the policies of our own government, the policies of multilateral institutions, the business community, and civil society.

Our work with women is easily illustrated by the stories of the projects we undertake with local partners in the communities where we work. These are stories of amazing, resilient women and the benefits that they realize when they are given a chance to lift themselves out of long-term poverty. One such story takes place in Burkina Faso, one of the world's poorest nations.

S. Colvey, IRDC/CRDI

Women in Boulgou process and sell karité (shea) butter as part of a Lutheran World Relief project. Their small business gives them a way to support their families and participate in their communities.

Challenges and Struggles

Women in the rural Boulgou region of Burkina Faso wake up each morning to warm weather and a beautiful landscape of brown grasses and scattered green trees. They also wake up to a host of challenges: rampant illiteracy, food insecurity, little money to buy clothes or medicine, poor access to potable water, and often very limited health care.

Both poverty and local tradition prevent most women from attending school and gaining skills they could use to earn an income. They struggle to participate in household and community decision making. They seldom learn techniques that can prevent common diseases like diarrhea and cholera. Most families in Boulgou rely on agriculture for food and livelihoods, using out-of-date techniques that leach nutrients from the soil and produce fewer and fewer crops each year.

The compound effect of these issues is a daily struggle for women—a struggle to feed their families, to stay healthy, to participate in decisions that affect their lives, and to earn enough money to purchase basic necessities. But there is hope for these women—hope in their hearts and in the green trees that dot the landscape.

Those trees—karité trees—represent a valuable natural resource. They produce fruit whose nuts can be processed into a variety of products, including karité butter (shea butter), a common ingredient in cosmetic products such as body lotion and sunscreen. Women in Boulgou already processed the nuts by hand, using them to make cooking oil, body cream, and soap for household use. They also used the nutshells as fuel for fires, which creates a natural mosquito repellent—a lifesaving side effect in a region where malaria kills thousands of people a year.

Marketing and Mechanization

But to capitalize on the global market for karité butter and earn a steady income, the women needed to process very large quantities of nuts. They needed motorized presses to process higher volumes of nuts more quickly and produce more butter to sell to companies for a bigger profit. Lutheran World Relief and its local partner organization, DAKUPA, bought motorized presses for two women's groups in the region. DAKUPA trained the women in the operation and maintenance of the presses and in making production schedules, managing finances, and keeping good records of expenses and profits. After the training, the women received small loans to buy large quantities of nuts from other women who specialize in picking the fruit from the trees.

Before, the women would grind the nuts by hand, walk several miles to another village to press them, then walk back home to boil and filter the oil. Because this was such hard work and reaped little profit, many women simply sold the nuts whole for a very low price. But now, selling the oil and butter, they can command four times the price they used to get for whole nuts. In addition, they can rent the pressing machines to people from other villages when they aren't using them, which gives them another source of income.

Now that the women are successfully processing the karité butter, LWR and DAKUPA are helping them to market their product. The women have a contract with a cosmetics company in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital city, and plan to diversify their market outlets to take advantage of the international market for karité butter.

This project has helped women in Boulgou take control of their lives. Now they earn enough money to

buy clothes and medicine, and they have an enterprise that is entirely their own. The men in their villages are taking them more seriously and starting to include them in community decision making. And now that they aren't grinding the nuts by hand or walking long distances to sell them, they have more time for other activities like small trade, making thread for sewing, and preparing the land for planting crops. Their karité business has given them confidence and camaraderie, and they have learned how to successfully manage a community project.

This is just one example of what women can do when they have opportunities. One of the greatest legacies Lutheran World Relief can leave with communities is empowered women—and men engaged in ways that enable them to understand this as a positive change. This can lead to people taking on new roles, allowing both men and women to better fulfill their potential. LWR considers its work with women to be a moral imperative. It also happens to be a very wise investment in reducing poverty and building healthy families and communities. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS IN BENIN

Alima, a schoolgirl from a Peulh family of northern Benin, was betrothed immediately after her birth, according to tradition, to her mother's cousin. Enrolled in school by her parents, she finished primary school when she was 13 years old and was planning to start secondary school. Unfortunately, in the meantime, Alima's parents had received a dowry and other presents from her "fiancé."

