

FRONTLINES

www.USAID.gov

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012



SPRING AWAKENING

- > JOINING FORCES AGAINST TERROR IN MALI
- > LEARNING FROM CAMBODIA'S PAST

Democracy, Human Rights & Governance Edition



INSIGHTS

From Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah

PRESIDENT Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton have both emphasized the close relationship between protecting human rights and advancing long-term, sustainable development.

In June 2011, I gave an address at our agency's Democracy, Human Rights, and Development Conference, discussing how we can better integrate democracy and human rights efforts with our core development mission. I spoke about how human welfare is defined not only in terms of freedom from hunger or poverty, but also respect for individual dignity. And I described several actions we're taking at USAID that will be key to strengthening our efforts to support both economic and political reform.

We are using the creation of our new Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance to strengthen the culture of data, evidence, and evaluation in our democracy

programming. What the MIT Poverty Action Lab has done for development effectiveness, our Center of Excellence can do for democratic effectiveness, devising new metrics and measuring performance to determine what really works.

We are also creating a new track of funding—with pre-existing resources—within our presidential initiatives to support smart investments in human rights and governance. We will continue to support our core democracy, rights, and governance work, but we will also use resources we have already committed to the initiatives to create a

new, formal funding channel for human rights and governance programming. This second track of funding is designed to improve the sustainability of our development efforts.

And we are adapting the financial risk assessment tool of government-to-government assistance we developed through USAID Forward to include consideration of democracy, rights, and gov-

ernance. This review will determine whether our investment would empower a government at the expense of its people.

If so, we will explore options to ensure that our assistance does not compromise the rights of citizens. And we will seek to work with those governments to improve their democratic practice so that they will be able to receive future government-to-government assistance.

As we support democratic transitions, we must not lose sight of what expanded freedom means for the individual. When we invest in a smallholder farmer in Uganda, we invest in an entrepreneur with a growing interest in a free society. When we help a mother safely give birth, we help expand her stake in her country's future. And when we support the rights of citizens to vote a corrupt leader out of office, we support the assertion of their dignity.

The value of investing in democracy extends beyond the borders of any single country. By helping governments and societies protect the basic rights of citizens, we spur economic growth, prevent conflict, and forestall the need for possible military engagements. Through the integration of democracy, human rights, and governance into our broader development portfolio, we will deliver a truer understanding of human welfare as we build a safer world. ■

As we support democratic transitions, we must not lose sight of what expanded freedom means for the individual.

LEARN MORE AT:
www.usaid.gov/frontlines



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

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

FrontLines is published by the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development

Ann Doyle, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs

FRONTLINES STAFF:

Kelly Ramundo, Managing Editor
Claire McIntyre, Production Editor
Angela Rucker, Writer/Editor
Patricia Adams, Photo Librarian
Marquita Wise-Williams, Human Resources Coordinator and Employee Liaison
Adriana DelGizzi, Intern

CORRESPONDENTS:

AFGE – Willy Hardin; **AFR** – Susan Quinn, Diana Harper; **AFSA** – Francisco Zamora; **ASIA** – Jan Cartwright, Joseph Truong; **CFBCI** – Heather MacLean; **DCHA** – Rebecca Gustafson, Sven Lindholm, Jessica Hartl; **EGAT** – Jane Stanley, Elisa Walton, Ranta Russell; **E&E** – Michael Hathaway; **OCRD** – vacant; **GC** – Harmony Wade; **ODP** – Todd Kirkbride; **GH** – Sandra Jordan, Chris Thomas; **IG** – Debra Scott; **LAC** – Maxine Hillary; **LPA** – Barbara Bennett; **M** – Lauren Gabler; **ME** – Hope Bryer, Jan Cartwright; **SEC** – Dwayne Moore, Lorraine Meehan

Submit notices, story ideas, feedback to *FrontLines* articles, and requests to be added to the mailing list to FrontLines@usaid.gov.

Go to www.usaid.gov/frontlines



4 One Year On, the Arab Spring Continues to Inspire and Challenge

- 2 The Dignity of the Street Vendor
- 10 Interview with Joe Taggart, USAID Democracy Officer
- 12 A Collaborative Approach to Combating Instability in Northern Mali
- 16 Documenting Tragedy Reconciles Cambodia’s Past
- 18 A Constitution for Sudan
- 22 Radio for a New Nation
- 24 When Love Meets Tradition in Afghanistan
- 26 Nigeria’s Information-Freedom Triumph

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 28 Technology Drives Liberia’s First Post-Conflict Elections
- 32 For Survivors of Rape, Relief in Therapy and Loans
- 36 Growing Democracy in Post-Dictator Paraguay
- 38 Preparing for the “Big One” in Nepal
- 40 A Printing Press for East Timor
- 42 It’s Not About the Chair
- 44 Budgeting for Effective Governance

See the online version of *FrontLines* for links to additional reading and videos.



LEARN MORE / VIDEO ONLINE AT:
www.usaid.gov/frontlines

Cover: Egyptians celebrate at Cairo’s Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the popular revolt that drove President Hosni Mubarak from power after 30 years, Feb. 12, 2011.

Photo by Petro Ugarte, AFP



MESSAGE FROM THE
 Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy,
 Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance

THE DIGNITY OF THE STREET VENDOR

Advancing Human Rights and Democratic Governance

By NANCY LINDBORG

DURING the past year, the momentous uprisings of the Arab Spring have both transformed the political landscape of the Middle East and North Africa and inspired activists far beyond that region to speak out for their fundamental human rights. Ordinary people around the world have acted with extraordinary selflessness and courage, inspiring us all.

The events in the Arab world and beyond demonstrate anew that true stability derives from legitimate, effective governments that are responsive to the needs of their people.

At USAID, we believe that democratic governance and human rights are critical for sustainable development and lasting peace in a society. To ensure we are supporting the creation of more legitimate and inclusive governance based on the full participation of civil society and the private sector, we are elevating and reconfiguring our efforts to advance democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG). In doing so, we will strengthen our support



Nancy Lindborg

for free and fair elections, independent media and civil society, sound governance, and the uniform application of the rule of law.

As the assistant administrator of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), I am proud to announce the establishment of our new Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

The Center will serve as a model for USAID's transformation into an evidence-based learning organization, devoted to

advancing best practices in the DRG field. The Center will place learning at the heart of its work—working closely with missions to systematically generate knowledge of what works (and what does not) in supporting DRG globally.

In establishing the Center, we are not only responding to current opportunities in the Arab world and beyond, but also to key policy initiatives of the Obama administration. Just over a year ago, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah released the first-ever Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, tasking USAID to elevate its work in DRG.

The Center will propel the core agenda of USAID Forward by creating and applying an evidence-based approach through our global partnerships, our cutting-edge innovation, and our relentless focus on what drives results.

The DRG Center is located in the DCHA Bureau, linked to a powerful set of programs dedicated to the proposition that we cannot move from conflict

to peace, fragility to strength, disaster to recovery, and ultimately from poverty to prosperity without inclusive, effective democratic institutions. The issues of authoritarianism, poor governance, disasters, conflict, and poverty are inextricably linked.

The 2011 World Development Report concluded that countries weak in government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption have a 30 percent to 45 percent higher risk of civil war and significantly higher risk of extreme criminal violence than other developing countries.

Recognizing that broad-based inclusive development is crucial for the achievement of lasting democracy and peace, the Center will ensure that

human rights and gender equality are integrated throughout all of USAID's work. We will continue to address the needs of marginalized populations such as survivors of torture and war and people with disabilities. We will step up efforts to combat human trafficking, especially in conflict zones. We will promote labor and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights, and increase support for human-rights defenders and human-rights commissions. We will work to prevent atrocities and secure transitional justice for all.

To further advance women's rights in countries transitioning from conflict, the Center will launch a new Global Women's Leadership Fund designed to support the inclusion of women in

high-level decision-making processes and to identify entry points for their participation in peace negotiations and political transitions. By working closely with women at the local, national, and international level, we can help to ensure that they are present when decisions are made that affect their lives.

Our new Center of Excellence comes at a time of historic change and opportunity. Speaking in May 2011, President Barack Obama captured this moment: "We have the chance to show that America values the dignity of the street vendor in Tunisia more than the raw power of the dictator. There must be no doubt that the United States of America welcomes change that advances self-determination and opportunity." ■



Photo by Khaled Desouki, AFP

Egyptian Rezq Anan shows his ID card and ink-stained finger after casting his vote at a polling station in Mansura, March 19, 2011.

One Year On, the ARAB SPRING Continues to Inspire

By Ellen Boccuzzi and Jan Cartwright

Tunisians from the Kasserine region walk with a Mohammed Bouazizi poster and the national flag in front of the government palace in Tunis, Jan. 28, 2011.

NG pire and Challenge



A YEAR HAS passed since Mohammed Bouazizi, a young Tunisian fruit seller, set himself on fire to protest the difficult economic conditions he faced and the humiliation he experienced at the hands of local police. Bouazizi's protest was personal, but it resonated with millions of people across Tunisia

and the Middle East who identified with his suffering and his defiance.

Across the region, people took to the streets, calling for political and economic reform. They expressed frustration with high unemployment, deteriorating living conditions, and a lack of economic opportunity. They called for transparency and accountability from their governments

and a greater say in the decisions affecting their lives. They stood up and demanded basic rights in a region long dominated by authoritarian governments.

"Nobody could have predicted what the spark for large-scale demonstrations would be or how quickly and widely these demonstrations would spread, but the seeds of discontent were evident across

the region in growing labor strikes, protests over socio-economic conditions, and public outcries over regime brutality and corruption,” said Shannon Green, USAID’s regional coordinator for the Middle East in the Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. “Adding fuel to the fire, citizens feared that shifts in leadership might not lead to real change, as leaders seemed intent on hand-picking their successors.”

Since January 2011, when protestors poured onto the capital streets of Tunis, USAID has been at the forefront in supporting peaceful transitions in the Middle East and responding to the legitimate aspirations of citizens across the Arab world. The Agency’s work is part of a comprehensive U.S. Government approach (see sidebar, page 8).

“Through our development work, USAID is helping to mitigate disruptions that jeopardize full transitions, while supporting the reform efforts that are essential for the promises of the Arab Spring to be fully realized and sustained,” said Mara Rudman, USAID’s assistant administrator for the Middle East. “Arab Spring” refers to the street protests throughout the Middle East that followed Tunisia’s demonstrations.

As a development agency, USAID is well-placed to respond to the ongoing political and economic transitions in the region. Decades of investment in economies, societies, and institutions across the Arab world have enabled the Agency to forge strong relationships with people on the ground.

“USAID was able to shift our assistance and draw on flexible mechanisms to respond to the dramatic changes across the region,” says Sarah Mendelson, deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.



Photo by Mahmud Hams, AFP

Egyptian women show their ink-stained thumbs after voting in Cairo, March 19, 2011.

USAID was one of the first donors on the ground in Tunisia, providing over \$19 million in support of Tunisia’s transition toward democracy, in addition to \$3 million for humanitarian assistance, as part of a broader U.S. aid effort that has totaled over \$32 million to date. The Agency’s activities have focused on helping political parties develop, and engaging citizens in the political reform process. Primarily working with new and existing civil society organizations, USAID is supporting Tunisian-led efforts to ensure a successful transition.

Following the revolution, USAID conducted a series of on-the-ground assessments as well as broad outreach to civil society, youth, and women to evaluate the priorities and needs expressed by Tunisians. These consultations played a critical role in developing timely and targeted programming in Tunisia post-revolution.

Through this assessment process, USAID listened to the needs expressed by people both in the capital, Tunis, and in the country’s interior and border areas. Because Tunisia’s revolution began in these interior areas, USAID has recognized that a fully successful transition requires an

inclusive process that involves all Tunisians. Therefore, while much work has focused on the capital, USAID is also working in historically marginalized regions.

IN CAIRO AND throughout Egypt’s cities and towns, three weeks of sustained protests brought about the end of President Hosni Mubarak’s 30-year reign on Feb. 11, 2011. Within days of the revolution, USAID moved to reprogram \$165 million for democracy, governance, and economic growth projects to support the country’s transition to democracy.

Under the Egyptian Transition Support Program, USAID grants have supported activities in democratic development that Egyptians themselves identified as essential. Activities include work in civic engagement and awareness; elections and political processes; access to justice and human rights; and transparency and accountability. In tandem, USAID provided grants to support economic growth in areas that Egyptians prioritized, including job creation, economic development, and poverty alleviation.

“This was a tectonically important and historic moment for the Egyptian people.

Our intention was to demonstrate in a tangible way, beyond words, that we were here to support them,” said Jim Bever, who was USAID/Egypt mission director at the time.

In Egypt, the Agency made extraordinary efforts to reach out to a broad range of people and organizations, including current Egyptian partners and new actors mobilized by the year’s events. In the months following the revolution, USAID held 10 information sessions for Egyptian civil society organizations to familiarize them with USAID funding processes. These sessions, held in Arabic and English in a number of cities, were attended by approximately 2,500 people from over 1,000 organizations, many of which had never applied for USAID funding before.

The sessions resulted in hundreds of applications from organizations proposing innovative ways to support Egypt’s transition. A total of 52 grants were awarded over the summer and a striking 40 percent of grant recipients under the transition grant programs were new partners for USAID.

“I was pleasantly surprised at the massive interest in our grants program. Significant, too, was the smaller and nascent NGOs’ interest in these unpredictable times. First-hand interaction with many of these groups during our orientation sessions helped demystify USAID, and it also reflected the high level of confidence they have in USAID as a leading development organization,” said Naglaa Mostafa, a project management specialist in the Democracy and Governance Office of USAID/Egypt.

Nearly half of the new awards focus on civic awareness and participation, voter education and elections, and access to justice, with one grant specifically supporting those in need of legal assistance as a result of the Jan. 25, 2011, uprising.

Local Egyptian organizations are focusing their activities at the grassroots level both on the specific election process and on general civic education. Some of these organizations are targeting groups that traditionally are less likely to be politically engaged. The South Egypt Development Association in Qena (SEDAQ), for example, is working with women to increase their political participation as voters and as candidates.

“This grant has allowed SEDAQ to reach women in a region where women have been marginalized from political life,” said project director Adel Ghazaly. “Now that elections have taken on new meaning in Egypt, we want to empower women to vote and present themselves for local popular council seats.”

The organization is reaching their target group by training political educators on communication skills and political laws, running workshops to support women leaders considering running for local councils, and developing political literacy materials for women’s literacy classes. Additionally, they are organizing awareness seminars on women’s rights and participation in political life.

Another grantee, SAED Association for Development and Human Rights, is promoting civic values and active citizenship in the governorates of Giza, Sohag, and Sharqia. The organization is training civil society organizations, preparing hundreds of young people to be leaders, and encouraging over 6,000 men and women to play an active role in managing and developing their local communities.

“This grant allows us to empower citizens in nine villages to be agents of change,” explained Hala Elhabashi, director of SAED.

Grants awarded this summer also respond to the unfolding economic situation, creating jobs and meeting demands as they emerge.

One such grantee, an Egyptian organization named Blue Moon, is helping small farmers better integrate into the international fresh produce supply chain. Using GPS technology to ensure product traceability, the project links small growers through cooperatives to a central database to facilitate communication with potential buyers. By helping farmers comply with international standards, Blue Moon’s project promotes transparency



Internally displaced Libyan children flash victory signs while playing in a refugee camp in the eastern rebel stronghold of Benghazi, May 3, 2011.

