



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FIFTH REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF USAID DISABILITY POLICY



December 2008

Reports on the implementation of USAID's Disability Policy are produced biannually. Previous reports as well as more detailed information on USAID's efforts to make its programs accessible to all can be found at www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability.

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Cover photo

In Uganda, Sign Language is constitutionally recognized as one of the official languages of the country. USAID supports the promotion of Sign Language through community-level training in Gulu and Lira Districts in Northern Uganda and has also extended support to the Uganda National Association of the Deaf to promote Sign Language in other parts of the country.

The photo on the cover shows a Northern Ugandan youth who is deaf, signing the letter "e." Photo courtesy of Sue Eitel.

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INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the idea of inclusive development—or the meaningful involvement and equitable participation of people with disabilities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of international development assistance—has become increasingly prominent in the development community. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been and tries to remain on the cutting edge of such practices.

USAID is acknowledged in the development community as an international leader in developing policies and programs that raise awareness of disability issues and address the needs of people with disabilities. USAID was one of the first bi-lateral donor agencies to develop a specific policy that addressed both discrimination against people with disabilities and the need for including their concerns in all facets of development work. It was also one of the first international donor agencies to establish standards in the area of accessible construction.

USAID recognizes that the most important experts in the field of disability and inclusive practices are people with disabilities themselves and disabled persons organizations. They are especially qualified to advise USAID on how to integrate the requirements of people with disabilities into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of USAID programs and operations. Therefore, efforts to build the capacity of local organizations of disabled persons around the world and to link USAID offices, bureaus, and missions to those local organizations are becoming an increased focus worldwide.

Today, the Agency remains fully committed to integrating people with disabilities into all of its programming, projects, and activities, plus developing policies and initiatives that address the needs and concerns of people with disabilities that they themselves define. This report discusses USAID's successes and challenges in those efforts.

In September 1997, USAID adopted a groundbreaking policy (see Appendix B) with the goal of advancing a clear vision and framework for the Agency's efforts in the area of disability-related issues. USAID further institutionalized its commitment to inclusive development by establishing two policy directives (see Appendices C and D), which (a) require contracting officers and agreement officers to include a provision supporting USAID's disability policy in all solicitations and in the resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements; and (b) require that contractors and recipients of USAID funding comply with standards for accessibility in all new construction, as well as in renovations of structures, facilities, or buildings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID is pleased to report on its progress toward establishing more inclusive programs and ensuring equitable participation in all its activities. The accomplishments outlined in the previous report, *Fourth Report on the Implementation of USAID Disability Policy*, have served as important catalysts to action. Since the publication of that report, the Agency has moved to institutionalize the tenets of the USAID disability policy. It has looked critically at its own processes and has worked with its partners in the development community to promote inclusive practices.

As this *Fifth Report on the Implementation of USAID Disability Policy* illustrates, USAID missions are increasingly integrating people with disabilities into their programs and are also developing more specific programs that promote equality for and empowerment of people with disabilities. This report further shows that the Agency remains committed to serving as an international leader in the area of inclusive development and to working proactively to remove barriers that may limit the full participation of people with disabilities.

The vast response from missions, bureaus, and offices to USAID's inquiries

for this report illustrates the Agency's increased attention to the area of disability in general. The responses reflect the Agency's progress in recognizing and addressing issues of discrimination and barriers to inclusion within its own infrastructure, as well as progress in including people with disabilities in its programs and activities worldwide. A number of broad conclusions can be drawn from the responses:

- *USAID has increased its engagement in disability issues.* The Agency's heightened awareness of disability issues is evidenced by the dramatic increase in the number of missions, offices, and bureaus reporting inclusive development efforts. Mission reports increased by 75 percent—from forty-three reports received for the fourth report to seventy-five for the fifth report; the number of offices and bureaus reporting was almost five times higher.
- *Focus has been placed on the uniform implementation of USAID's disability policy.* Reporting from both the field and Washington, D.C., shows that the effect of USAID's disability policy is widespread. Virtually all missions report compliance with the ba-

For this report and for USAID's work in general, the Agency subscribes to the definition of people with disabilities put forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." That definition applies to people with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental/psychosocial disabilities. Although USAID recognizes that HIV/AIDS can be a disabling condition, it does not consider all individuals living with HIV/AIDS to be disabled. Therefore, the fifth report includes only those HIV/AIDS programs that target or integrate all people with disabilities. For more information on USAID's general HIV/AIDS programs and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, please visit the USAID website at www.usaid.gov.

sic principles of the policy, including nondiscrimination on the basis of disability. As mandated by the policy, language on disability inclusion is now standard practice for USAID solicitations. Increasingly, the presence of a program component addressing the needs of people with disabilities is among the selection criteria for requests for proposals and applications.