When school re-opened in October 2004 after the summer break, Alima was planning to resume classes at a local secondary school. However, her fiancé chose at that moment to claim his bride. Even though Alima wanted to continue her studies, her fiancé did not want to hear about it. The case was referred to the Association of Pupils' Mothers (AME) of the area, and they convinced Alima's parents to let her continue studying at least up to the eighth grade.

Subsequently, Alima was enrolled in a high school for girls in Parakou. She stayed with a host family during Christmas vacation to prevent a possible kidnapping by her fiancé. But three days after school reopened after the holiday, the headmistress of the school reported that Alima had disappeared. Her parents were told she had left for an unknown destination allegedly because she thought her return to the girls' residence could result in her death. However, her father is convinced that she had been bewitched. This is just a typical example of how a young girl's future can be thwarted by retrograde traditions.

Absence of Women's Rights

The greatest barriers to the empowerment of women in Benin are customary law and traditional practices that deny women and girls the most basic of human rights. In these traditional societies, women are defined by their relationships to men, and there is strong resistance to the idea of women's equality with men. Customary practices such as forced or early marriages, child exchange, levirate marriages (in which a widow is forced to marry her dead husband's brother or son), polygamy, widowhood ceremonies (in which widows are obliged to cease their activities for months), barriers to women's inheritance of property and land, domestic violence, and female genital mutilation condone violence against women and increase their poverty. These practices thwart democracy and slow Benin's economic and political development because they ensure that most women in Benin are illiterate, are financially dependent on their husbands, and are not encouraged to participate in political decision making.

To correct this situation, some women decided to get together to strategize about how to improve their living and working conditions. The Association of Women Lawyers of Benin (AFJB), a nonprofit organization, was born in January 1990 for the promotion of human rights, especially women's rights. The AFJB, in collaboration with Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF-Benin) and other organizations, worked hard for the initiation and development of new legislation. The government of Benin advanced in 1990 a draft Personal and Family Code of Law. After it was made compliant with Benin's constitution, it was voted on June 14, 2004, and signed by the president of the republic on August 24, 2004.

This new law marks a watershed in the history of Benin's legal environment. Whereas old laws were hostile to the recognition and protection of women's rights and interests, men and women now jointly share responsibility for bringing up their children. Polygamy, levirate marriage, and forced marriage are now prohibited. A dowry is now only symbolic and cannot be claimed in case of divorce. Children born outside of wedlock have the same rights as legitimate children, while women now have the same rights to inheritance as men.

The Struggle for Enforcement

Unfortunately, Benin's Personal and Family Code is still largely unknown by much of the public and is not fully enforced. Through ignorance or defiance,

magistrates and judges continue to apply customary law—even though new laws have been passed. There is widespread lack of knowledge about and resistance to applying principles that uphold women's rights. The government has not even established decrees to ensure that the law is enforced and that legal duality has come to an end.

AFJB's founder and former president, Judge Clotilde Médégan-Nougbodé, now chairs Benin's High Court of Justice and is a member of the Constitutional Court. During a presentation on the new code as part of an International Women's Day celebration, Médégan-Nougbodé stated that the Personal and Family Code is a tool for the development and promotion of family that concerns the human person, both man and woman, throughout life from the moment of birth. She cited the need to raise the awareness of all citizens on the new code.

Women's Legal Rights Initiative

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of Women in Development, since 2002 has worked with Chemonics, a nongovernmental organization (NGO), to advance the legal, civil, property, and human rights of women through USAID's Women's Legal Rights Initiative (WLR). Benin is one of the focus countries. WLR-Benin is working closely with the USAID mission in Benin and the gender subcommittee to integrate women's legal rights program activities into the mission's portfolio of activities.

To identify obstacles to the full guarantee and enjoyment of women's legal rights in Benin and determine what should be done about them, the WLR-Benin team met and talked extensively with internal USAID/Benin teams, with ministries, with NGOs, and with judges, lawyers, and international donors. WLR's activities to overcome the resistance of customary law focus on education and training about women's legal rights. They include public awareness campaigns, paralegal training, developing manuals and brochures for legal professionals on the new Personal and Family Code, adult education centers, social promotion centers, workshops for community leaders, and continuing education for judges and intermediate-level actors in the judicial system.