Photo by Saeed Khan, AFP

and sustainability, mitigates food safety risks, and empowers small growers and the broader community—including women and disadvantaged groups.

Another grantee, Pathfinder International, will implement a multi-sectoral program in 2012 to provide immediate job opportunities predominantly for young women in rural areas to serve as community health outreach workers, encouraging greater access to health information and quality health services for Egypt's most vulnerable populations.

Approximately 7,500 women will also be trained in entrepreneurship and will receive financial and technical assistance to start their own businesses. The effort, known as FORSA, Arabic for “opportunity,” will focus on governorates in Egypt's south, including Assiut and Sohag, which typically suffer from high levels of unemployment, low educational levels, and poor access to health information and services.

“FORSA focuses on answering Egypt's most immediate needs in the midst of the current situation through efforts that will have lasting impact beyond this time of change,” said Mohamed Abou Nar, Pathfinder's Egypt country representative.

IN MARCH 2011, a coalition that included the United States, NATO, and Arab countries took military action against the regime of Moammar Gadhafi under a United Nations-approved mandate. As part of the U.S. team, USAID mobilized in coordination with a broad-based international humanitarian effort to protect and assist the Libyan people.

The U.S. Government provided more than \$90 million in humanitarian assistance through NGOs, U.N. agencies, and other international organizations to address humanitarian needs in Libya and among the hundreds of thousands who

fled the conflict. USAID-funded humanitarian activities included supporting health facilities in Libya with medical supplies, doctors, and nurses; distributing emergency relief supplies to conflict-affected and vulnerable populations; and supporting the World Health Organization emergency health response through medical training and supplies, services, and an early warning system for epidemic-prone diseases. USAID is also supporting U.N. coordination, logistics, and communications in Libya and throughout the region.

The Agency's response quickly evolved to include assistance to strengthen emergent media outlets and civil society organizations and to bolster the basic administrative capacities of interim governing authorities during the period of political transition. USAID's Libya Transition Initiative, which has been implementing activities on the ground since July 2011, is supporting Libyan-led efforts to promote national unity, while assisting the transition to inclusive democracy.

One example of this work is USAID's assistance to a new Benghazi-based foundation, Independent Libyan Media, which works to educate emerging print, radio, and new media journalists in the practice of responsible journalism. These media outlets are at the vanguard of the transition to a culture that values freedom of information and expression but that has seen difficulties from a lack of familiarity with the ethics and responsibilities of independent reporting.

Support to emergent civil society and media will remain a critical need to ensure the disparate groups that participated in the overthrow of the Gadhafi regime are fully vested in the political processes that will shape Libya's future government.

A Comprehensive Approach

USAID's efforts in the Middle East and North Africa are part of a comprehensive U.S. Government response in the region. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton have both emphasized that U.S. policy will continue to promote reform and democratic transitions in the region over the long term, and a number of agencies and departments are supporting this effort.

The State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative is supporting the democratic transitions by empowering local civil society organizations, private sector groups, and political activists to demand and advance political and economic reforms throughout the region and to play an active role in the future of their countries. The U.S. Private Overseas Investment Corporation is providing loan guarantees totaling \$1 billion, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has named Tunisia a threshold country in recognition of its commitment and progress toward democracy and economic freedom. Tunisia's inclusion in the MCC program will support the Tunisian Government to work on policy reform that can lead to faster growth and generate employment, including addressing constraints to economic growth, increasing private sector investment, and improving economic governance.

In addition, the Peace Corps will return to Tunisia this year following a 15-year absence, revitalizing a long and productive U.S.-Tunisia partnership. Programs focusing on English-language training and youth skills development will help Tunisian students and professionals prepare for future employment, build local capacity, and develop active citizenship at the grassroots level.

JUST 10 MONTHS after former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's ouster, Tunisia achieved a major milestone in its transition: the country's first free election for a National Constituent Assembly. In the run-up to the elections, USAID funded projects in support of Tunisian citizens' engagement in democratic reform efforts. Activities included information sessions on democratic processes, and assisting civic organizations that promote participation in the democratic process, especially amongst women and youth.

Approximately 3.7 million Tunisians voted, with lines stretching out doors and around corners in the hot midday sun. The Carter Center's monitoring mission deemed the election representative and competitive, and, most notably, the election has instilled confidence in Tunisia's democratic process, a positive first step in reform.

"October 23rd marked the first open election in the Arab world since the region's uprisings began," said Joe Taggart, an elections expert and head of the program office in USAID's Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, who observed Tunisia's historic election on the ground. "With this successful election, Tunisians have sent a signal that a peaceful and democratic transition is not only possible, but also pathbreaking." (See article on page 10.)

Although challenges remain, life for Tunisians has changed in tangible ways. Previously, citizens were only permitted to form associations focused on sports, culture, and the arts. Since the revolution, they are embracing newfound opportunities to engage actively in civic life. To bolster these efforts, USAID is supporting the emergence and strengthening of local organizations.

In July 2011, a USAID-supported workshop trained newly forming associations in Tatouine on management and



Photo by Martin Bureau, AFP

Tunisian protesters kiss soldiers during a demonstration against the presence of the toppled ruling party in the transitional government, Jan. 20, 2011, in Tunis. Authorities arrested 33 members of former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's family as protesters demanded that the former dictator's ruling party be rooted out.

communication—a step towards greater mobilization of citizens in one of the most historically marginalized governorates in Tunisia. "This was a great occasion for the youth to learn how to operate within an association and to have more ideas about their role in the civil society," said Radhia Dhiab, a workshop participant.

Egypt's road has been unpredictable and marked by hurdles as well as achievements. Local organizations are experiencing challenges in implementing activities on the ground, signaling a possible hesitation for support of a fully open and active civil society. At the same time, the enthusiasm and participation in elections seems to be signaling an appetite for and trust in democratic processes.

"USAID's work in this ever-changing environment demands flexibility and an ear on the ground. This is about Egypt

and its future, but the right kinds of USAID investments can help Egyptians realize their dream of a secure, prosperous, and inclusive nation at peace with its neighbors," said Walter North, USAID/Egypt mission director.

In Libya, USAID is providing assistance on the ground for the first time in decades. To support the country's emerging civil society, USAID provided seed funding to *Hamzat Wasl*, a new civil-society resource and learning center in downtown Benghazi. The name *Hamzat Wasl* comes from a grammatical tool in Arabic that brings sound to silent syllables—or, in this case, capacity to blossoming organizations. The center offers vital services, including Internet stations, work space, a resource library, and professional development opportunities for rising young activists.

continued on p. 11

Interview with Joe Taggart, USAID Democracy Officer

“Inclusive, Transparent, and Credible”: A Witness to Tunisia’s Historic Elections



On Oct. 23, 2011, Tunisia held elections for its 218-member Constituent Assembly. Joseph Taggart, a USAID democracy officer, currently leads strategic planning in the Agency’s new Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. He has served as a democracy officer and program officer with USAID since 2001 in Georgia, Montenegro, and Azerbaijan. Taggart’s background includes service as a civic organizer, locally elected official, and congressional staffer.

QUESTION: Why were these elections important?

JOSEPH TAGGART: In January, Tunisians’ frustration with autocratic rule, the lack of economic opportunity, and having no voice in how their country was governed boiled over into massive citizen-led street protests that sparked what would be dubbed the “Arab Spring.” Citizens in neighboring countries were inspired by what transpired in Tunisia and felt empowered to shake off decades of autocratic rule in their own countries.

The Constituent Assembly election marked the first election since the start of the Arab Spring, and was the first test for Tunisia and the region. It marked a turning point in demonstrating whether citizens who marched in the streets were also willing to peacefully cast ballots in significant numbers.

On Oct. 23, Tunisians turned out in record numbers, peacefully standing in line for hours to participate in elections

that were determined to be free, representative, and transparent. The elections marked the first truly democratic elections in Tunisia and have set a course for a representative body of the people to begin drafting a new constitution which will lay the governing political and economic framework for Tunisia.

Q: What kinds of influence will first-time politicians, particularly women and other underrepresented groups, have in remaking their society when they join with other lawmakers to begin work on a new constitution?

Taggart: Tunisia’s elections were an important political victory for the country’s women. Roughly one quarter of the seats in the 218-member assembly are now held by women, which is the largest percentage of women in any assembly in the region. The Constituent Assembly has a diverse make-up, including citizen activists, members of the former opposition,

and those new to the political realm. Consequently, Tunisia’s constitution will be written by a broad spectrum of Tunisia’s society—a marked departure from its past, where only a handful of ruling elite were allowed to influence Tunisian laws and governing system.

Q: What did USAID do to assist the Tunisians as they conducted their first democratic elections?

Taggart: I want to note that, from day one, the process in Tunisia has been led and managed by the Tunisians. After the events in January, Tunisians were very clear that they would lead the transition, that they have a vision, and that they would manage this process based on priorities expressed by Tunisian citizens. USAID contributed to this process by supporting peer-to-peer networking opportunities between Tunisian democratic reformers and those from other parts of the world, based on

Tunisian requests. Through those peer-to-peer consultations, democratic reformers shared best practices regarding transparent election processes, systems, and grass roots political campaigning. USAID also supported Tunisian-led and designed citizen- and voter-education efforts and training for first-time and women candidates.

Q: What were your impressions regarding Tunisian efforts in administering these elections?

Taggart: The extraordinary turnout of voters across Tunisia reflected Tunisians' determination to see through the process that they had initiated, as well as their confidence in the Independent Election Commission of Tunisia (ISIE). The Tunisians had only a few months to prepare for an election on which, in many ways, the momentum of the Arab Spring hinged.

They succeeded in carrying out a process that was declared inclusive, transparent, and credible—an extraordinary and historic achievement in such a short amount of time. The voting took place in a positive, festive, and very patriotic atmosphere.

In spite of waiting periods of several hours in many places, the mood of the voters and poll workers was summed up by one 50-year-old gentleman who had waited over 4½ hours to cast his vote: “I have waited my entire life for this day. . . . I can wait a few hours more!”

I count myself very fortunate to have witnessed history in the making. I have worked with USAID democracy, human rights, and governance programs for over 15 years, and observed dozens of elections, but nothing compares to what I witnessed in Tunisia in October. The Tunisians' spirit and pride inspired me and reminded me once again what a truly

wonderful opportunity it is to work for USAID.

Q: In what way is Tunisia a model for other countries in the Middle East? And in what ways is it not?

Taggart: Tunisia's Oct. 23 elections were the first competitive elections in the Arab world since the region's uprisings began. With this election, Tunisians sent a resounding signal that a peaceful and democratic transition is truly underway in the Middle East. While the Tunisian uprising in January served as an inspiration for the Arab Spring, each of the uprisings that followed in the region have taken on their own unique character and will follow different trajectories. It is the job of USAID to support these transitions—and the inspiring citizens who are leading the way—so that they meet the promise and expectations of citizens across the region. ■

Arab Spring

continued from p. 9

USAID has also been conducting human rights trainings and workshops at *Hamzat Wasl* since October 2011, the first of which trained 25 men and women who aspire to become civil society leaders and advocates for citizens' rights.

“Just one year ago, all of us would have been arrested for gathering here,” said National Transitional Council Minister of Culture and Civil Society Atia Lawgali at a recent workshop, reflecting on the radical change that Libya's transition has brought for civil society organizations. Workshops covered the history and evolution of human rights principles, pertinent international laws, protection strategies, and the role of civil society in human rights monitoring and advocacy.

“Libya will now be a place where we can openly promote and protect human rights. We always knew we had rights in a general sense, but we didn't know there were mechanisms for protecting them,” said Tamer Mohammed El-Jehani, founder of a Benghazi-based youth organization.

USAID's approach to development in the Middle East and North Africa supports President Barack Obama's work in forging partnerships across the Arab world. In June 2009, Obama gave a speech in Cairo entitled “A New Beginning,” and placed special emphasis on the role of youth in creating this new beginning. “I want to particularly say this to young people of every faith, in every country—you, more than anyone, have the ability to remake this world,” he said.

“The work of this generation will be to carry on the positive legacy of

the uprisings by forming and maintaining peaceful, prosperous, stable, and transparent societies that respect the rights of all citizens,” said USAID's Rudman.

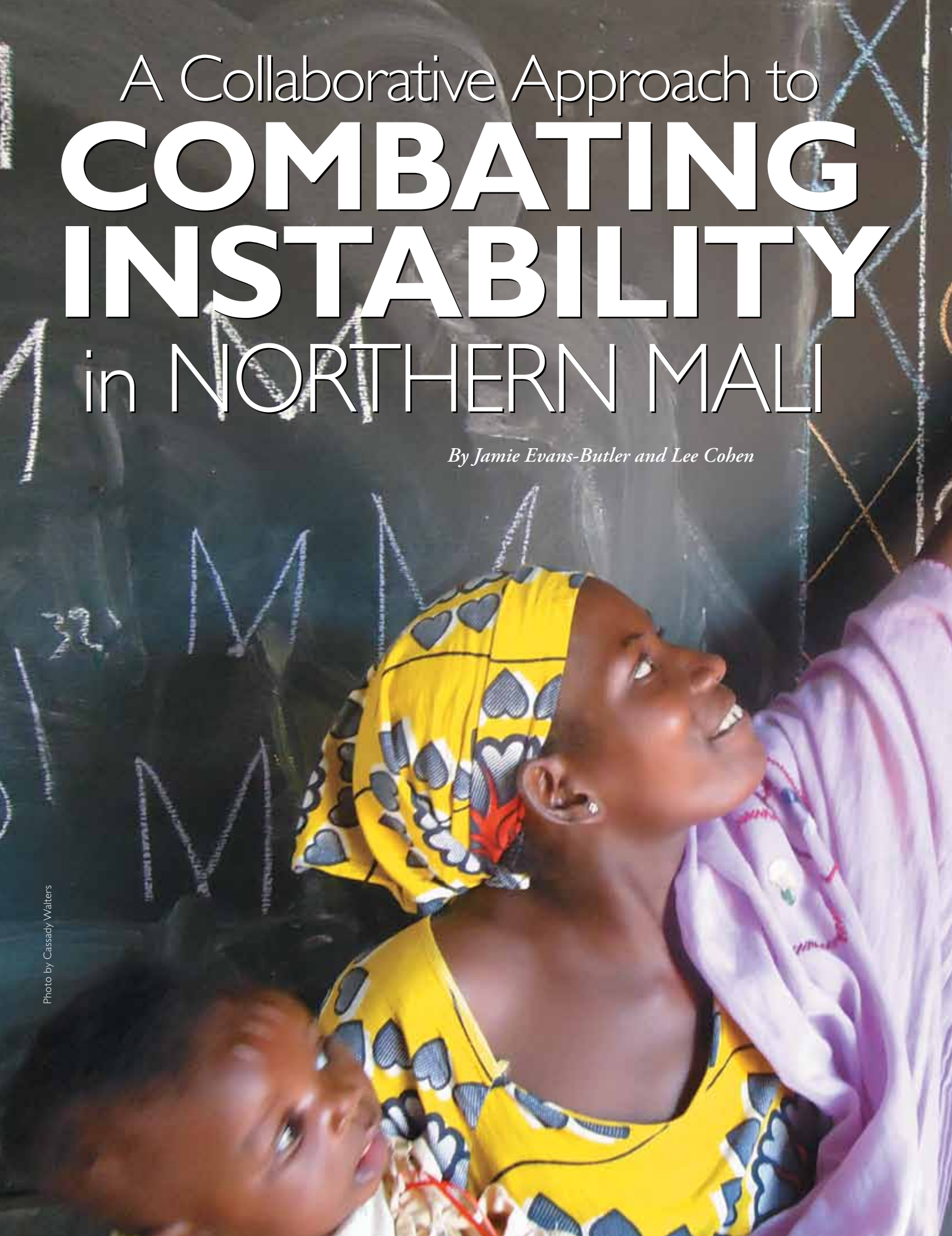
Mohammed Bouazizi may never have imagined that his personal act of defiance would have such far-reaching consequences, but as USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah recently said: “Small human acts have [the power] to cause global and generational change.”