Many missions report (a) distributing Agency policy papers to staff members, implementing partners, and other relevant stakeholders; (b) coordinating more closely with donors in the area of disability; and (c) establishing locally developed disability inclusion plans.

- *Individual missions have developed disability inclusion plans.* There is a marked increase in the number of missions that report having locally developed disability inclusion plans already in place or in process. In the fourth report, only a “handful” of missions reported the existence of such a plan, in contrast to more than 20 percent in the current report. Moreover, most completed plans were developed in collaboration with disability groups, implementing partners, and other relevant stakeholders.
- *Current USAID programs are benefiting people with disabilities.* The vast majority of responders—more than 75 percent—report undertaking activities benefiting people with disabilities. Those activities address an array of issues. Common goals around which many programs are designed include (a) integration of people with disabilities into their communities through education, training, and employment; (b) improvements to the accessibility of the built environment; and (c) sports programming. Reports also show a significant trend toward promoting political participation and the civil rights of people with disabilities. Several countries report implementing projects designed to increase voting or other types of political participation among people with disabilities. Multiple projects focus on prevention and rehabilitation, including the

provision of mobility aids and assistive technology.

- *Efforts have been made to build the capacity of disabled persons organizations.* Those organizations, which advocate on behalf of their members and constituents, continue to increase, with more than one-quarter of countries reporting such activities. USAID capacity-building activities, coupled with support for awareness raising and legal advocacy, are necessary efforts to create the infrastructure in which countries can begin to work independently on disability issues. Building local capacity, specifically the capacity of disabled persons organizations to advocate on behalf of their members, is particularly important in the wake of the recent passage, signing, and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Although an impressive number of USAID missions and offices report incorporating disability issues into their program activities, participation of people with disabilities in the planning and design of those programs remains an area for improvement. Approximately 10 percent of the overall reports received this year describe having collected explicit input from people with disabilities. Responses are self-reported; it is possible that such input is solicited more frequently than reported, especially when considering the number of disabled persons organizations that serve as implementing partners. Nevertheless, it is apparent that people with disabilities need to be included more commonly as participants and partners, not just as beneficiaries.

Similarly, few missions report having people with disabilities on staff. The reports acknowledge compliance with equal employment opportunity

standards, but that effort has not yet resulted in a significant increase in the participation of people with disabilities in the workplace. Missions continue to lay important groundwork, however, with improvements in the accessibility of facilities and with websites that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

USAID continues to build on its disability programming, thus achieving significant progress in raising the awareness of disability issues both inside and outside the Agency, and in implementing important programs that work to include people with disabilities in their communities today and into the future. Although more work remains, with continued support for the current focus on capacity building, political participation, and integration, USAID is laying the critical foundation for future activities and accomplishments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To foster the replication and systematization of the many successes that have occurred over the past two years, and to advance the implementation of USAID’s disability policy, the *Fifth Report on the Implementation of USAID Disability Policy* makes the following recommendations:

1. Increase outreach to and consultation of disabled persons organizations and disability leaders by USAID missions, offices, and bureaus.
2. Systematize the inclusion of disability into USAID program selection criteria.
3. Increase formal and nonformal training opportunities, and raise awareness on inclusive practices for

USAID staff, implementing partners, and disabled persons organizations.

4. Increase the number of missions with disability plans.

Each recommendation is discussed in detail at the end of the “Recommendations” section of this report.

HIGHLIGHTS OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

USAID missions, offices, and bureaus report conducting innovative activities and programs to increase the participation of people with disabilities in their programs. Those programs range from capacity-building activities that target disabled persons organizations to programs aimed at including people with disabilities in economic, democracy, health, education, and other programs. USAID has also worked to ensure that disability awareness increasingly becomes part of all USAID activities, programs, and operations with a focus on building inclusive programs in the field. Highlights from field; USAID/Washington; and Agency-wide programs follow.

FIELD INITIATIVES

- In Ecuador, the mission demonstrates a commitment to integrating disability issues into both its internal operations and its country programming. USAID/Ecuador has made concerted efforts to sensitize all of its employees on inclusive practices and to identify and break down barriers to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to USAID programs, including programs in democracy and governance, employment, and

the environment. The mission has a comprehensive disability plan in place that it has shared with its stakeholders. The plan includes the appointment of a disability focal point for the mission and a requirement that all new staff members take the USAID e-learning course titled “Inclusive Development.” The mission also employs an individual with a disability as a senior staff member.