WLR-Benin officially launched the training and awareness-raising tools in March 2005, at a ceremony attended by representatives of the government of Benin and of various institutions and NGOs, each of whom received sets of manuals and brochures. The package of materials comprise training manuals and illustrated awareness-raising brochures edited in French and in four local languages—Fon, Adja, Batonou, and Dendi.

WLR-Benin also organized reading sessions in several regions of the country when the code was presented to the populations in their native language. According to the participants, these sessions have been very useful in raising the awareness on the new law throughout the populace. ■

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, prepared by Sandrine Dossou-Yovo, USAID/Benin.

CAMBODIAN WOMEN RUNNING FOR PEACE

Ung Vathana, a former vegetable grower and seller, is now chief of her province in Kompong Cham, Cambodia. One of more than 12,000 women who placed their names on the ballot in Cambodia's 2002 communal elections, Vathana and others like her set the stage for the 2003 National Assembly elections in which more than 900 women representatives were elected—an increase of 8,900 percent over the 10 women who had served on the assembly in previous years. Two-thirds of the women elected had participated in training sessions offered by Women for Prosperity, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and based in Phnom Penh.

USAID has supported Women for Prosperity's decade-long effort to promote voter education and the participation of women in government. Working with politicians, voters, and the media to advocate for the greater inclusion of women at all levels of government, Women for Prosperity publishes a magazine encouraging women's leadership, democratic reforms, and nonviolence. The organization also has trained more than 5,500 women to run for and hold political office.

Three decades of violence had prevented strong democratic institutions from taking root in Cambodia. Political factions had created a climate of unrest and instability that excluded large portions of the population from decision making, thereby limiting the government's ability to address their needs. Under the Khmer Rouge—the Communist Party of Cambodia—so many men were killed that 28 percent of Cambodia's women are now widows and 56 percent of the population is female. Consequently, women have been forced to assume new roles in business and in the family. Some have even had to take on more than one job in order to support their families.

However, before the most recent elections, women were excluded from participating in Cambodia's governing process. As a result, women were not visible in the halls of government, and issues of concern to women did not figure prominently in local and national elections.

Women for Prosperity is working toward correcting this inequity, as well as promoting awareness about the importance of gender in the country's development. As the organization prepares qualified women to step into politics, it also works toward developing a politically savvy female voter base that can be mobilized into action.

Women for Prosperity conducts training for future leaders, encouraging men to participate along with women. Women for Prosperity trains men and women together so that men become aware of gender concerns and recognize that women must be involved in the country's decision making and development. The organization hopes this sense of cooperation will carry over into the men's work on the governing councils.

From an initial group of 80 women and men trainees from Cambodia's three major political parties, 59 were chosen to become "graduate trainers." The graduate trainers returned to their respective provinces to stage additional workshops. Of the more than 5,500 women who were trained through this process, 60 percent registered as candidates in the 2002 elections. The women came from 24 provinces and 208 districts; more than 60 percent had only a primary-level education, and they represented a wide range of ages, from 25 to 62 years.

Workshop sessions concentrate on eight lessons: women and politics, gender, leadership, management and preparation, standing for election, decentralization, election law, and the role of commune councils. Often, both men and women candidates have little knowledge of decentralization going into the training, and the sessions prepare them for the ways in which power over commune affairs is being shifted away from the national government and instead being put in the hands of the commune councils.

To ensure that the trainings sessions are practical, accessible to people with varied levels of education, and address critical issues in the country, the group often uses role playing. In a workshop on leadership styles, for example, some trainees assume roles as democratic leaders, while others pose as authoritarian figures in order to present the audiences with more realistic

NDI/Cambodia

Cambodian women participate in a training of trainers for women activists in Kampot in July 2004. The participants attended a three-day course on recruiting new members and then, on the fourth day, organized their own outreach event.

scenarios. These future policy makers quickly see that decisions and policies made with citizen involvement are more sound and sustainable than those arrived at without democratic participation.