Citizens and donors alike recognize that the political and economic grievances that contributed to the uprisings will not disappear overnight, but USAID remains committed to supporting the people of the Arab world as they work to achieve their democratic goals and aspirations for a better life in the years to come. ■

A Collaborative Approach to
**COMBATING
INSTABILITY**
in NORTHERN MALI

By Jamie Evans-Butler and Lee Cohen

Photo by Cassidy Walters





FOR TWO decades, Mali has enjoyed remarkable political stability characterized by four rounds of peaceful presidential and legislative elections and the proliferation of civil society organizations and private media outlets. In this sense, the country has been something of an anomaly in a sub-region where neighbors have been plagued by political repression and an absence of democratic freedoms.

Yet this democratic progress belies Mali's record of development over the past 20 years. Indeed, 80 percent of the population continues to rely on subsistence farming or herding for their livelihood.

As a result, Mali remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Problems of extreme poverty are even greater in northern Mali where the Sahel covers most of the region, creating even harsher conditions for survival and greater underdevelopment.

To address this disparity, USAID works with the Government of Mali to engage local communities and improve basic service delivery in the northern regions through a wide range of activities that includes support to local health clinics, microfinance associations, youth employment programs, and decentralization activities. However, these collaborative efforts risk being undermined by a lawless environment that threatens the region.

Three distinct, yet occasionally intersecting sources of instability exist in northern Mali. The first is from persistent political and economic marginalization, most notably that of the Tuareg, an ethnic minority from the north that has not historically been well incorporated into the Malian state. Feeling the brunt of this marginalization,

the Tuaregs have led several armed rebellions over the past 20 years.

In addition, tribal, ethnic, and clan-based divisions have been a constant source of instability, with hundreds of clans spread out over the north.

Lastly, the presence of the terrorist group al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which has its roots in the Algerian Civil War, now poses a threat of violent extremism. While the recent kidnappings of foreigners and armed attacks have captured newspaper headlines, the group also represents a long-term destabilizing threat to the local population, especially youth who have limited opportunities for formal education or economic activities.

IN 2005, USAID and the Departments of State and Defense joined an interagency counterterrorism effort to address the roots of terrorism in the Trans-Sahara Region. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership endeavors to bring to bear the tools of defense, diplomacy, and development in a strategically balanced manner to cut off support and safe havens for terrorist groups, while also strengthening partner nations' capacities to meet their counterterrorism goals. This effort highlights the widely recognized assumption that counterterrorism efforts that neglect "soft side" inputs—such as basic efforts to strengthen community capacity—will not make a lasting contribution and might, in the end, do more harm than good.

The partnership is often cited as a good example of interagency coordination. By working with State and Defense, USAID has been able to identify areas of alignment, while still retaining the essential development and humanitarian character of its work.

A volunteer provides literacy training to Malian youth.

One example of this collaboration is USAID/Mali's work with the Department of Defense's Civil Military Support Element (CMSE), which conducts routine humanitarian assistance missions in the north to support the Government of Mali's stability operations in the region, but also works with interagency partners on counterterrorism and development efforts. For USAID/Mali, collaborating with the CMSE has been essential to monitoring programs in northern regions that require military accompaniment.

"We share many similar objectives with USAID in terms of increasing stability in the northern regions of Mali through humanitarian assistance

and development projects," says CMSE team member Dan Utley, who has accompanied USAID/Mali staff on trips to the north. "We also realize that security constraints make movement in the area difficult for non-military personnel, so we continue to support USAID with military aviation assets and other logistical planning."

USAID works at the community level to address groups most vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Activities include youth empowerment through education, skill training, income generation, and advocacy. USAID also strengthens local governments' capacity to manage local resources and provide peace dividends. In addition, the

Agency improves access to information through community radio, and disseminates messages of peace and tolerance.

Many of these goals are achieved through the Support to Local Governance and Decentralization Program (PGP2), which provides training for elected officials and youth and female leaders of civil society organizations on conflict management mechanisms, peace-building activities, and natural-resource management as a way to reduce the risk of conflict and promote community cohesion. PGP2 also uses radio as a tool to deflect external destabilizing influences and build unity among community members. One



Photo by Cassidy Walters

A participant in a Malian youth entrepreneur program supported by USAID gives a land investment tour.

way this is achieved is by training radio hosts to incorporate conflict resolution messages into programming.

USAID IS WORKING cross-sectorally in Mali to provide opportunities for youth and reduce their susceptibility to violent extremism. To address the mounting tension spurred by lack of opportunities for youth in the north, USAID's governance, communications, education, and economic growth teams are supporting a project to put out-of-school youth, ages 14 to 25, to work and to use their new skills to benefit their communities.

The PAJE-Nieta (Support Project for Young Entrepreneurs) program imparts basic educational skills, such as reading and math, and identifies employment opportunities. Then, youth conduct a market analysis of their community to see if their expectations for work match the reality of the marketplace. Finally, after re-evaluating their goals, the participants enter a supervised apprenticeship in the field of their choice.

Under the project, education officers help train youth, building up their competencies, while the economic growth team provides the technical expertise for them to independently identify employment goals and market realities. Experts in governance and communications emphasize a civic engagement piece that focuses on leadership, conflict resolution, and training on the rights and responsibilities of citizens, particularly in relation to local communal governments.

Under the project, young people create associations within each village, which become the hub for all future vocational training and job mentoring. From this hub, youth design community service



Photo by Cassidy Walters

A young Malian practices basic literacy skills.

projects that they carry out in their own communities, showing their neighbors, their family, and their bosses that this program is more than simply receiving assistance, and that the youth of Mali are just as willing to give back as they are to move forward.

Scott Isbrandt, director of PAJE-Nieta, believes that this is the model of the future: "The future of our work should really revolve around cross-sectoral efforts," he says. "It's erroneous to think that an education project can succeed without a health piece, or an agriculture piece, or a democracy piece. It should all be cross-cutting. That's what is exciting about this project for me, is that it really integrates all these components."

PAJE-Nieta has been piloted in southern Mali with such success that President Amadou Toumani Toure publicly praised

the project, claiming it would create 12,000 new jobs in the country—an exaggeration, but still, a potentially useful presidential endorsement.

With planning underway to expand to the north, now will be the time to see if this innovative solution, coupled with the ongoing work of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, can begin the process of reconciliation, mediation, and pacification in the north of Mali.

As USAID/Mali Mission Director Rebecca Black observes: "It's clear that engaging youth in our development activities is key to the success of all our programs, but in terms of the north, the need to create viable economic and civic opportunities for youth to reduce the threat of violent extremism is critical, and I'm hoping that PAJE can replicate the successes it's had in the south." ■

Im Chaem, left, sits beside Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, at Preah Vihear Temple on top of the Dangrek Mountain along the Cambodian-Thai border. Chaem, now 67, was a former chief of a district where many lives were lost to execution, starvation, and exhaustion during the regime of the Khmer Rouge.

DOCUMENTING TRAGEDY RECONCILES PAST

By Roy Fenn

In Cambodia, a USAID-funded research institute is dedicated to analyzing and preserving evidence decades after the Khmer Rouge-led genocide.

RELECTING ON the past isn't always easy, but sometimes it is the only way to move forward. That is the belief of Youk Chhang, a survivor of Cambodia's "killing fields," who now directs the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), an independent Cambodian research institute in the country's capital city dedicated to analyzing and preserving evidence of the past.

Millions of Cambodians were tortured and killed during the Khmer

Rouge-led genocide from 1975 to 1979. The determination of the Khmer Rouge to completely remake Cambodia into a classless, agrarian society led to the slaughter of the educated and professional classes and the destruction of much of the nation's infrastructure. The devastation of this period has hindered the pace and progress of development for more than 30 years and will affect the country for generations.

Spending his days surrounded by evidence of the Khmer Rouge's horrific

genocide, Chhang believes that the only way to heal—both personally and as a nation—is to document the past and learn from it.

"I am a survivor of Cambodia's genocide," he says. "All of us who lived through the genocide know that genocide devastates a country in many, many ways. And we need to make sense of our history before we can heal and move on."

In the mid-1990s, Chhang, 50, received a U.S. grant to set up a field office in Phnom Penh to conduct research and gather documentation on the Khmer Rouge regime. In 1997, that field office became DC-Cam.

Over the past 14 years, DC-Cam has established the world's largest

archive on the Khmer Rouge period. It has catalogued approximately 155,000 pages of primary Khmer Rouge documents and more than 6,000 photographs of victims, perpetrators, and survivors. It has more than 800,000 additional pages of documentation and other types of materials that have not yet been catalogued.

USAID has supported DC-Cam since 2004, and has since provided a \$4 million endowment to help ensure its long-term sustainability. DC-Cam will use the earnings from the endowment to support ongoing activities and operate its permanent research and education center.

“DC-Cam’s work helps rebuild Cambodian society by preserving the memory of the events of the past, and the effect on millions of Cambodians,” said USAID/Cambodia’s Director of the Office of Democracy and Governance Shally Prasad. “DC-Cam’s permanent research and education center will stand as a monument in their memory; encourage reflection, analysis, and discussion; and help build a national consciousness for healing and reconciliation. Thirty years after the end of the genocide, DC-Cam’s work is critical for moving the country forward.”

AN OFFICIAL TRUTH and reconciliation process has not yet occurred in Cambodia, but DC-Cam is using its in-depth archive to provide documentation to the ongoing Khmer Rouge trials, also known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

The ECCC is a special court established by the Cambodian Government and the United Nations to try senior

continued on p. 46

The Evolution of Cambodian Programs

USAID’s support for DC-Cam is part of the Agency’s broader efforts to help Cambodia come to terms with its past and achieve a brighter future. In the areas of democracy and governance, the Agency implements programs to strengthen human rights advocacy, the rule of law, youth leadership development, and elections and political processes.

The current USAID program in Cambodia traces its roots to humanitarian assistance activities in support of Cambodian non-communist resistance groups beginning in 1986. U.S. assistance to Cambodia accelerated sharply after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1991, which in turn led to the re-opening of the USAID mission in 1992.

With the establishment of a full-scale mission, USAID shifted to a more strategic, long-term approach to reflect the development needs of Cambodia. While the initial focus was on meeting basic human needs, USAID also developed programs to support the U.N.-sponsored move to establish a freely elected government. Improved health and education services also emerged as key concerns.

USAID’s current program reaches all 24 provinces in Cambodia and has a 2010 fiscal year budget of \$69 million.

“USAID programs in Cambodia have evolved over time, with U.S. Government policy and legislative parameters continuing to have an important impact,” said Mission Director Flynn Fuller. “In 2000, USAID was authorized to engage directly with the Government of Cambodia on issues related to HIV/AIDS. In 2002, this authority was extended to include programs related to basic education and trafficking. In 2007, Congress lifted restrictions barring most direct U.S. assistance to the Cambodian Government.

“Following this change, the United States now has bilateral agreements with Cambodia in health, education, and economic growth. A major focus of our development program—and I like to think we have been successful—is on supporting and strengthening civil society (local NGOs), including capacity building and their overall substantial contribution to the development of the country.”

From the outset, USAID funding was primarily delivered through contracts and grants to private voluntary organizations or international organizations, a pattern that continues to this day. To ensure sustainability, USAID increased the number of Cambodian-run organizations it has worked with over the years, with many going on to become some of the leading local NGOs in the country.

DC-Cam, just one of these successful Cambodian-run organizations, hopes to serve as a partner in global efforts against genocide by creating a permanent research and education center. In addition to continuing its present activities, it will add a museum, library, theater, and conference hall, and offer courses on genocide studies, human rights, and international law.

A CONSTITUTION

اصوات متعددة ..
دستور واحد ..

“Diverse voices, one constitution”

*Outreach poster, Sudanese
Initiative for Constitution Making*



FOR SUDAN

By Warren Ryan

At a critical juncture in the country's history, USAID-supported groups are helping stimulate an inclusive national dialogue to channel the Sudanese people's aspirations for peace and good governance under a new constitution.

THE REPUBLIC of Sudan is at a critical juncture in its history. The interim period of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended with the secession of South Sudan in July 2011, yet a concentration of wealth and political power in Khartoum continues to fuel discontent and armed conflict in several regions of Sudan—Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states, the Darfur region, and the Abyei area, which is contested by Sudan and South Sudan.

Many of the issues of governance that affect Sudan today have arisen from the absence of a permanent constitution to govern as the supreme law of the land. A permanent constitution has eluded Sudan since its independence in 1956, and the country was no closer to a final document by 1983, when the Second Sudanese Civil War broke out. The CPA ended 22 years of war between north and south and ushered in an interim constitution for Sudan, institutionalizing arrangements for power sharing and consultative processes that had been lacking for almost 50 years. With the end of the CPA period and with South Sudan's independence, the interim constitution became obsolete and the need for a permanent governing document for Sudan emerged again.

Worsening economic conditions (arising partly from the loss in oil revenues from the South), regional grievances that fuel conflicts, resistance to meaningful reform, and a lack of accountable governance combine to undermine Sudan's ability to address the challenges to sustainable peace. A new constitution could offer Sudan an opportunity to address these issues.

Just days after South Sudan formally declared its independence, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir addressed the National Assembly in Khartoum, declaring a "second republic" that would "affirm a commitment to the rule of law, the extension of justice, the propagation of a patriotic spirit, the guarantee of citizen



rights, impartiality and transparency in decision making, integrity in public spending, accountability and the dependence on the standards of efficiency.”

However, many observers and Sudanese leaders of influence balked at Bashir’s proclamation, citing ongoing violent conflicts in key areas across the nation, as well as a lack of progress on the part of the government in establishing a national consultative process for a new constitution.

U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Ambassador Princeton Lyman stressed the need for governance reform last September: “The government [of Sudan] has said that they are going to undertake a major constitutional process. Our message to the government is: This is the opportunity for the government to draw in the parties from all around the country and deal frankly with issues of decentralization of power, of wealth sharing, of new government arrangements.”

The absence of a widely accepted roadmap toward a new constitution

has invigorated civil society. Organizations across Sudan have seized the opportunity by establishing forums to discuss key constitutional reforms. These civic dialogues center on creating a more democratic and inclusive government; addressing key issues such as equitable distribution of public goods and services and guarantees of civil and political liberties; and economic and social rights, including the role of women and youth.

USAID is collaborating with some of these civil society organizations to stimulate an inclusive national dialogue around good governance and democratic reform that would channel the Sudanese people’s aspirations and priorities for a permanent constitution. To support civic awareness and participation, USAID has helped fund established civil society networks that are focusing on constitutional review.