More recently, the mission extended its commitment on disability issues to the local development community by hosting seminars on accessibility and inclusive practices for USAID implementing partners. Ecuador also supports several program initiatives that target people with disabilities. Among those programs are the workforce labor insertion program through the National Federation of Ecuadorians with Physical Disabilities (Federación Nacional de Ecuatorianos con Discapacidad Física) and an economic opportunities program that offers computer training in partnership with Microsoft. The strong commitment and involvement by USAID in those efforts have galvanized the government of Ecuador to

similarly demonstrate dedication to inclusive development practices.

- Vietnam has made great strides in developing policies and services to address the needs of people with disabilities. USAID/Vietnam has driven the development of three key components in this effort: legal and regulatory reforms, educational mainstreaming, and increased economic opportunities for Vietnamese with disabilities. USAID has galvanized the government to (a) create the Barrier Free Codes and Standards, (b) codify accessibility into all new public infrastructure, (c) develop a national action plan for disability, and (d) create the government of Vietnam’s long-term plan for promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Technical and financial support from USAID is a key element behind the development of Vietnam’s new law on disabilities. In addition, USAID support has established and strengthened programs on inclusive education of children with disabilities, vocational training programs, and an innovative job placement program in which a consortium of public and private partners is facilitating the employment of people

with disabilities throughout the business community and is encouraging employers of people with disabilities to share their success stories.

- The Omega Initiative, established in 2002, continues to make significant contributions to the empowerment and full participation of people with disabilities in Africa. Through one innovative effort, Omega established a one-person office in northern Uganda and worked with a local peer support committee to provide more than sixty small grants to local disabled persons organizations. Small grants were coupled with entrepreneurial training, institutional strengthening, and broader community awareness activities. As a result, more than 90 percent of the small-grant activities continue to thrive and provide economic, social, and political opportunities for Ugandans with disabilities in the north.

WASHINGTON-BASED INITIATIVES

These are highlights of initiatives in Washington, D.C.:

- The Building an Inclusive Development Community program, implemented by Mobility International USA (MIUSA), and Engaging with Disabled Persons Organizations in Development Cooperation (ENGAGE), which is implemented by the American Institute for Research (AIR), are two DCHA/DB-based initiatives that provide support to field missions, as well as to pilot activities with disabled persons organizations.

The MIUSA initiative seeks to increase the participation of people with disabilities, including women and girls, in international devel-

opment programs as participants, agents, administrators, and consultants. The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of USAID missions and local disabled persons organizations to reduce the barriers that people with disabilities encounter when they participate in civic, social, and employment activities. Phase one of the program focused on technical assistance to Albania, Ecuador, and Guatemala and their USAID missions. Phase two, which begins in late 2008, will add four more countries.

AIR is developing pilot programs and advocacy strategies to address the needs and to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. It works with organizations representing people with disabilities in three countries where USAID has a significant presence. The pilot projects aim to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be involved in (a) the design and implementation of programs to improve the quality of basic education in Pakistan, (b) more equitable participation in democracy and governance in Mexico, and (c) ways to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in Zambia. AIR will also design and convene training sessions for USAID and its implementing partners to foster a greater understanding of the strategies needed to advance inclusive development. Both the MIUSA and AIR programs are demonstrating that capacity building within local USAID missions and pilot projects will increase the involvement of people with disabilities in USAID's broader development initiatives.

- The USAID Office of Democracy and Governance (DG) has conducted programs to integrate people with

disabilities through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) program in Albania, Armenia, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone. It also provides training for all new DG staff members in the area of inclusive development practices. Starting in 2006 and continuing for 2007 and 2008, the cadres of new entry professionals (NEPs) and junior program officers (JOs) who will be working in the area of democracy and governance were required to participate in training sessions on how to better integrate disability into current and future programming. A session on disability was also included in the June 2008 DG officer training, which provided new skills and innovative best practices in the area of democracy and governance for existing DG officers in Washington, D.C., and in the field. As a result, new USAID foreign service officers are heading to the field with greater understanding of the issues facing people with disabilities and with the tools to make development programs more inclusive.