With the support of USAID, Women for Prosperity now focuses on women formerly associated with the Khmer Rouge, integrating their concerns into local civil society initiatives. For example, the organization has successfully lobbied the government to ensure that political party lists for the National Assembly include more women. Moreover, through the organization's successful legislative initiatives, a new law mandating the creation of women's and children's committees in local governing councils is changing the way these councils work and is influencing the issues, priorities, and agendas they address.

As Women for Prosperity gains more experience, it is taking its message around the countryside. Since televisions and tape recorders can be found in even the poorest and most remote villages, the organization produces video and cassette tapes on voter education, covering topics from "What is an election?" to "Why should women be elected?" It distributes videos and cassettes to temples, an important focus of community life in most rural areas. In addition, women and NGO activists have spent many hours pedaling their bicycles around rural communities and townships with battery-operated cassette players and public address systems, broadcasting the cassette messages to all those within earshot.

This massive effort has paid off, and female commune representatives are now finding their voices and speaking out strongly on such issues as women's health needs and development of the canals that are so vital for trade and transportation in Cambodia. The women want to participate in their local governments because they believe that it is women themselves who are best able to understand the problems of other women. As Keang Siphan, the deputy chief of the Sambourmeas commune says, "I decided to stand for election because I want to help women in my villages, especially widows. Thirty percent of our people are widows. If I'm elected, I will help them to help themselves without depending on men."

A neighbor of Keang Siphan agrees. "We want more Khmer women to be candidates because women don't solve problems by force and gunpoint. Women are the world's mothers." ■

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, prepared by the Bureau for Asia and the Near East.

PROTECTING NAMIBIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Kristina Stefanova

Since 1992, the U.S. Agency for International Development has supported the development of community structures to conserve and profit from Namibia's biologically rich environment. These conservancies, which are home to almost 100,000 Namibians, are empowered to manage wildlife and other natural resources to generate income and employment for rural communities. They have their own constitutions, policies and procedures, and management plans. And as this article describes, many of them are on the way to profitability and self-sufficiency—or are already there.

Kristina Stefanova is deputy managing editor of the USAID publication Frontlines.

Namibia, a large, arid country in southwestern Africa, has a democratic government, relatively good infrastructure, and abundant natural resources. While mining, fishing, and tourism fuel the economy, most people eke out a living from subsistence agriculture and what amounts to the exploitation of natural resources. Interestingly, tourism accounts for about 10 percent of Namibia's gross domestic product and is a significant contributor to rural employment and income.

Namibia is the world's first country to incorporate environmental protection into its constitution. Article 95 provides that "The State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting, *inter alia,* policies aimed at the following: maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity of Namibia, and utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future." Further, Article 91 states that an ombudsman will be responsible for investigating complaints "concerning the overutilization of living natural resources, the irrational exploitation of nonrenewable resources, the degradation and destruction of ecosystems, and failure to protect the beauty and character of Namibia." Today, some 14 percent of the country is covered by protected areas. As more land is protected, it becomes increasingly important to help rural communities living either within or near the conservation areas to profit from protecting the land and its resources.

Benefits From Conservancies

Since 1992, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through its mission in Namibia, has supported the development of community structures to conserve and profit from the biologically rich environment. To date, USAID has invested almost $40.3 million in this program—which was matched by an even larger sum from private investors and other donors through 2004.

In 2005, USAID funded the third phase (2005-2010) of the Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) program, which is being implemented by a consortium led by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in partnership with the Namibian government and a network of local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The CBNRM program helps the formation and development of communal conservancies that are empowered to manage wildlife and other natural resources to generate income and employment for rural communities. It also promotes the integrated management of all communally owned resources in the conservancies. These resources are managed through different pieces of legislation that ensure compatibility. For example, land legislation ensures that conservancy management plans are not contravened during the processes of land allocation and administration.

Members from each conservancy elect a committee to oversee the development and management of communal resources. The committee includes both men and women from the communities, thus giving them a voice on local governance decisions. The community representatives who serve on the committees report back to their communities at various meetings and often invite local government representatives to share information. Only those communities that receive wildlife quotas report to the national government on the utilization of the quotas.