USAID’s primary partner in this effort is the Sudanese Institute for the Development of Civil Society (IDCS),



Photo by Sudan Initiative for Constitution Making

During a USAID-supported workshop in Khartoum, a participant from Gezira state presents his group’s action plan for raising community awareness on the constitutional process.

which collaborates with Sudanese civil society networks to facilitate national dialogue on a new constitution. An initiative called the Sudanese Initiative for Constitution Making provides a forum for diverse civic groups to debate specific elements of constitutional reform with the aim of reaching broad segments of the public.

The initiative convened citizen dialogues in each of Sudan’s 15 states, collecting public input on the content of a new constitution. With USAID support, IDCS and its partners have conducted more than 75 of these forums across Sudan, which were well-attended by citizens, civil society organizations, and in some locations, local government officials. The forums have worked to include women and youth as both audience members and as activists.

“We are interested in the final product that comes out of our discussions and workshops on the constitution—namely, a set of principles and rights that can be agreed upon as being



Photo by Sudan Initiative for Constitution Making

Participants from all three Darfuri states develop their action plan for upcoming forums in their respective states during a July 2011 USAID workshop in Khartoum on the constitutional process.

important for all Sudanese,” said IDCS Chairman Abdel Mitaal Girshab. “We are interested in proper advocacy of these rights as well as the participatory, inclusive, and deliberative process in which we are currently engaged, not political maneuvering for one cause or the other. It is important for the credibility of the process that it be considered non-partisan and transparent, so we ourselves strive to remain impartial, yet passionate, in our advocacy,” he said.

To spread awareness about their activities, IDCS and its partners publish weekly pages in two local newspapers on constitutional issues and plan to publish a booklet on the importance of the constitution in daily life called “The Constitution in our Daily Food Basket.”

A series of colorful posters highlighting aspects of the constitutional process have also been produced for distribution to create a visible reminder that the process is underway. As part of its efforts to reach citizens, including those who are illiterate, IDCS has produced several songs, skits, and plays on civic participation that can be broadcast on local radio stations.

“While it is evident that a new constitution for the Republic of Sudan is necessary, it is only through civic engagement and dialogue that a process of constitutional review becomes meaningful,” said USAID Democracy and Governance Team Leader Lazhar Aloui. “The work of the Sudanese Initiative for Constitution Making and other civil society groups is an investment, not just in producing a constitution document that is acceptable to the majority of Sudanese, but also in a culture of rule of law, civic participation, equitable governance, and peace.” ■

Building Civil Society, Bridging the Divide

Over the past two years, USAID, through its partner National Democratic Institute (NDI), has helped establish two networks—one based in Sudan, one in South Sudan—of nearly 100 nonpartisan civil society organizations that have created coalitions to promote citizens’ rights and democracy, including overseeing landmark election and referendum processes, and providing civic education. The Sudanese Group for Democracy and Elections (SuGDE) served Sudan, and the Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections (SuNDE) covered South Sudan.

“Through USAID funding, SuGDE and SuNDE were the only groups that were able to create a nationwide observation,” said Traci Cook, the then-NDI resident director for Southern Sudan. “That was incredibly symbolically important to see northerners and southerners working together and agreeing on an objective observation and agreeing on what they saw throughout Sudan in the elections and ultimately the referendum [on self-determination for southern Sudan].”

Among the notable activities carried out by these networks were:

- Collaborating across the north/south divide to provide voter education for the referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan in January 2011
- Training and deploying 4,300 observers to more than 2,000 polling stations across all 25 states of northern and southern Sudan for the April 2010 nationwide elections, and more than 3,200 observers for the January 2011 referendum
- Observing voting in the May 2011 Southern Kordofan state elections
- Releasing public statements on the fairness and transparency of these processes and noting any irregularities reported by their observers
- Currently, the civil society network active in South Sudan is supporting dialogue between civil society and the government on a process to review the existing interim constitution, and draft a permanent constitution.



A member of the South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections is interviewed by the media during the January 2011 referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan.

Radio for a New Nation

By Angela Stephens

FOR DECADES, radio waves have been the primary vehicle to disseminate information in Sudan, as in many places where literacy is low, electricity is inconsistent or uneven, and media options are few. But until eight years ago, most people in South Sudan did not have access to radio or any type of independent media.

In 2003, when Sudan was still embroiled in civil war, Sudan Radio Service, the country's first independent broadcaster of news and information, was launched with USAID assistance. In the early days, broadcasts took place on shortwave from Nairobi for just one hour per day.

Since then, the Agency's support for the platform has helped educate and inform millions of people. In addition to Sudan Radio Service, USAID also supported the establishment of six community radio stations between 2005 and 2011 in southern Sudan and in northern Sudan's Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states. The Agency also supplied over 200,000 solar and crank-powered radios throughout the south and the Three Areas (Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Abyei), increasing access to the broadcasts.

When the 22-year civil war ended with the landmark Comprehensive

Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, radio was the most efficient and effective way to inform citizens about the agreement and their rights and responsibilities under it. These rights and responsibilities included participating in a nationwide census, voting in



A teacher at Torit East Primary School in Torit, Eastern Equatoria state, South Sudan, holds a solar-powered, wind-up radio as she gives her students a lesson using South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction.

nationwide elections in 2010—the first voting opportunity for many Sudanese—and the referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan, which led to the creation of the new nation of the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011.

“USAID recognized that it was important to support radio that provided an independent source of reliable information in Sudan, to support the peace process and help mitigate conflicts that could undermine the CPA,” said Donna Kerner, a USAID democracy specialist who helped establish the community radio network in South Sudan in the years before the country's independence. “Community radio is particularly important in ethnically diverse,

multilingual areas that are vulnerable to conflict to provide an accessible community forum for diverse views,” she added.

Particularly in remote areas of South Sudan outside the capital of Juba, radio is often the only source of information available. Due to the legacy of war, there is a lack of electricity except in a few major towns, a dearth of print media, exceedingly low rates of Internet access, and high levels of illiteracy. Approximately 73 percent of South Sudanese adults cannot read.

Warrap state, for example, which borders the Abyei Area that is disputed by Sudan and South Sudan, has three radio stations—a government-run station in the state capital, Kwajok; a Catholic Radio Network station in Tonj; and Mayardit FM in Turalei, Twic County, run by the NGO Internews and funded by USAID.

“The radio stations are a great source of information for the citizens

of Warrap,” said Eric Kessler, a U.S. Government representative based in Warrap state and part of a team helping to build relationships between the U.S. Government and local government officials in South Sudan. “Without the radio stations, people wouldn’t know where to get information on a daily basis.”

MANY DISPLACED persons who fled fighting that erupted in the disputed Abyei Area in May are sheltering in Twic County and need assistance with food, medical care, water, and sanitation. Twic County is also hosting a substantial number of South Sudanese who recently returned from living in Sudan; many of them lived there for decades after fleeing war in the south. They have returned to their areas of origin to resettle and restart their lives, and many need assistance.

“There’s a coordinated effort between the USAID-supported radio station and the NGOs so they can help people identify where resources are and connect lost family members,” Kessler explained. “So it’s a useful resource in a time of crisis.”

USAID funding currently supports three other community FM radio stations run by Internews—in Upper Nile, Unity, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states—which together with the Twic station broadcast to more than 2 million people, nearly a quarter of South Sudan’s population. The stations broadcast news and information on topics including agriculture, adult literacy, health, hygiene, peace building, and cultural tolerance.

In Juba, Sudan Radio Service—managed by the Boston-based Education Development Center with USAID funding—launched 98.6 SRS FM in December 2010, and currently broadcasts 12 hours per day on FM and 6 hours on shortwave, reaching 1.1 million people. The station has begun generating advertising revenue, which will help make the service sustainable over time. It has also established a partnership with Juba University that offers a certificate in broadcast journalism.

RADIO IS NOT only the most important way to reach the broadest audience in South Sudan with news and information. It is also a critical tool for teaching both young students and adults who have had limited education opportunities, and is helping to build teachers’ skills.

Since 2004, USAID has supported the South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction project, which provides educational radio programs for primary school classes on topics such as English and math, English language lessons for adults, and programs for teacher training. Since 2004, the broadcasts have reached more than 473,000 primary school students and more than 842,000 South Sudanese with English language radio programming for adults.

The programs reach all of South Sudan’s 10 states through radio broadcasts used in classrooms and other settings, helping to increase the low literacy levels and enlighten South Sudanese on their roles and responsibilities as citizens. As the South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction Teacher’s Guide to “The Learning Village”

LISTEN TO
Sudan Radio broadcast in English at
www.sudanradio.org

In the first public opinion poll conducted in South Sudan, supported by USAID, **61 percent of South Sudanese interviewed said that radio is their primary source of news and information.** The next most common source was “word of mouth” (16 percent). The nationwide poll of adults age 18 and over was conducted in September 2011 by Pechter Polls for USAID partner International Republican Institute.

program for primary school students states: “Citizens who cannot read and write with ease cannot fully participate in society.”

“In this new nation where English is the official language, but many children and teachers do not speak or understand English well, and there is a lack of instructional materials, South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction provides a standardized way to give teachers a roadmap for lessons, and to teach students in engaging ways, including with songs and games that help them learn English,” said William Osafo, USAID/South Sudan’s education team leader.

USAID support for radio has helped inform millions of South Sudanese about democracy and their rights and roles as citizens as well as everyday topics such as health and hygiene, and has provided a forum for teaching people of all ages. ■

USAID’s successful radio programs are a tribute to the dedication of John Granville, a USAID democracy officer who was managing the programs when he and his driver, Abdelrahman Abbas Rahama, were killed by terrorists in Khartoum in the early hours of Jan. 1, 2008.

Photo by Checchi and Co.

Afghan elders, under a USAID program, meet to share challenges and best practices in traditional dispute resolution and to collaborate on serious or long-term disputes.

WHEN LOVE

In Afghanistan, USAID-sponsored activities seek to strengthen the linkages between the tribal and formal justice systems, while also serving to educate on and promote basic human rights.

WHEN Soraya and Idrees* fell in love and eloped, they violated a cultural taboo so strong among the Pashtun people of Afghanistan they could have paid for it with their lives.

The groom's family also could have been forced to give daughters or other girls in their household to the bride's family to compensate for their lost daughter and to restore their honor. *Baad*, the practice of gifting girls to repay debts or pay for serious crimes of male family members, has ruined the lives of young women in Afghanistan for centuries.

Although the girls usually become wives in their new homes, they often are treated like slaves and living symbols of the misdeeds of their family members.

Thanks to a culturally sensitive USAID-funded project that addresses issues arising from such practices, Soraya and Idrees were not only spared their lives and allowed to remain together, but no girls from the groom's family were given in *baad*.

The project, implemented by Checchi and Co. Consulting Inc., a U.S.-based

the respective district's most common disputes in a manner that promotes human rights and conformity with the legal system. Since the project's inception in April 2010, approximately 350 one-day workshops and solutions-based discussion sessions have been conducted for more than 6,000 male and female elders in southern and eastern Afghanistan using Afghan law and Sharia scholars from the national universities. These beneficiaries have attended an average of 2.4 events each, and the number is growing."

In Afghanistan, violent crimes are increasingly handled by the formal justice system, while civil disputes (inheritance, family, land disputes, etc.) are often resolved through the informal system. Choosing the formal or informal system varies according to the type of dispute or crime, and the options available in a community.

AFTER 30 YEARS of conflict, Afghanistan's formal justice system is in disarray. Most of the 431 existing Afghan laws are several decades old, and many contradict each other.

concentrated in the capital, while most of the country is poorly covered. Judges and lawyers willing to serve outside Kabul operate without adequate financial and structural support and in frequent physical danger from local strongmen and insurgents.

For these reasons, and because of a long tradition of tribal justice, roughly 80 percent of disputes in Afghanistan are resolved through the informal system run by village elders in ad-hoc dispute-resolution groups called *jirgas*, or through standing councils called *shuras*.

"Because of the prevalence of the traditional tribal justice system outside of urban areas and because of high levels of mistrust of the formal justice system in the countryside, we chose to work with traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms. We encourage linkages with the formal system rather than promote the formal system in areas where Afghans are too skeptical of it," said Don Chisholm, a USAID Foreign Service Officer involved in the design work.

In addition to using judges and law professors from the formal sector as trainers for the informal program,

MEETS TRADITION

By Katharine Dow

company with a strong local presence, strengthens the linkages between the traditional and formal justice systems by conducting legal education workshops for community-based dispute resolution practitioners.

Checchi Chief of Party Kelly Gavan reported: "The workshops focus on

Legislative revision to a single law can take three years or more.

According to Afghan Government statistics, half of the country has no public defenders or prosecutors, and 70 percent of those who exist have only a high school education. The formal justice system in Afghanistan is

USAID funds complementary activity in the formal justice sector through its Rule of Law Stabilization Program—Formal Component. That project works to develop the capacity of Afghanistan's courts (including judges and court administrators) and law

continued on p. 47

NIGERIA'S INFORMATION-FREEDOM TRIUMPH

By Eburn Aleshinloye

After an 11-year struggle to pass the Freedom of Information bill, a quest to bring greater accountability and transparency in public service ends in a landmark law.

IN FEBRUARY 2011, Nigeria's House of Representatives responded to Nigerians' call for greater transparency and accountability by passing the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill by a voice vote with no dissents. A Senate vote concurred the next month.

President Goodluck Jonathan signed a harmonized version of the bill into law on May 28, just before he took office for his first full tenure. Had he not done so on that date, the bill would have had to be reintroduced to the new National Assembly for fresh deliberations.

The journey for the FOI law has been a tough and hard fought one, languishing in the National Assembly for over 11 years, including three parliamentary sessions, five public hearings, and a presidential veto. In the end, the landmark legislation overrides the antiquated Official Secrets Act of 1911. For the first time, public institutions are legally obliged to keep proper records and must respond to requests for information within seven days.

Celebrations by all stakeholders, including journalists, civil society organizations, and champion lawmakers have taken place across the country. All agree that the FOI law is a significant development in the quest for

accountability and transparency in public service and, by extension, good governance.

Nobel Prize-winning writer Wole Soyinka, who once ran a newspaper operation out of his garage, told *NEXT* newspaper in August 2011 that the law will help to "shred the web of silence" over government business in Nigeria, thereby encouraging public scrutiny of governance. "The swagger of indifference will give way to nervous glances over the shoulder," he was quoted as saying.

The law makes public records and certain other government-held information more freely available to the public. It provides broad rights of access, clear procedures to follow, and exceptions that acknowledge no right is absolute. It also importantly provides for the protection of whistleblowers. Citizens can now access information that will greatly enhance transparency and accountability at all levels of government.

Because the law is under a year old, stakeholders have had little time to find out how government would respond to FOI requests. However, one NGO, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), recently tested the new law by asking for information on how stolen assets

recovered by successive governments were used.

SERAP's request to the accountant general would have simply been ignored under the Official Secrets Act. However, in this instance, the accountant general sent a letter stating that the request was "being examined alongside the provisions of the cited Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to appropriately determine the nature of information to release." While this does not respond to the inquiry, it has made government more aware of the need to address such inquiries promptly.

The federal government, bowing to pressure from civil society, has just inaugurated an inter-ministerial committee headed by the attorney general and minister of justice to fashion operational guidelines for implementing the act in all government ministries, departments, and agencies. The committee is also tasked with preparing a road map for sensitizing and training public officers on the act and developing a framework to benchmark its implementation.