"Given their structural organization, conservancies are great avenues through which we can get out the word on HIV/AIDS and civic education in rural areas," says Tina Dooley-Jones, USAID's director of technical programs in Namibia.

Lori Waselchuk, Associated Press

A cheetah rests in the shade in southern Africa.

Conservancies earn significant income by entering into joint ventures with private investors to establish safari lodges or by negotiating trophy-hunting concession agreements. Individual members also earn money from making and selling arts and crafts. Except for such personal income, the earnings of the conservancies are pooled. A portion of the conservancy income goes toward community projects such as schools, clinics, and roads. For example, in 2003, Torra Conservancy contributed more than $2,000 toward the renovation of their local school and bought a photocopier for the school. It also contributed about $1,000 to their local crèche—a day nursery. In 2003, Khoadi Hoas Conservancy contributed more than $3,000 to their two local schools and provided diesel fuel to farmers to pump water for their own livestock and for elephants. In 2004, Nyae Nyae Conservancy provided funds for waterpoints maintenance and protection against elephants, in order to secure water for both human and wildlife consumption. The remaining funds in these accounts generally were distributed to the individual residents as a dividend of conservancy membership.

Under its 2005-2010 strategy for Namibia, USAID is expanding from conservancy wildlife management to community oversight of a broader set of natural resources, including forests, fisheries, and grazing land. It is also emphasizing business development skills and training projects for income-earning activities.

The Bottom Line

Namibia's 31 registered conservancies earned $2.35 million in 2004, compared to nine years earlier in 1995, when their earnings were less than $100,000. Four of the conservancies are now financially self-sustaining, while six more are expected to earn profits by 2006. Although 11 of the conservancies had earned no income by the end of 2003, it was largely because they were newly registered and were still developing their enterprises. The remaining conservancies were at different stages of development and are making minimal contributions to their operating costs, including conservancy staff salaries.

Almost 100,000 Namibians reside in conservancies, and some 3,800 people are employed as game guards, hunters, artisans, and customer service personnel at lodges and campsites. Conservancies are self-governing entities having their own constitutions, policies and procedures, and management plans. Individual conservancy residents are subject to customary law under their respective traditional authorities.

The registered conservancies protect some 8 million hectares of communal land, which is in addition to 11.2 million hectares already protected by the government. According to Gary Newton, the director of USAID's mission in Namibia, "By the end of our support to Namibia's conservancies in 2010, some 18 percent of Namibia's land mass will be under a sustainable system of natural resource management, and biodiversity will have been greatly enhanced."

Torra Conservancy, the first to become self-sufficient, distributed about $75 to every conservancy member in 2003—equal to half the average annual incomes. However, no cash distributions were made in 2004. Instead, the conservancy bought two vehicles, one of which it is using as an ambulance to transport sick people needing advanced medical care to a hospital that is about 300 kilometers away from the conservancy. The conservancy also provided cash compensation of about $16,000 to local farmers who lost livestock to predators. Similar compensation schemes are being undertaken in at least five other conservancies.

In 2004, the Torra Conservancy was one of six winners of an international prize awarded by the United Nations Development Program. This year, the Damaraland Camp, a safari lodge located within the conservancy, won the 2005 Tourism for Tomorrow Conservation Award at a Global Tourism summit—an award that recognizes the world's best practices in responsible tourism.

For 2005, Torra Conservancy has allocated resources to three major projects. The first is a campsite construction estimated at $50,000 that is expected to create 10 to 15 additional jobs for local community members. The second effort is a garden project costing $20,000 that will produce paprika and citrus fruits on communal land for commercial sale and vegetables for local consumption. The vegetables will be supplied free to elderly and sick people, with any remainder sold to the community to recover costs. This project is also soliciting additional support from the Namibian government under the Green Scheme implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Forestry. The third project involves construction of a new crèche at $6,500.

Increased Wildlife Populations

Wildlife in Namibia suffered heavy losses from poaching until the mid 1990s. Since then, poaching has declined immensely, largely due to the work of community game guards and to the increased perceived value with which communities view wildlife. As a result, wildlife is coming back into the conservancies. There are now more elephants, oryx, buffalo, Hartmann's zebra, springbok, and lions than ever before in modern times. Namibia also has the world's largest free-roaming population of black rhinos, and their numbers have doubled in the northern Kunene region over the last 12 years. The country is also home to 2,500 cheetahs, the world's largest population of the big cats.