THE LACK OF transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility in managing government revenues at all levels has set back Nigeria's economic development by decades. In its quest to help the country address corruption and to bring about accountability and transparency in public service, USAID/Nigeria's 11-year campaign that ended in the passage of the landmark FOI law was hard fought and heavily contested. The USAID mission established a broad coalition of civil society organizations and other stakeholders to work on passage of the bill and to inform the public so that they could make their opinions known to the government.

With USAID assistance, the FOI bill was nearly enacted in 2002, but action stopped because of procedural technicalities in the House of Representatives. Further progress was checked by an 80-percent turnover in the National Assembly following the 2003 elections. This meant that USAID/Nigeria and its civil society coalition had to roll up their sleeves to target reform-minded legislators who could help get the FOI bill back on the floor of the National Assembly. But the way forward was blocked as politicians were wary of the law being used to expose corrupt and ineffective governments.

WHEN THE FOI LAW finally was enacted in 2011, it was called an historic step forward in the push to establish accountable, transparent governance. In just a few short months, Nigeria's minister of finance published the budget allocations to the three tiers of government, providing a detailed account of funding and a roadmap to help journalists and likeminded citizens "follow the money." Monthly allocations to the federal, state, and local governments were last published during the Obasanjo presidency four years earlier.

This transparency enables Nigerian citizens to follow their government's fiscal allocations from the federal level down to the grassroots local governments. Social Action, an NGO, has hailed this move as a complement to the tenets of the FOI law as it realizes that access to fiscal information is a right of the Nigerian citizenry and would contribute to creating the desired public sensitivity

GO ONLINE

for the phone app to download the entire FOI law.



Photo by Plus Utomi Ekpei/AFP

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan casts his vote for president in Ogbia district, Bayelsa state, April 16, 2011. The following month, Jonathan signed the country's Freedom of Information bill into law.

to governance, transparency, and accountability in Nigeria.

USAID is now working with civil society and government to ensure the implementation of the law. One of those partners, Media Rights Agenda, has long been a champion of the FOI Act, and this year won the prestigious Pan-African Award in South Africa for "its tireless struggles culminating in the passage of Nigeria's Freedom of Information Act in May 2011."

On Nov. 15, USAID/Nigeria and Media Rights Agenda launched an easy-to-navigate application that allows Java-enabled mobile phone users to download the entire FOI law to their devices. With over 93 million active mobile telephone lines in Nigeria, the application is a powerful tool to help make the law available to the vast majority of Nigerians at no cost.

Improving public awareness of and familiarity with the provisions of the act should translate into a significant increase in the number of people using the law to seek information from public institutions and private entities. ■



Photo by Justin Prud'homme, USAID

A polling station worker opens the ballot box prior to counting votes. Independent observers concluded that the 2011 elections were credible, transparent, and without evidence of significant irregularities or systematic fraud.

Technology Drives Liberia's First **Post-Conflict Elections**

By Justin Prud'homme

Less than 10 years after a crippling civil war ended, Liberians cast their votes in presidential and general elections, remarkable not only for their democratic procedures, but also for their modern tools like voting databases and real-time, web-based results reporting—supported by USAID.

IN LESS than 10 years, Liberia has transformed from a country mired in strife and civil war to one that is peaceful and leading its own free and fair elections.

In the fall of 2011, Liberians went to the polls to cast their votes in presidential and general elections, which were remarkable not only for their modern, democratic procedures, but also for their modern tools like voting databases and real-time, web-based

results reporting—both of which USAID supported.

When Liberia’s civil war ended in 2003—a war that claimed around 350,000 lives in the country—part of the peace agreement called for holding elections in 2005. However, at that time, the National Elections Commission (NEC) lacked the capacity necessary to carry out its mandate. The 14 years of conflict had prompted an exodus of educated professionals and halted development of the next generation of professionals, thereby decimating state institutions.

As a result, the elections were organized with the support of 280 international elections technicians, and overseen by the United Nations mission in Liberia. All of the election magistrates responsible for overseeing the legal administration of the voting process had to come from the U.N.

The election process—transparent, open, and peaceful—ushered in the promise of a new era for the country when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the second round, becoming Africa’s first democratically elected woman president. A former finance minister in the 1970s, Harvard-educated Johnson Sirleaf won the round with 59 percent of the vote, making her Liberia’s 24th president. USAID supported the 2005 election process through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening.

With an eye toward the next round of legislative elections in September

2009, USAID launched a project with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems in Liberia (IFES) to help build the competence and credibility of the NEC.

Democracy and Governance Specialist Louise Fahnbulleh has worked on the project since it began, and with USAID since 2005. “The 2005 elections

commitment to improving for future elections.

“The whole country knew that the election could not have been held without the U.N., but after the election, there were immediate steps taken to begin rebuilding Liberia’s ability to host elections on her own,” reminisces Fahnbulleh. “I can also proudly say, with all this assistance, NEC has improved drastically in managing and taking the lead in the process.”

THE NOVEMBER 2009 senatorial by-election got the program off to a quick start: USAID and IFES provided technical and financial support for the process, including procurement of ballots, indelible ink, t-shirts and caps for civic education, posters and fliers, and poll workers for election day. The program also supported a civic and voter education campaign and a candidate debate.

The two-round election was a success procedurally and, as it involved almost half the country’s voting population, an encouraging test of the election commission’s ability.

In 2011, the NEC organized and executed the first registration of new Liberian voters in 15 years. The registration was pioneering, using solar-powered equipment that allowed voters in rural areas to receive official, printed, laminated voter identification cards within minutes of registering.

USAID and IFES set up a data center for voter registration and national



In rural areas, polling stations were equipped with solar power to allow voters to receive official voter cards within minutes.

were very important for Liberians to get the country back on a good path,” says Fahnbulleh. “So we were all pleased when they were successful through the assistance from the international community.”

Fahnbulleh admits that the level of assistance provided exposed the limits of the NEC’s capability, but says that there was no shortage of

counting and tallying of ballots. This established fraud-detecting features that further bolstered the credibility of the NEC and the elections processes. Voter registration forms were processed rapidly at the new data center, allowing NEC officials to inform the public about the process in real time.

The Carter Center, which independently observed the elections, published a preliminary report following the presidential run-off election. The report stated that: “The first round of the presidential election held on Oct. 11 was found by international and domestic observation groups to be credible, transparent, and without evidence of significant irregularities or systematic fraud. Since none of the 16 candidates received 50 percent plus one of the votes, the top two candidates, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of the Unity Party (UP) and Winston Tubman of the CDC [Congress for Democratic Change], automatically qualified for the run-off election held on Nov. 8.”

The report added that “The [Carter] Center finds that Liberia’s run-off election was conducted in general accordance with the country’s legal framework and international obligations, which provide for genuine democratic elections.”

The elections employed exclusively Liberian magistrates, with the support of only 16 foreign election experts—a stark contrast to the 2005 elections.

With USAID support, mini data centers were installed with dedicated satellite links to the national database center at all 19 magistrate offices. This provided

a decentralized tallying process that fed into the national counting database where official aggregated results were tabulated. All voting station-level counts and magistrate tallies are made available on the NEC web page.

The NEC also engaged the Liberian media to lend transparency to the processes and help protect them from fraud. Reporters covering the election were encouraged to send in the results of each polling place by text message to the Liberian Media Center, a data center funded by USAID, where the results were aggregated and displayed on a public website. The website quickly became the go-to source of election result information for Liberians, receiving over 3.8 million hits during the first round of voting.

IN THE 2011 presidential and general Liberian elections, all seats in the House of Representatives and half the seats in the Senate were being contested, as well as the presidency. With 71 percent of the registered population voting, the Unity Party maintained a plurality in the House and Senate, and Unity Party standard bearer Johnson Sirleaf finished with 44 percent of the presidential vote—the most of any candidate.

Per the Liberian constitution, lack of a winner by absolute majority in the presidential election required the two candidates with the highest vote tally to contest a run-off election. Unity Party incumbent Johnson Sirleaf won the run-off with an overwhelming majority, beating CDC standard bearer Tubman.

The NEC engaged the Liberian media to lend transparency to the processes and help protect them from fraud.

The opposition made claims of fraud during the election, but were largely unable to provide any evidence of wrongdoing, mostly due to the transparent and credible systems that had been put in place.

During the runoff election, there was an opposition boycott and some violence, which served as a reminder of the fragility of political processes in post-conflict societies—and of the need for strong institutions to handle such occurrences.

According to Elizabeth Nelson, acting chairperson of the NEC, this is exactly what happened in 2005.

“Liberia lacks social stability, especially for those large numbers of unemployed youth, so when it comes to elections, they feel this is the only time they can be heard.”

Nelson explains that although Liberia, and the NEC especially, has come a long way since 2005, a lot of work still needs to be done to ensure the continued success of the democracy.

“Political parties in Liberia need assistance. They are governments in waiting, and need assistance in civility, responsibility, and sustainability,” she says, adding that civil society organizations and the ministries of gender and education also need assistance. “This time, many votes were cast along ethnic lines, and even sectional lines, and this is a major issue that needs to be addressed by many institutions within Liberia.”

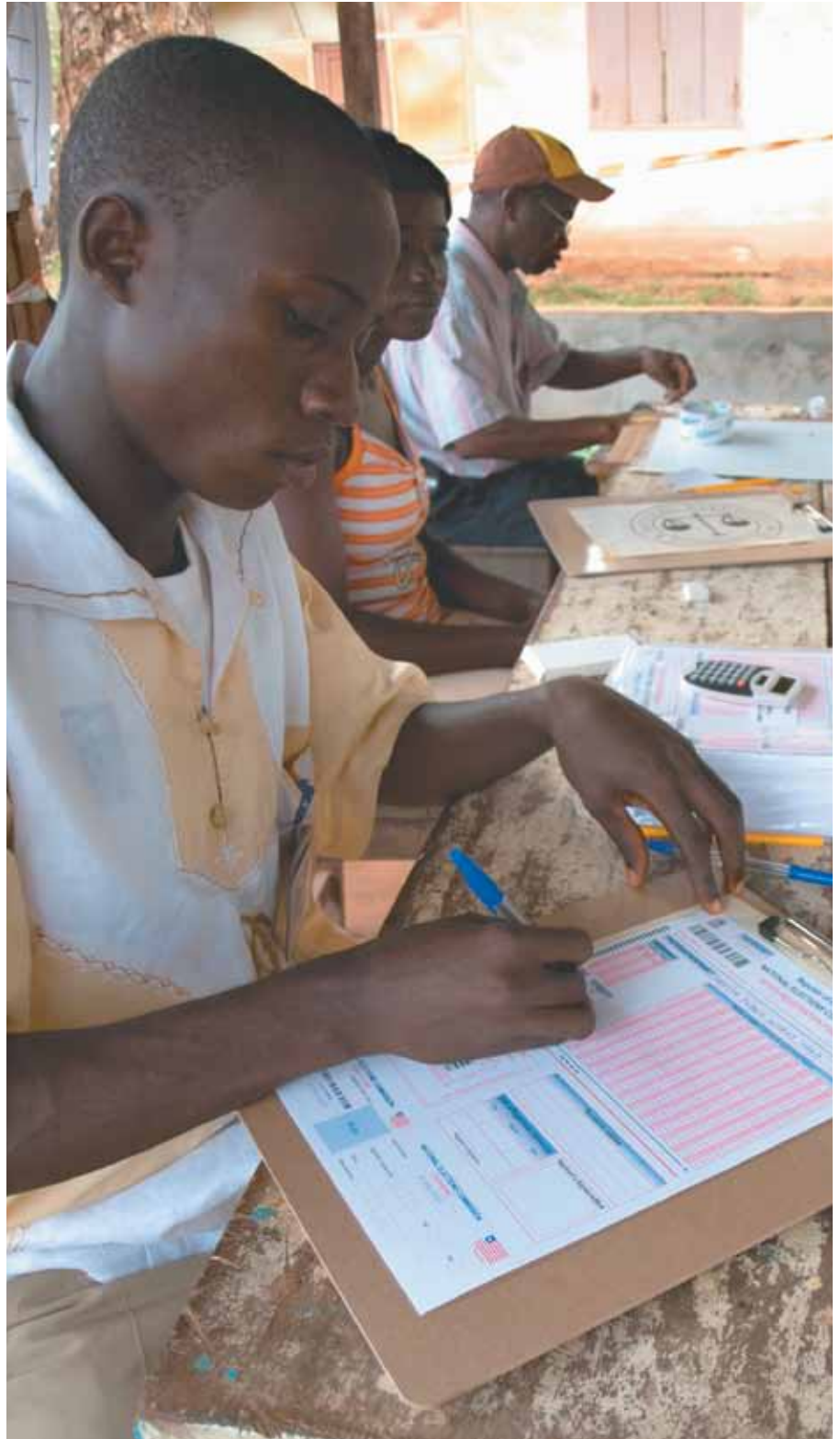
Ultimately, the election process moved forward as scheduled despite the regrettable and widely derided opposition boycott. As a result of the boycott, and possibly in response to the previous day’s violence, voter turnout on the day of the presidential

run-off was markedly lower than the more than 70 percent in the first round. This lower turnout, and the landslide run-off results, prompted the opposition to call into question the results despite the international community certifying the election as free and fair, and accepting the results as legitimate.

Following her confirmation as the winner of the presidential election by the NEC, President Johnson Sirleaf pledged to reconcile with those of different political persuasions, promising “an inclusive government that reaches out to all those who have felt marginalized.”

USAID Democracy and Governance Officer Sean Hall oversaw the program with IFES for over two years, and believes the impressive gains made at the NEC are the direct result of programs that focus on both infrastructure and human capacity building. He explains that NEC staff benefitted from USAID-funded study tours and training that supported administrative and financial best practices. In addition, USAID support was coordinated closely with assistance from the U.N. Development Program and other do-nors to ensure international efforts were complementary and as effective as possible.

“The NEC’s rapid adoption and implementation of technology and increased professional capacity are establishing the commission as a competent and independent institution well poised for future successes in carrying out its mandate,” said Hall. “In the near future, the NEC will no longer need to rely on the support of international experts to organize and host elections.” ■



A Liberian voter registers for the 2011 elections with a member of the National Elections Committee. USAID has helped the committee to run free and fair elections, and provided a modern data center to improve efficiency and transparency.

Photo by Justin Prud'homme, USAID

FOR SURVIVORS OF RAPE, RELIEF IN THERAPY AND LOANS



Photos by Daniela Greco, IRC

A member of a village savings and loan association in Kalulu, Kabare, waits to sign for a loan.

By Judith Bass, Sarah McIvor Murray, and Karin Wachter

Where sexual violence and poverty form a crippling double punch, USAID and its partners are using two distinct but interconnected responses—one psychological, one economic—to help abused women in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

FOR MORE than two decades, armed rebel groups have perpetrated innumerable acts of violence against women in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), including rape, sexual assault, and abductions. The women who survive these brutal attacks face complex

mental health problems such as trauma, shame, fear, feelings of abandonment, and even the desire to die. This distress takes a heavy toll, making it difficult for women to perform essential daily tasks, participate meaningfully in family and community activities, and earn a living.

Often, these women are shunned by their communities, further compounding their mental-health issues and creating or compounding economic ones. Those who do seek mental-health treatment frequently find such services lacking.

All this is beginning to change.