"Game donations, primarily from private farms and the government, have helped conservancies increase wildlife populations and reflect a growing confidence in the ability of the conservancies to be good shepherds of the environment," says Tina Dooley-Jones.

The project is successful, she says, because "it hits the governance aspect—we are working with rural people who politically could be extremely strong when it comes to their local governance and the use of their resources. It also touches upon biodiversity and conservation. People won't conserve or sustainably use natural resources unless they can see the benefit of conservation. And, of course, there's the livelihoods aspect. There, people may have absolutely no other source of income or very few alternative sources of income. So this is a very tangible poverty alleviation program." ■

SEEING THE LANDSCAPE IN NEW WAYS

Some developing nations, although poor in capital assets, are rich in vegetative natural resources—primarily forests. These forests have a value beyond the lumber and habitat they provide. One can think of them as banks filled with carbon instead of money. As concern about global warming and attention to emission reduction increases, the forests of developing nations are becoming valuable for the carbon dioxide they remove from the atmosphere and store, or sequester.

As part of the growth process, vegetation removes carbon dioxide from the air, offsetting the polluting emissions of vehicles, factories, and other human activities. More and more countries and industries are seeking ways to offset their carbon emissions, and promoting forestry management is a good way to do just that. Interest and investment in forestry programs designed for carbon management is growing. Poor countries that have abundant forests have a potential new source of income and new incentives to manage their forests wisely.

Forest management depends on a good understanding of the resource base, sound planning and policies, and the front-line support of local people. Accurate information is critical to the process. Winrock International, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that fosters natural resource management and environmental sustainability, believes that developing nations should have access to the same kind of data that developed countries use to make decisions. To that end, Winrock has designed inexpensive, high-quality tools—known collectively as digital aerial imagery—to evaluate the health of forest resources, explore land use, develop management plans, and monitor the forests over time.

Digital aerial imagery and the data it generates are giving local communities, governments, and researchers a new perspective on their surroundings. This imagery is enabling people to see, in many cases for the first time, the impact they have on the environment. As a result, they are adopting sustainable farming practices that boost production and income, reducing the need for farmers to extend cultivation into forest areas. Communities are making better use of raw forest products, adding value at the local level to increase economic gain and contain uncontrolled logging. Development of small enterprises based on non-timber forest products is introducing new ways to earn income, a powerful incentive to preserving forests.

Digital aerial imagery gives decision makers an accurate tool to measure and monitor land use change, develop policies, and set priorities. They can see how decisions and policies impact resources and how the involvement of all stakeholders can mean long-term management success. Researchers are obtaining information so refined that they are able to document the fruiting activities of trees and plants in correlation to changes in wildlife. They can track forest diseases and pests, monitor delicate ecosystems, and determine the right strategies to meet the needs of people and animals who share the forest.

Importantly, forest management, measuring, and monitoring activities provide the data and documentation needed to attract investors interested in offsetting greenhouse gas emissions by purchasing carbon stored in forests. This lucrative and growing sector has the potential to contribute substantially to the development of many emerging nations.

Using its M3DADI technology (multi-spectral, three-dimensional, aerial digital imagery) as a base, Winrock has built a suite of technologies that open the door to economical and precise measurement, monitoring, and analysis of eco-assets, biodiversity, land use, habitat production, water quality, and sequestered carbon found in forests and other vegetation. Training for local people enables them to use Winrock's technology to their full advantage and participate in setting priorities and in measuring and monitoring land use change.

Winrock's work in environmental sustainability in Latin America includes activities in Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru. Recent efforts have led to carbon measurement and monitoring plans that cover some 931,000 hectares of land and represent an estimated 49.96 million tons of sequestered carbon.

Critically important to this work is building the capacity of nongovernmental organizations, local communities, and others to conduct the verification and analysis needed to support long-term measurement and monitoring efforts and make the most of the information this technology offers. The potential this work represents in the global climate change arena and in the trading of carbon credits will yield dramatic benefits for local people and countries around the world.