As part of an effort to help female survivors of sexual violence in developing countries worldwide, USAID is assisting women in the South Kivu province of eastern DRC with a combination of psychological and economic support. The goal is to identify well-tested methods of helping women

that can be used in other regions to address a variety of challenges. The project helps survivors to cope more effectively by thinking of the violent event in a different way, and provides them with a way to earn money and reconnect with their communities—a two-pronged response in a country suffering from the challenges of poverty and gender-based violence.

USAID, along with the World Bank, is supporting the work of the Applied Mental Health Research (AMHR) Group at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and local organizations in South Kivu province.

“The combined efforts of these organizations build on case management and basic psychosocial support—essential services that are challenging to establish in contexts as complex as eastern Congo—and take service provision to the next level by adding additional options for survivors to heal and recover,” says Dalita Cetinoglu, director of the International Rescue Committee’s gender-based violence program in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The mental-health intervention now being offered by the organizations was selected specifically in response to concerns expressed by community-based psychosocial assistants (PSAs) who were working directly with the women. The assistants understood that many of their clients needed more effective assistance than they were providing.

CASE MANAGEMENT services, which form the basis of support to survivors, is a process where a social worker assesses the needs of the client (and the client’s family when appropriate), and coordinates, monitors, and

evaluates a package of services to meet the client’s needs.

Instead of settling on basic case management, staff members from the IRC and Johns Hopkins trained local interviewers to assess the needs of survivors of sexual violence in three communities in South Kivu. The interviewers reported that survivors faced not only mental-health issues, but also poverty, lack of access to medicine, and insufficient food resources. The stigmatization, rejection, and alienation of the women contributed to their poverty, creating a self-reinforcing downward spiral.

These findings led to developing and testing something called group cognitive processing therapy (CPT-G) and village savings and loan associations (VSLAs)—two distinct interventions to address the women’s psychosocial and economic needs.

In 2011, the IRC and Johns Hopkins University introduced CPT-G, a mental health intervention that allows service providers to address the specific effects of trauma otherwise not addressed through case management and basic psychosocial support alone.

Cognitive processing therapy has been shown to not only be an effective treatment of post-traumatic stress, such as in a USAID-funded program in northern Iraq, but has also been shown specifically to reduce symptoms in survivors of sexual trauma.

During the treatment, groups of six to eight women participate in 12 weekly sessions. The women learn skills that help them begin to change the way they think about their trauma and the

associated feelings of fear or shame they may experience. Eventually, they begin to think about and cope with the event in a less debilitating way.

For the social economic program, VSLAs—where members of a community pool money from which they can take out small-interest loans and can eventually divest with interest—was selected based on prior USAID-funded IRC experience and evaluation in Burundi.

THE CURRENT IRC-JHU collaboration has different communities of women participating in CPT-G or VSLA to evaluate the impact of each of these interventions on the mental health and functioning of sexual-violence survivors. Therapy participants will also be invited to form savings-and-loan groups after they have completed their 12-week sessions. According to Hopkins researchers, this will show whether the women’s improved mental health and functioning will help them take advantage of

the economic opportunities presented by the loan program.

The evaluation program also includes control groups of women waiting to receive either the mental health or social-economic services.

The JHU research team noted that they need groups of comparison women who are not receiving services in order to determine whether any changes seen among participants are due to the programs themselves. All women in the control groups will receive treatment or access to the saving and loans programs following their waiting period.

READ MORE

about the work of psychosocial workers in eastern DRC in the August 2010 issue of FrontLines.

To date, seven psychosocial workers in South Kivu have been trained in how to run cognitive processing therapy groups. A total of 141 survivors of sexual violence have completed their sessions, representing nearly 90 percent of those enrolled. The IRC staff is now conducting follow-up assessments with the women.

Additionally, more than 150 women in groups of 15 to 25 are currently participating in village savings-and-loan associations in South Kivu. The women

contribute their own savings to a joint fund. They can then apply to take out loans that they later pay back to the group with interest.

“What really matters for us is that, thanks to our VSLA, we have access to money and that this money has an impact on our households, particularly on nutrition and on access to school for our children,” said a member of a VSLA in the territory of Walungu.

“In the past, we didn’t know what saving was, we were not informed,”

said another woman from the same association. “Today, I can take a credit of 10,000 Congolese francs (around \$11). I sell *lenga-lenga* (a local variety of spinach) and I have a benefit of \$2.20 per week, half for me, half to pay back the interests to the group at the end of the month. With this money I’m able to feed my children.”

At the end of approximately a one-year cycle, members cash out, receiving their initial investment plus any



Photos by Daniela Greco, IRC

The secretary of a village savings and loan association in Madaka, Walungu, registers the shares bought by a member: Each star represents a share saved by the member, for a value of 500 Congolese francs (\$0.55). Members meet every week and can buy up to five shares per meeting.

accumulated interest. Through participation in such a group, women not only earn money and have access to small loans for microenterprise, but they also interact with other women—only some of whom are survivors themselves—and take part in a community of shared trust and support.

“Our husbands are happy. Since we gathered together as a group, we share our problems and receive good advice from other members,” said a beneficiary. “This improved the communication in our families.”

ALTHOUGH THE implementers are still evaluating the success of this program, the South Kivu psychosocial assistants and their supervisors report large decreases in symptoms of depression among the women participating in the CPT therapy sessions. The PSAs also describe feeling a sense of personal empowerment from being able to help women in their communities.

Participants, many of whom originally reported feelings of blame and guilt about being raped, are now acknowledging that what happened to them is not their fault. One PSA said that for women in her group, “most of them said in the beginning that they were worthless, but now at the end of therapy they are saying they are very useful to the society. One woman said her in-laws want her to come and help with a family member who is sick. Before, they treated her as if she was worthless because of the rape, but now that they need her help, it means she is important and worthy.”

These PSAs are also seeing changes in the abused women’s families and communities. One explained that “initially women said they could no longer participate in community activities because they felt that no one would listen to a raped woman, but now [PSAs] notice that women are joining groups like the choir, farming groups, prayer groups, and other community groups, and report that they are speaking up and are being listened to.”

Another PSA noted that “women also reported that [initially] they did not believe the therapy will work, but out of desperation they give it a shot. But, now at the end of CPT, they can truly say it is magic.” The women in some areas are already organizing to continue meeting as a group, despite the conclusion of the 12-week program.

USAID expects preliminary results from the two-pronged effort in the first half of 2012, and complete results in 2013.

The results of the evaluation, in addition to the feedback of the PSAs, IRC staff, and the women themselves, will increase understanding of what can be done to help women survivors of sexual violence. This understanding will, in turn, enable USAID and its partners to provide women in other regions with much-needed assistance. ■

Judith Bass and Sarah McIvor Murray are with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Karin Wachter is with the IRC.

READ MORE

about USAID’s work to aid Iraqis suffering with post-traumatic stress using techniques similar to those being tried in DRC in the October 2009 issue of FrontLines.

Other Efforts in DRC

The IRC/Johns Hopkins project is part of USAID’s larger efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in DRC, where over 57,000 vulnerable individuals and nearly 20,000 SGBV survivors received specialized support services as a result of USAID programs in fiscal year 2010 alone. More than 7,000 service providers and 300 Congolese service-delivery organizations improved their ability to deliver high-quality services to SGBV survivors, abandoned children, and their families. And 1,450 separated or abandoned children—many of whom are survivors of sexual abuse—were reunited with their families.

USAID has also provided technical assistance in drafting critical legislation and subsequent prosecutions in SGBV cases in the country. USAID efforts to promote awareness of the 2006 Law against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence led to an increase in surveyed population awareness from 21 percent to over 66 percent in South Kivu province.

USAID also works with civil society organizations to improve gender perceptions and empower vulnerable populations. The Agency has provided technical assistance to over 100 national human rights organizations on how to successfully plan and manage projects, raise community awareness of human rights and SGBV, and monitor courts and judicial processes.

Growing Democracy in Post-Dictator Paraguay

Adriana Casati and Michael Eschleman

FOR PARAGUAY, a small landlocked country in the heart of South America, a strong democracy with social justice was a dream held by many, but expressed only in hushed tones for decades. The overthrow of the 34-year dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner in 1989 converted the dream into a possibility overnight.

Today, attaining that robust and socially just democracy is a major priority in Paraguay's quest for development—one that citizens and organizations alike seek with growing assertiveness and commitment. It is also critical for the United States, which has seen a new period of collaboration on matters of regional security and economic partnership since Paraguay's emergence from dictatorship.

"I believe that the fact that local organizations like *Semillas* work actively in democracy programs generates a much greater impact than that which a foreign consultant could generate," says Marta Ferrara, executive director of local NGO and USAID partner *Semillas para la Democracia* (Seeds for Democracy). "There is more trust on the part of citizens due to the knowledge of [local] reality that we local organizations have."

Semillas para la Democracia is an early beneficiary of a USAID local capacity-building program. In only five years, *Semillas* has gone from beneficiary to partner in the implementation of USAID's democracy programs. The group's goal is to help improve the quality of Paraguayan democracy through

citizen participation, social justice, and government accountability. It is building local capacity by helping civil society organizations to promote public sector accountability, support broader alliances, and enhance their interaction with the government.

In fact, all of USAID/Paraguay's democracy activities are implemented with local organizations, not large NGOs or contractors. The core of USAID's democracy-building efforts in Paraguay has been the fight against corruption and for more transparent institutions—working with the judiciary and the prosecutor's office to ensure the rule of law; empowering local governments; professionalizing the civil service; and building a more inclusive democracy with equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has also worked with USAID, through the Threshold Program, to strengthen the justice system and improve internal controls in public institutions, among other activities. Paraguay's \$30.3 million Stage II Threshold Program, signed in April 2009, is a Government of Paraguay initiative to fight corruption and ensure the rule of law.

In 2007, USAID and MCC helped Paraguay's Supreme Court transform its obsolete and inefficient disciplinary system into a modern and transparent one that offers greater access to citizens. An Office of Complaints was incorporated

into the disciplinary system, with case-tracking software designed to ensure confidentiality and transparency throughout the disciplinary process.

In addition, officials created a Judicial Audit Office with the ability to investigate and recommend sanctions against judges and justice-related professionals, including attorneys.

"To us, it was really blessed ... the creation of this department of judicial audit," said Olga Torres de Fernandez, remembering the trial against her deceased daughter's doctors, just recently convicted for medical negligence.

Andrea Fernandez Torres died five years ago of dengue and was neither correctly diagnosed nor treated by doctors in a private health clinic. Torres sued the doctors, but attorneys for the defendants maneuvered to create delay after delay. The trial was suspended three times. "Four and a half years [had passed] and I didn't know where to turn," she said.

Ten days before the statute of limitations was set to expire, Torres and her attorneys discovered the new audit unit. "We found out that there was an office which could receive [claims] and that could also act ... not only against attorneys, but also against judges that also fall into these kinds of legal chicanery," Torres said. "We requested help from the audit office through a note, and, for us, it was a true blessing that, thanks to that, the necessary diligence was immediately performed."

The audit office investigated the case and recommended to the Supreme Court that an administrative sanction be applied to the defendants' attorney, and that the trial proceed. The trial resulted in convictions for two of the three attending doctors.

During the past year, almost 1,200 claims have been filed at this office against

judges, judicial staff, and attorneys, many of which resulted in sanctions.

USAID and MCC were also behind the creation of a new curriculum for the Paraguayan Police Academy that emphasizes practical training over theory, and includes modules on ethics and human rights, which were previously only briefly mentioned.

“I realize that we are improving,” says Assistant Officer for Order and Security Santiago Espinosa of the first graduating class with this new curriculum, while pointing out that it helps improve the police force’s professionalism, and also prepares cadets to respond to citizens’ expectations.

The graduation ceremony was presided over by the Paraguayan Minister of the Interior Carlos Filizzola, who said: “This event was very important because we are giving society a new group of police.”

Underscoring the fact that in this graduating class policewomen obtained the best grade-point averages, Filizzola said: “[this] is important because it means that the police force is also in new times ... today women also occupy an important role within the police forces.”

Assistant Officer for Order and Security Karen Barreto, who received the third best grade-point average in the class, added: “To me, this graduation is an enormous satisfaction because I will now be able to help my country improve.”

Another one of the institutions that instituted reforms in the fight against corruption is the customs office. In October 2011, Paraguayan Customs registered its all-time record in revenues, collecting

approximately \$165 million, while also registering a 250-percent increase in seizures of smuggled goods compared to 2005—from \$1.6 million during that entire year to \$5.6 million during October 2011 alone. DETAVE, an anti-contraband unit created with USAID assistance under the MCC Threshold Program, helped make those figures skyrocket. The unit’s major success in recent months can be attributed to the technical assistance and training received from the



“Beto,” left, a young man with intellectual disabilities currently working as a program assistant at local civic society organization and USAID partner, *Fundación Saraki*, delivers draft legislation to Minister Lilian Soto to increase job opportunities for people with disabilities in the public sector.

program, which enabled DETAVE to strategically plan larger seizures by going after the big fish in the tri-border area near the Brazilian border.

USAID also has been committed to helping minorities achieve equal job opportunities in the public and private sectors. Luis Alberto Aguilera, better known as “Beto,” is a 24-year-old man with intellectual disability, who for the past three years has been working as a project assistant at the local NGO and

USAID partner, *Fundación Saraki*. Beto arrived at Saraki thanks to the USAID-funded Effective Labor Inclusion program, and is one of more than 200 people with disabilities to secure a job through policy changes backed by the Agency and the NGO.

“I am very lucky to be working, because it is difficult to find a job, and more so for people with disabilities. My life has changed completely since I started this new stage; it feels good being important and useful for others, that people trust you and give you opportunities,” Beto said.

Semillas para la Democracia’s Marta Ferrara believes that USAID has managed to implement a highly successful, multifaceted, and comprehensive democracy program in Paraguay. “We need to strengthen our institutions through a society with ethical values that allow for the necessary cultural change for democracy to allow all Paraguayans a more dignified life...” she said.

“The United States has been a critical and much-appreciated partner with key Paraguayan reformers as they are moving from dictatorship to a modern, democratic state,” says Rose Rakas, USAID/Paraguay mission director. “Governance remains a big challenge here, but real progress is being made. Paraguay’s institutions are getting stronger, and this is permitting it to assume an increasingly important role in addressing security and other challenges in this critical region. A democratic, well-governed Paraguay will contribute substantially to regional and U.S. national security.” ■

Preparing for the “Big One” in Nepal

By Douglas Ebner

The United States is helping reduce disaster risks in one of the earth’s most disaster-prone corners, increasing the Nepalese Government’s resilience and strengthening its capacity to respond to its citizens.

PERCHED atop the Himalayas, Nepal faces multiple natural hazards, including annual floods, landslides, and avalanches, as well as periodic droughts, forest fires and disease epidemics. However, for the 28 million people of Nepal, the risk of earthquakes is what looms largest, in particular, the proverbial “big one”—an earthquake impacting urban areas that would eclipse those of recent memory.

Nepal’s capital city of Kathmandu, with an estimated population between 3 million and 5 million, has not experienced a major earthquake in more than 75 years, and there is concern among seismologists that the city could be struck by an earthquake of magnitude 8.0 or greater—at least 10 times as powerful as the January 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti.

Similar to Haiti, Nepal is situated in a seismic zone that is capable of generating catastrophic earthquakes, and like Port-au-Prince, Kathmandu has experienced rapid urban development, including widespread construction of buildings considered too weak to withstand a powerful quake.

The importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs is clearly

evident in Nepal. These programs are used to prevent or decrease the impact of a disaster on a population, or to increase the ability of a community to withstand the disaster so it can recover more rapidly after the event. Since Nepal faces a number of hazards, an integrated U.S. Government approach to DRR, based on more than a decade of USAID engagement and now encompassing a “whole-of-government” effort, is being used to demonstrate best practices in disaster preparedness and mitigation.

There is consensus among international donor agencies that a concerted emphasis on disaster risk reduction is a necessary and cost-effective investment, empowering communities to reduce and mitigate disaster risk, increasing their resilience to disaster events and strengthening government capacity to respond.

The international community generally accepts that national governments themselves should play a key role in the design and support of DRR programs. Not only do they have a duty to ensure the safety of their citizens, but they also can help to implement the programs and create the necessary policies and frameworks to maintain them.

“Unless we act now,” said Margareta Wahlstrom, special representative of the U.N. secretary-general for disaster preparedness, “we will see more and more disasters due to unplanned urbanization and environmental degradation Disaster risk reduction . . . is a strategic and technical tool for helping national and local governments to fulfill their responsibilities to citizens.”

DRR efforts can mean the difference between rains causing minor damage or mudslides and flooding that destroys lives and livelihoods.

USAID has focused on risk reduction and preparedness in Nepal for years. A pilot project in Nepal known as Total Disaster Risk Management, implemented through the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in the early 2000s, first introduced the concept of DRR in Asia. USAID has also supported the Program for the Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER) in Nepal, through which hundreds of emergency responders have been trained in collapsed structure search and rescue and medical first response.

In collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, USAID has sponsored training for Nepal Government officials in the Incident Command System—a management framework designed to integrate personnel, equipment, procedures, facilities, and communications during complex events, enabling more effective response operations within a common organizational structure.

U.S. AMBASSADOR TO Nepal Scott H. DeLisi has made DRR a top priority, building on USAID’s work and promoting a whole-of-government approach to address the high risk of

a catastrophic earthquake faced by Nepal's population.

Recognizing there would be few new resources in a tight budget environment, DeLisi developed an integrated U.S. Government approach to strategically target human and financial resources, and leverage investments from the Government of Nepal, donors, and the private sector. The upshot: an interagency DRR office led by a USAID Foreign Service Officer.

In September 2011, an interagency team conducted a broad-based, multi-hazard assessment. The end product was the "Five-Year DRR Strategic Framework" with clear objectives for U.S. Government DRR engagement in Nepal coupled with indicators to measure and evaluate performance and outcomes.

Currently, USAID is building resilient communities by mainstreaming DRR throughout its development programs, developing first-responder capability and engaging the private sector on solutions to reduce risk.

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense has taken the lead on developing joint disaster response plans with the Nepal Army. Defense's ongoing engagement focuses on building response capacity through training, exercising disaster plans and synchronizing them with civilian plans, and investing in infrastructure to mitigate risk and increase response effectiveness. Reinforcing these efforts is the State Department's diplomatic engagement of the Nepalese Government and other public and private actors to put more focus on DRR, as well as integrating DRR into ongoing training and exchange programs through the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu.

continued on p. 48



A student from Shree Janaudaya Lower Secondary School in Kathmandu, Nepal, demonstrates how to take cover during an earthquake. The school was part of a National Society for Earthquake Technology program to provide structural reinforcement and earthquake-preparedness education.

Photo by Gari Mayberry, USAID



A Printing Press for East Timor

This Timor-Leste printing press—the only one in the country—was destroyed in 1999 in violence following a referendum on independence. Today, the artifact remains near the current press at *Suara Timor Lorosae*, the first independent newspaper in Timor-Leste, to remind people of the importance of a free and independent media. Salvador J. Ximenes Soares, shown beside the press, is the newspaper's editor. USAID funded the destroyed press and the one that replaced it.

By Lisa Rogers and Germano Boavida

In 1994, USAID provided the only press in East Timor to a local newspaper. Nearly two decades later, the Agency is continuing to help the fledgling nation build a free and independent media sector.

THE PRINTING press was invented by the German Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-1400s, sparking a “printing revolution” and leading to some of the most transformative changes the world has ever seen. The rapid democratization of ideas in politics, science, religion, and culture was made possible by the press, and effectively ushered in the modern age as we know it. Later in that century, over 100 countries used Gutenberg’s press, and the printed book became something of a mainstay in Europe.

Fast forward 500 years to East Timor in 1994. That is the year that USAID

provides a printing press to *Suara Timor Timur* (*The Voice of East Timor* in Indonesian). It was the only printing press available during occupation by Indonesia from 1975 to 1999, and its procurement was part of the U.S. Government’s effort to support an independent media sector and the flow of information when the Timorese were effectively cut off from the rest of the world.

After the press was destroyed in 1999 in widespread violence after the referendum on independence, USAID provided a replacement press, still in use by the same newspaper, now called

Suara Timor Lorosae, the same name in Timor-Leste’s national language.

In 2002, Timor-Leste became the first new nation of the millennium, after 24 years of Indonesian occupation and two years of U.N. administration. In the first years after independence, USAID supported the national radio station, now Radio Timor-Leste, as well as more than a dozen community radio stations across the country. Radio still has the broadest reach of all information media in Timor-Leste. The Agency has continued to support the expansion of a free and independent media sector by providing technical training for young journalists, developing and establishing the first four-year journalism degree in the country, and supporting a robust defense of media rights and freedom of information.

Since then, thousands of Timor-Leste’s aspiring journalists, many of them women, have benefitted from USAID



Photo by Mauricio Borges, USAID

training, and most media organizations have benefitted from the Agency's small-grants programs. Journalism training included not only the basics of reporting but also the basics of running a media company. Just 10 years after independence, Timor-Leste has a lively print, broadcast, and online media sector, with four daily papers in the capital, Dili; more than 20 radio stations across the country; and several online news and information sites.

Over the past five years, USAID has helped establish six Media Houses in district capitals and major towns equipped with Internet cafes that also function as resource centers for local journalists. These new Media Houses provide journalists access to computers, printers, cameras, and recording equipment, and also host training sessions.

The Internet cafes often offer the only Web access in these communities. By

providing Internet access at a nominal charge to the public, the cafes generate extra income to financially support the Media Houses as well as the community radio stations that share the space.

"We find the presence of Media Houses very useful," said Jose Efi, senior journalist and manager of the Atoni Lifau Community Radio Station in Oecusse District. "Given that it provides free Internet access to the journalists, it enables us to send our story from our district to Dili. We can use the computers provided by the Media Houses to the journalists to write and/or edit our stories. In addition, we can borrow some important equipment such as tape recorders and cameras from the Media Houses, so it really helps us in our regular tasks as journalists."

AT THE NATIONAL University of Timor Lorosae (UNTL) in Dili, USAID developed and introduced the first four-year journalism degree in the country's history. The curriculum includes more than a dozen courses, from the fundamentals of journalism to critical thinking. USAID provided initial teaching support and helped the university reopen its radio stations to give students practical experience. In its first two years, nearly 300 students registered for journalism courses, and the curriculum has now been transferred fully to the university.

"We have a large number of students who want to take these courses," said UNTL Rector Aurelio Guterres. "The program is part of our long-term strategic plan."

To help Timor-Leste's media sector develop its own training programs, USAID produced the country's first journalism training manual, published in the main language, Tetum, that

focuses on the experiences and interests of the Timor-Leste media sector.

The training manual augments other Agency-funded publications, including the country's first style guide, code of ethics, and media law handbook for journalists. The handbook is also used by media associations, schools, and local organizations to improve skills and media quality.

The media activities have provided vital support to activities in other sectors.

A peace-building radio project for young people helped radio stations to expand audiences and inspired them to develop new programming. Anti-trafficking, human rights, gender equality, and anti-corruption messages have been picked up by journalists from other USAID projects to reach much broader audiences, and the wider range of training topics has boosted the sector's vital watchdog role.

The media has played a significant role in informing the public about elections. The fiercely democratic young nation has held six nationwide elections since Indonesia departed in 1999, all peaceful, free, and fair. In 2012, the country will go to the polls twice—to elect new members of parliament and a president. Journalists across the country will use the skills they have learned from USAID's projects to help serve as the eyes and ears of the people.

USAID/Timor-Leste Mission Director Rick Scott believes that support for a vibrant, independent media helps set Timor-Leste on a firm footing. "With a stronger, more skilled cohort of journalists, Timor-Leste can continue its development as a young democracy, freely airing different perspectives for all to hear, especially as it prepares for national elections in 2012," he said. ■

It's Not About the Chair

By Christine Spetz

Worldwide, over 65 million people need wheelchairs. USAID works in several countries to ensure that people with disabilities receive proper devices that suit their needs and their environment, providing not just mobility, but independence.

ABOUT 1 PERCENT of the world's population, or just over 65 million people, need a wheelchair.

The majority of these people live in developing countries, and are part of a much broader community of people with disabilities—1 billion people or 15 percent of the world's population—that also lack equal access to health care, education, and employment opportunities. They are essentially excluded

from everyday life and from full enjoyment of their human rights.

Less than 5 percent of those in need of a wheelchair actually have access to a properly fitted chair due to the devices' relatively high cost compared to income levels, and the limited number of service providers and properly trained human resources.

The majority of wheelchairs used around the world are donated and often mass distributed. Chairs come not only

without the user's needs being properly assessed by a trained technician or therapist, but also without the wheelchair ever being fit to the user's body. Users, some of whom are receiving a chair for the first time in their lives, are often not trained in how to use them.

According to the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Rehabilitation*, "Various studies indicate that pressure sores affect millions of people each year, with many of these sores coming as a result of improperly fitted wheelchairs...the problems can lead to amputation, autonomic dysreflexia (over-activity of the autonomic nervous system), or even premature death."

Providing well-designed wheelchairs to users that are appropriate to their needs, including their environment, enhances the users' ability to move around, and opens up the possibilities for education, work, and an active social life.

Rob Horvath, manager of USAID's programs for wheelchair users, notes: "Wheelchairs bring mobility, but well-fitting wheelchairs bring independence."

With this in mind, USAID supports efforts in 15 countries, working to ensure that people with disabilities receive proper wheelchairs that suit their needs and their environment. In Albania, Georgia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Togo, projects take many forms but all aim to produce and distribute appropriate wheelchairs and to provide services for their users that include proper fitting and basic training on the chair's use.

AS A NEXT STEP on the way to greater social inclusion, USAID also works to increase the quality of life for



Lalithamma's new wheelchair allows her greater independence, including moving about to buy materials for her shop.

Photo by Chapal Khasnabis/World Health Organization

people who use wheelchairs to allow them to increase mobility, independence, and inclusion in society. The projects increase opportunities for wheelchair users to attend school, to hold jobs, and even to play sports.

Lalithamma (like most people in South India, she has just one name), who has been living with paralysis in both legs since childhood, is one recipient of a USAID-funded wheelchair. She lives in Siddarampuram village in the Ananthpur District of Andhra Pradesh, India. Life is difficult in Ananthpur due to poor rainfall and few opportunities for decent work. Life is more difficult for people, especially women, with disabilities.

Although Lalithamma aspires to be like any other woman of her village, her ability to move around is severely restricted by her impairment, her chronic health condition, poverty, and, at one time, a bad wheelchair. Lalithamma lost both her parents when she was a teenager and her two brothers abandoned her, declaring that she was a liability to them. Poverty, disability, and loneliness have been a part of Lalithamma's everyday life for many years.

In the past, Lalithamma received a variety of wheelchairs, mostly second-hand, and built for indoor use.

"It is difficult for me to use continuously my present wheelchair for more than half an hour," she had said. "Our village roads are full of rocks and uneven surfaces. Usually these type[s] of wheelchairs get stuck in sand and in between the stones. ... I have to keep always one person as an assistant, which I cannot afford. So I wait when my friend will be free and support me to go out of my house."

Her last wheelchair was not only incompatible with her town's roads,

Rugby on Wheels

Maximus is an innovative, cross-cultural program that utilizes the wheelchair sport of Quadrugby to promote peace, empowerment, and social inclusion for persons with disabilities in Latin America. Quadrugby is a team sport for wheelchair-bound athletes with some loss of function in at least three limbs. Played with four players from each team on a basketball court, the goal is to cross the goal line with the ball. Like traditional rugby, the sport is intensely physical as the opposing team attempts to stop the team with the ball.

Maximus, which is implemented by the Arcángeles Foundation, through USAID/Peru and USAID's wheelchair program, expects to launch local sports programs for people with disabilities, and, through a twinning program, establish national Quadrugby teams in six South American countries. More than 270 persons with disabilities will be trained as competitive athletes on nine country teams. In addition, nine recreational sports clubs for persons with disabilities will be established in the six countries.

Maximus' Quadrugby component of the project will culminate in an international championship tournament in Chile in 2014; named Maximus V.



Photo by Arcángeles Foundation

Quadrugby, a team sport for wheelchair-bound athletes, is played with four players from each team on a basketball court.

it proved unsafe when Lalithamma needed to transfer into it and it prevented her from being truly mobile and independent. She also developed pressure sores from sitting

on a solid wooden base instead of a cushion.

Under a USAID-funded project with the World Health Organization, *continued on p. 49*

Budgeting for Effective Governance

By Erin Concors

With a new USAID-supported budget process, Ukraine is fighting corruption and providing better services to its citizens.

“NOT A SINGLE *kopek* of the city budget will be stolen from Kyiv citizens,” wrote Oleksander Popov, head of the Kyiv City State Administration, on the city’s website. “[With the new budget system] we are going to put our financial system in order and eliminate any chance for budget abuse.”

The new budgeting system, known as Performance Program Budgeting (PPB), represents a new, more effective way of doing municipal business, according to Popov, who describes Ukraine’s current system, a vestige from the Soviet Union, as one that “focuses on cultivating bureaucracy, rather than on improving services to Kyiv residents.”

For Kyiv, as well as 117 other municipalities where PPB has been piloted since 2008, the status quo is changing. Once viewed with skepticism by officials in the post-Soviet nation, the new system, which allows for more efficient and transparent spending of resources, is being rolled out nationwide over the next three years, thanks to USAID assistance.

EARLY SKEPTICISM vanished for one reason. According to Iryna Shcherbyna, director general of the Institute for Budgetary and Socio-Economic Research (IBSER), a Ukrainian NGO

partnering with USAID, “PPB establishes clear priorities for budgetary expenditures. It transforms general budget line items into concrete goals and tasks, expressed in simple and clear indicators.” Using a performance-based methodology establishes a clear link between resources and results, allowing local governments to spend scarce resources more wisely.

The old line-item budgeting method is still used for the preparation of some local budgets in Ukraine. It mandates line items in budgets—for things like salaries and utilities—without considering achieved results or customer satisfaction derived from the expenditures. Instead of being motivated to improve budget efficiency, under this system, local governments are tempted to inflate the number of maintained public entities and employees, as these factors affect the size of state budget subsidies.

By contrast, “The PPB method concentrates on the ‘end result’ funding principle,” says Shcherbyna. It optimizes efficiency and continuity of fund allocations, while basing budgeting effectiveness decisions on the factors of quality and public benefits to citizens.