On a larger scale, Winrock's leading-edge technology is having an impact globally through the work of various funding organizations. Data collection and methodology are enabling the U.S. Agency for International Development to more accurately track the impact of its funding on global carbon stocks. Winrock also developed a method, designed for use by nonexperts, to track carbon in land use and forestry projects supported by the United Nations Development Program. ■

Source: Winrock International.

PRESERVING RUSSIA'S FORESTS

The future of forests depends on communities from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The Russian Far East contains 22 percent of the forests on Earth. These forests are important for the obvious economic benefits they represent and the unique ecosystems they support. On a global scale, their massive ability to store carbon plays a vital role in reducing atmospheric greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change.

Winrock International's environmental work targets several key threats that endanger the forests in the region: uncontrolled wildfire that scorches thousands of hectares each year; damaging gypsy and Siberian moths that attack entire forests; and uncontrolled, unsustainable logging that contributes little to the struggling local communities these forests support.

Winrock International

Forest in Siberia.

Unfortunately, various factors, primarily Russia's current economic difficulties, mean that great swaths of forest are disappearing without a compensatory benefit to residents. With inadequate funds for management, Russian government forestry agencies must stand by helplessly while forest fires burn unchecked, pest outbreaks are uncontrolled, and illegal loggers operate without penalty. Even where legal logging takes place, lack of capital to build sawmills means that logs are exported in their raw state, bringing in far less money than finished lumber would.

Winrock, through its Forest Resources and Technologies (FOREST) project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, has provided both grants and technological help to build and update sawmills and manufacturing facilities in Russia. The project has also increased the efficiency of existing mills by assisting in the installation of biomass facilities, which use heat from sawdust—formerly a waste product—to dry wood and increase its export value. Some facilities have increased their incomes by hundreds of thousands of dollars a year through biomass utilization.

A FOREST partner organization has developed a software package called EcoSentinel that can forecast outbreaks of Siberian moth caterpillars. The software tallies population counts for moth larvae and pheromone monitoring results for adult moths, automatically pinpointing high-risk areas. As a result, outbreaks can be contained with far less labor and expense.

As part of a FOREST public awareness campaign, drama students in the city of Khabarovsk created and performed a play entitled *I Give You a Thousand Years,* which vividly brought to life the dangers of forest fires and the economic and environmental losses they cause. FOREST supported a Tiger Day festival at the Khabarovsk Zoo to publicize the conservation of the Amur tiger, an endangered resident of Russian forests. Using FOREST resources, many teachers in Russia have included forest ecology in their environmental science courses.

In an especially innovative approach, FOREST has helped area residents make money from their forests—without cutting them down—by harvesting renewable resources such as pine nuts, berries, and mushrooms. With the project's help, members of the Siberian Interregional Association of Organic Producers, along with members of similar groups, attended a major international exhibition, the Natural Products Expo West, in California. Here, their products were seen by visitors from other countries who are potential customers for herbal raw materials and new types of health foods, dietary supplements, essential oils, and natural cosmetics. As preparation for the exhibition, FOREST volunteers trained Russian participants in presentation and international negotiation techniques. ■

Source: Winrock International.

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INTERNET RESOURCES

U.S. GOVERNMENT

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/dhap.htm

Foreign Agricultural Service: Food Aid
http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp

Millennium Challenge Corporation
http://www.mcc.gov/

U.S. Agency for International Development
http://www.usaid.gov/

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs
http://www.state.gov/e/eb/ifd/

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs

Global Development and Foreign Aid
http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.html

HIV/AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases
http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html

Sustainable Development Fact Sheets
http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/sustainable_development/Sustainable_Development_Fact_Sheets.html

White House

Helping Developing Nations
http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/developingnations/

Progress in Africa
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050630.html

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Academy for Educational Development (AED)
http://www.aed.org

Basic Education Coalition
http://basiced.org/

Center for Global Development
http://www.cgdev.org/Research/Index.cfm?TopicID=36

Concern Worldwide
http://www.concernusa.org/

CORE Group
http://www.coregroup.org/

Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP1)
http://www.equip123.net/equip1/index_new.html