In addition, the new format makes the budget understandable for average citizens, allowing for more government transparency and fostering greater responsibility of public officials. “Budget

transparency and public access to budget information are key prerequisites for achieving greater budget efficiency and avoiding misuse of public funds,” Shcherbyna says.

FOR SEVERAL Ukrainian communities in four pilot oblasts—Crimea, Lviv, Luhansk, and Zhytomyr—and the city of Kyiv, these budgetary improvements have empowered local authorities to reallocate funds to better performing activities such as new diagnostic medical equipment in hospitals, school computers and lab supplies, and street light improvements to make life brighter for Ukrainian citizens.

The city of Zhytomyr provides a good example. Under the new system, Zhytomyr reallocated funds that were saved as a result of the more efficient and transparent performance of its PPB-based budget, and invested them into life-saving equipment and services, which in turn generated cost savings and improvements in the community. Located in northern Ukraine, this city of 271,100 has achieved a total savings of roughly \$712,500 since PPB was implemented in 2009, and has gained valuable commodities.

Before developing a PPB budget for health care, the local government analyzed the efficiency of budget expenditure in this area. The analysis showed low efficiency of service provision, in particular because of the use of old and obsolete equipment.

The PPB analysis showed that if some of the budget funding routinely used to cover health-care costs was invested into new medical equipment—things such as computerized CT scanners and modern anesthesiology equipment—it would both reduce costs and improve services.

The head of the city's health care department, Mykola Suslyk, explains: "By introducing nearly every new kind of medical examination or treatment, we achieve saving of budgetary funds by reducing inpatient stay at the hospital and, thus, budget funds spent for this purpose. Improved diagnostics conducted within the first hours of the illness enables doctors to start treatment sooner and with better precision, thus achieving results sooner and reducing the time the patient has to spend at the hospital to recover."

Additionally, savings have also resulted in both education and general infrastructure improvements. Just three years ago, less than 50 percent of Zhytomyr was adequately lit by streetlights. Thanks to funding provided through PPB savings, 92 percent of the city is now properly covered by electric street lights.

"We have reconstructed 112 kilometers of electric networks and replaced 3,779 lights using energy-efficient modern lamps. We have also commissioned a wireless city lighting control system," said Vitaliy Shevchuk of the Zhytomyr City Council.

Eleven new programs and services have also been introduced in schools, including new computers, energy-efficient technologies, gifted programs, legislative programs, and building maintenance projects, according to Svitlana Kovtunenکو, deputy head of Zhytomyr's education department. At Lyceum No. 25, PPB savings allowed the school to buy 216 sets of lab equipment for students.

Throughout all the pilot regions, USAID, through its Municipal Finance Strengthening Initiative, has worked closely with Ukraine's Ministry of Finance and State Treasury, as

well as a national advisory committee on PPB, to establish the system.

Through its previous project on municipal budget reform, in 2007, USAID provided funding to train Ukrainian experts in PPB methodology, develop education materials, and allow Ukrainian experts to teach the PPB method for use in pilot cities. Subsequently, USAID provided a direct grant to IBSER—a Ukrainian think-tank providing unbiased, independent budgetary and economic data—to implement PPB in four pilot regions and the city of Kyiv. Plans exist for 973 Ukrainian municipalities to adopt PPB as their budgeting method by 2014.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, the Kyiv City Council passed the city's 2011 budget, which was developed in the PPB format. Since August 2010, the USAID project has trained 500 Kyiv city employees. Over 600 budget programs, totaling around \$2 billion for 2011, were adopted.

"The main ideology of PPB is the departure from the principle of maintenance and gradual transition to the principle of results achievement," says IBSER Deputy Director General Vyacheslav Zubenکو. "Thanks to the implementation of the pilot and formulation of budgets based on this new principle, the state is already receiving economic and social benefits from a more effective use of budget funds."

Owing to its success in the pilot communities, the Government of Ukraine has mandated that PPB be rolled out across the country beginning this year as part of President Viktor Yanukovich's four-year economic reform program. The plan aims to reform public finance and introduce PPB at all local budget levels by 2014. ■



Photo by Olena Panchenko, IBSER

School boys from Ukraine's Lyceum No. 25 in Zhytomyr use new lab equipment in their physics course.

Documenting Tragedy

continued from p. 17

members of the Khmer Rouge leadership for crimes against humanity. DC-Cam has already provided 500,000 pages of documents to the ECCC as well as photographs and video footage to the prosecution, defense, and civil party lawyers.

To date, the ECCC has convicted one person, Kaing Guek Eav, known as Duch, the former chief of S-21, a notorious Khmer Rouge prison. The trial of the second case involving four Khmer Rouge leaders has recently begun.

Judge Silvia Cartwright, formerly of the High Court in New Zealand before serving as an international judge at the ECCC, says: “The material provided by DC-Cam, that has been authenticated at trial, has been valuable in documenting the operations of the Democratic Kampuchea regime and has provided also some help to victims who have been searching for decades for information about their family members.”

Although the Khmer Rouge tribunal began 30 years after the end of the genocide, it represents an important step toward national reconciliation with the past.

YOUTH AGE 30 OR younger—who were not yet born at the time of the genocide—constitute 70 percent of Cambodia’s population of 14.5 million; therefore, DC-Cam also promotes genocide education for high school and university students, most of whom are the offspring of genocide victims or survivors.

As part of the national genocide education initiative, DC-Cam is conducting public awareness campaigns in rural towns and villages across the



Photo by U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton thanked Youk Chhang for a tour of the Tuol Sleng Museum. “Your telling of its history as well as the tragic accounts of the victims who suffered there were deeply moving,” she said.

country. These campaigns help survivors—many of whom live with terrifying memories—bring closure to their past, as the country slowly rebuilds itself and national consciousness heals.

DC-Cam has succeeded in convincing the Ministry of Education to add a genocide studies component to the official high school curriculum. It provides specialized training to high school teachers to improve their understanding of the Khmer Rouge period and teach this sensitive and historical topic more effectively.

Officials say educating Cambodian youth about the Khmer Rouge ensures that the painful truth of the past is preserved, which helps to prevent similar tragedies. Their efforts are paying off.

One Cambodian 12th grader named Sothea said that, “previously when my parents told me about the Khmer Rouge era, I did not believe what they said ... yet when ... I have studied, I believe that those evil events did really happen.”

Another student, Sorya, struggles to make sense of the stories she has heard from relatives. She says: “I want to know why they (the Khmer Rouge) killed so many of their own people. I want to know why they left their own country in such terrible condition.”

Students study in the classroom and then speak with their parents and relatives at home about what they have learned. Educators say this intergenerational dialogue is important for understanding and healing.

Cambodia has changed a great deal since the Paris Peace Accords in 1991, which ushered in a period of renewal, reconstruction, and hope. Yet beneath the surface of Cambodia’s progress towards peace, reconciliation, and democracy lies the pain and trauma of the past. As Youk Chhang has said: “A society cannot know itself if it does not have an accurate memory of its own history.” ■

When Love Meets Tradition

continued from p. 25

schools, and provides public outreach to inform Afghan citizens about how the legal system should operate.

AFTER ELOPING, Soraya’s and Idrees’s story had a predictable start. Idrees’s older brother immediately tried to return Soraya to avoid bloodshed between their families. Soraya’s brothers were furious and threatened to kill the couple. In an unusual turn of events, the older brother took them to the district governor’s office, instead of the local *shura*. With the assistance of the Human Rights Commission, the district court heard their case and, in the presence of both families, officially recognized their marriage.

At this point, the fluid partnership between the formal and informal system began. Dissatisfied with the

formal court’s decision, the bride’s father approached the local *shura* and demanded two girls in *baad* to prevent a blood feud.

Fortunately for the young couple, all but one of the mediators from the *shura* had taken part in USAID’s family law workshop, which helped them to explore the differences among tribal, religious, Afghan, and international law. Several also participated in government informal justice coordination meetings, which helped them document and register their decisions with the formal justice system.

Although most tribal law does not take the bride’s choice into consideration, under Islamic law, a woman has the right to choose her own husband. In recognition of the cultural crime the couple committed by marrying without their families’ agreement,



Photo by Checchi and Co.

Afghan women meet to discuss their access to informal and formal justice institutions.

the *shura* ordered the groom’s family to apologize and give one ram and 300,000 Pakistani Rupees, or roughly \$3,500, to the bride’s family as an alternative to *baad*, which is forbidden under Islamic law. The *shura* also recognized the formal court’s decision regarding the legality of the marriage.

“One of the true novelties of these family law workshops is their ability to bring discrepancies or inconsistencies between official custom and Islamic law to the attention of traditional mediators,” said Jean Garland, senior rule of law adviser for USAID/Afghanistan.

In the words of one *shura* elder after the decision: “The Family Law Seminar helped us a lot because we learned that a girl can marry the one whom she wants [under Islamic law]. She can choose her life partner by herself. Of course, it is not Pashtun culture, but we convinced [the families] from the Islamic point of view.” ■

**Names in this article have been changed or withheld for security reasons.*



Photo by Checchi and Co.

Afghans discuss the establishment of a women’s dispute-resolution group, or spinsary.

The “Big One” in Nepal

continued from p. 39

Disasters cross international borders, and the United States is also taking a regional perspective, engaging India, China, and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) members in these disaster mitigation activities. Regional assets and cooperation will be necessary in any major disaster, particularly since Nepal is a landlocked country with extremely challenging geography and infrastructure that can complicate a major humanitarian response.

One of USAID’s most enduring DRR partnerships in Asia has been with the Kathmandu-based National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET). Established in 1993, NSET’s mission is to reduce the risks associated with earthquakes in Nepal. USAID’s partnership with NSET began in 1997. Since that time, USAID has provided more than \$8 million in support of NSET’s activities, helping it evolve into one of the world’s leading organizations on earthquake preparedness and mitigation.

Says Amod Mani Dixit, executive director of NSET: “With [USAID’s] support, Nepal has become earthquake-safer not only because of increased earthquake awareness or school buildings retrofitted or numerous masons trained. The support has helped Nepal to institutionalize disaster reduction processes through improved building construction, improved emergency preparedness in schools and hospitals, and a better understanding of the need to create to a culture of safety.”

In 2005, USAID provided funding to NSET for the Nepal Earthquake Risk Management Program, which was recently renewed for an additional

three years. NSET has improved the seismic safety of public schools, residences, hospitals, and other public structures in the Kathmandu Valley, and trained engineers and masons on proper building techniques. The ongoing school safety program retrofits schools while also training local masons by using the actual retrofitting as hands-on instruction and practice. As masons are responsible for the construction of 95 percent of the buildings in Nepal, their education is vital.

NSET has also conducted workshops, seminars, and conferences on earthquake safety and preparation for wide swaths of Nepal’s citizenry, including students, and has supported capacity building of local government authorities through awareness programs.

The second phase of the program aims to coordinate long-term earthquake risk reduction planning among governmental and non-governmental entities, as well as to continue to increase earthquake awareness and preparedness among Nepal’s population through initiatives including media campaigns, publications, and training programs.

STRONG U.S. Government leadership on DRR has spurred accelerated action by the Government of Nepal and other donor engagement. The Nepalese Government has begun including DRR in its planning and budgeting and for the first time has included resources to retrofit schools. The Australians and British have followed the United States’ lead as the first bilateral donor to join the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium, and the U.K. Department for International Development has pledged \$30 million in new resources for Nepal’s DRR over the next four years.

The Nepali Diaspora, through the Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) association, has focused on disaster preparedness, and three NRN professional societies are working on medical, communication, and engineering disaster preparedness measures.

Recently, the Government of India has indicated its willingness to engage on this issue through its military and development programs—a breakthrough for regional cooperation.

In addition, a number of USAID programs in Nepal now serve as global models. This includes the Hospital Emergency Response Program and the School Earthquake Safety Program, through which existing buildings are retrofitted, earthquake preparedness plans are devised, and teachers and students are trained in earthquake response. Likewise, the U.S. Government’s integrated approach in Nepal is being explored by the British and Nepalese.

“Our fundamental policy interests in fostering stability and prosperity in Nepal are a critical factor in compelling our engagement on disaster risk reduction,” DeLisi said during a recent event in Kathmandu. “[W]hat is more destabilizing to a nation, and potentially to its neighbors, than a catastrophic event of the magnitude we envision will occur in Nepal?”

“Equally, as we support Nepal’s efforts to build a stable, functional, and democratic nation, we are also investing considerable sums in the country’s development. I believe that if we are not prepared to protect that investment, through efforts to mitigate the impact of the disaster and shorten the recovery time, we are, in essence, just throwing away our development dollars.” ■

Disabilities

continued from p. 43

Lalithamma received a new, well-fitting wheelchair onsite and training on how to use it.

Lalithamma now moves around the village alone and goes to the nearby town to buy raw materials for her shop where she sells packaged food and sundries. Her mobility has increased and she has become more independent. Besides running her small shop, she does all of her own household work.

“With this new wheelchair, I feel confident and I can use the wheelchair without any assistant for longer durations. I can overcome rock and sandy surfaces independently,” she says. “With this new wheelchair, I can fetch water, I can sweep with one hand while propelling the wheelchair with the other hand. Now, I can manage to travel alone to collect my pension from local government office.

“I do not need to look for a volunteer—I will be on my own and I am free; no more dependent life.”

Horvath notes: “The provision of a wheelchair is not just about the chair itself. Rather, it is about increasing the quality of life for wheelchair users like Lalithamma. Providing the actual wheelchair is just the first step in a multi-step process of enabling wheelchair users to participate in family and community and to join with other people with disabilities in advocating for their rights.”

USAID supports myriad programs that take this holistic approach to providing assistance for wheelchair users and other people with disabilities.

In Georgia, the Agency provides wheelchair users and others with



Photo by Chapal Khasnabis, World Health Organization

USAID works with its global partners to provide proper, well-fitted wheelchairs to persons with disabilities like Lalithamma, increasing their independence and quality of life.

mobility impairments—at least 50 percent of whom are women and youth—with opportunities to participate in roundtable support groups as well as mobility and self-help camps. The project also conducts disability awareness activities and training on how to remove barriers to accessibility within the community.

In Romania, USAID peer groups show wheelchair users how to live independently and integrate into society and the workforce. USAID also works in Southern Asia, East and Southern Africa, and Eastern Europe, helping

local organizations to provide wheelchair services and to develop peer groups to inform wheelchair users of their rights.

Finally, USAID has collaborated with the World Health Organization

and the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics to rethink the way organizations worldwide approach providing wheelchairs to individuals in developing countries—to make sure that people around the world get the wheelchair appropriate for their needs. In August 2008, the organizations launched the publication, *Guidelines on the Provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings*. Since its launch, the publication has become one of the most downloaded documents on the WHO website, with more than 50,000 downloads to date.

By developing an effective system of wheelchair provision, USAID and its global partners are carrying out the tenets of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its call to promote the human rights of people with disabilities, recognizing that it is not about the chair, but, rather, the individual. ■

GO ONLINE
for more on **USAID's wheelchair program** and to download **Guidelines on the Provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings**



Photo by Fundación Saraki

USAID and *Fundación Saraki* are working together in Paraguay to remove physical barriers to inclusion, to ensure that persons with disabilities can reach their jobs safely.

U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20523-6100
Penalty for Private Use \$300
Official Business

PRSR1 STD
Postage and Fees
PAID USAID
Permit No. G-107