InterAction
http://interaction.org/

International Rescue Committee
http://www.theirc.org/

International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)
http://www.irex.org

Save the Children
http://www.savethechildren.org/usa/

Women for Women International
http://womenforwomen.org

World Relief
http://www.wr.org/

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria
http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/

United Nations Development Programme
http://www.undp.org/mdg/

United Nations Millennium Project
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org

World Bank: Millennium Development Goals
http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/MDG/home.do

MISCELLANEOUS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Directory of Development Organizations
http://www.devdir.org/

Development Gateway
http://www.developmentgateway.org/

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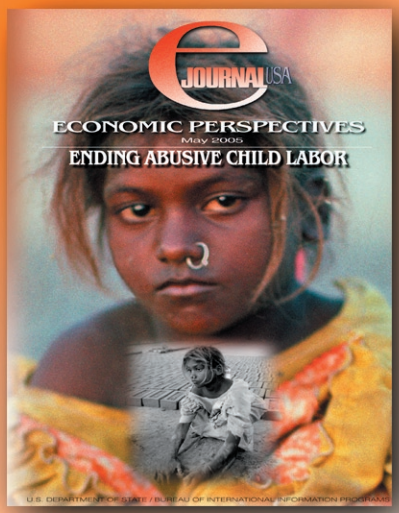

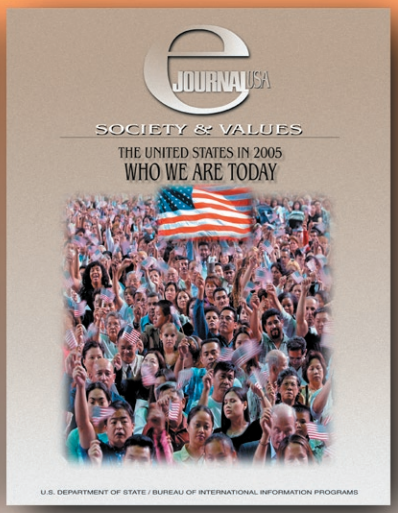

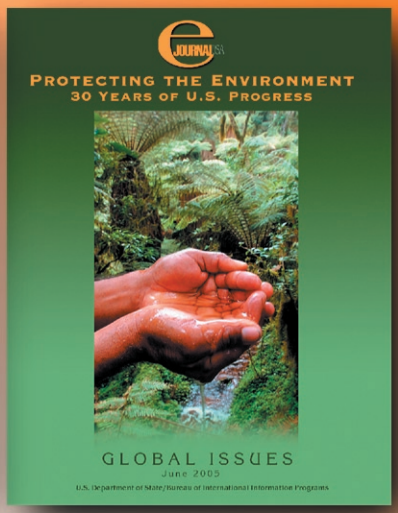

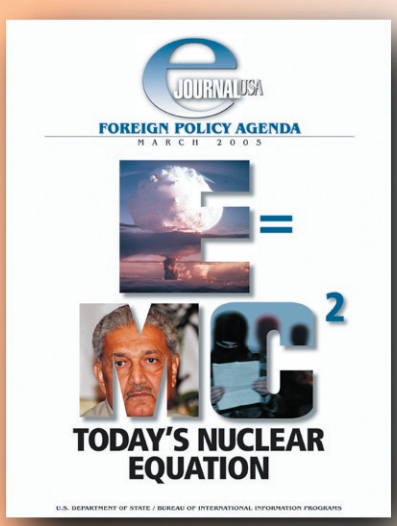

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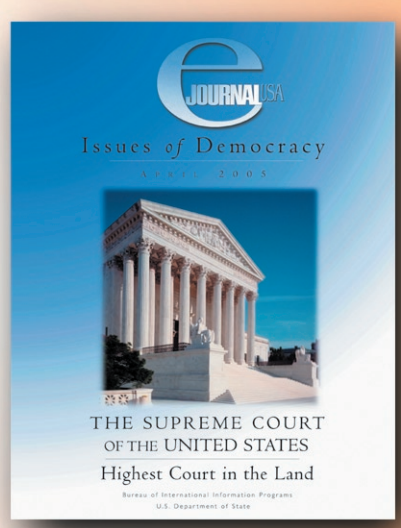

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