- In June 2007, the Office of Microenterprise Development, Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT), organized a three-day electronic discussion titled "Disability and Economic Opportunities." More than forty-five disability experts and experts on microfinance and microenterprise, including representatives from academia, donor organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), participated in the event. The e-conference aimed to (a) establish a dialogue about identifying and reducing barriers to participation, (b) outline best practices for inclusive economic programs, and (c) provide recommendations to both disabled persons organizations and the microenterprise

and microfinance community about ensuring equal access to programs. This effort has increased the knowledge base within the Agency on how economic opportunity programming can be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

AGENCY-WIDE INITIATIVES

USAID is committed to including people with disabilities in its operations and activities throughout Washington, D.C., and in all its overseas missions. To realize that commitment, in 2004 USAID appointed an Agency disability coordinator. This coordinator is the primary point of contact for disability-related issues and activities, promoting the full implementation of the disability policy, and managing the Disability Fund. Under the leadership of the disability coordinator and a small disability team, USAID has successfully (a) increased the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in solicitations for funding, (b) provided USAID staff members with training, (c) raised awareness of disability issues and inclusive practices among its partners in the development community, and (d) coordinated with other donors in the area of disability. Specific achievements during the reporting period are discussed below.

INCREASED DISABILITY AWARENESS WITHIN USAID

The disability team has conducted numerous training programs for staff members on how to better integrate people with disabilities into all of USAID's programs, projects, and activities. Trainings have included roundtables on disability issues for NEPs, block training sessions to raise awareness of and to use effective practices for addressing disability issues in the democracy

sector, and roundtables for the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) on disability and disasters. In addition, the team continues to promote the Agency's comprehensive e-learning course on disability and development. This training course provides staff members with the basic information, resources, tools, and skills to better enable them to promote and increase the participation of people with disabilities in USAID development programs and operations worldwide. The course is available online to all Agency employees. The team also promotes best practices through published articles on inclusive practices in USAID's internal newsletter, *Frontlines*, and through Agency-wide notices.

INCREASED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance to USAID missions, bureaus, and offices based in Washington, D.C., has significantly increased since the publication of the last report. The disability team, in coordination with international disability leaders, has produced technical notes, tools, and other resources on accessibility standards, inclusive practices, language, and other disability-related topics. Those resources have been distributed to missions and offices and are available on USAID's website at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/. For example, the disability team has developed resources for specific sectoral issues, such as a short paper on disability, water, and sanitation in disasters for the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), as well as on gender and disability for USAID's Office of Women in Development (WID). More important, USAID recognizes that the best resources for disseminating information on disability issues and promoting changes in attitudes and practices are people with disabilities themselves.

Thus, USAID staff members are linked with disabled persons organizations and disability leaders at every opportunity. Increased coordination and collaboration are emphasized.

IMPROVED CAPACITY OF DISABLED PERSONS ORGANIZATIONS AND DISABILITY LEADERS

In addition to managing the funding of programs that build the leadership and administrative capacity of organizations in the field, the USAID disability team has provided direct capacity-building trainings. For example, in December 2006, USAID worked with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to organize and implement the ninth International Congress on Community Services for Children, Youth, and Families with Special Health Care Needs. During that four-day seminar, USAID hosted both formal and informal meetings with disability leaders from around the world to explain USAID's funding mechanisms and to discuss more effective ways to approach USAID missions within their respective countries. Participants were provided with handouts and checklists on USAID's policies and procedures and suggestions for follow-up.

IMPROVED DONOR COORDINATION

Coordination with donors is strongly encouraged among USAID field missions. It is also a priority for USAID's disability team based in Washington, D.C. To ensure a cohesive and strategic approach to disability planning and programming, members of the team regularly meet with members of the donor community. For example, the Agency's disability coordinator serves as a technical advisor to the Board of Directors of the International

Committee of the Red Cross, Special Fund for the Disabled. In addition, members of the team have presented USAID's work and strategic plans related to disability in donor coordination meetings hosted by the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD), and others. The team ensures frequent communication with other U.S. government agencies and foundations such as the National Council on Disability, the State Department, DHHS, the Department of Education, and the Disability Rights Fund. Team members have also shared information on the Agency's disability policy and accessibility standards with a United Nations (UN) interagency working group in preparation for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

INCREASED ACCESS TO USAID FUNDS BY DISABLED PERSONS ORGANIZATIONS

In 2005, Congress appropriated \$2.5 million in economic support funds for programs to address the needs and to protect the rights of people with disabilities in developing countries. Those funds are administered by the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/Office of Democracy and Governance/Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors and are managed by the Agency's disability coordinator. In subsequent years, Congress has increased the funding to approximately \$4 million per year. This Disability Fund complements USAID's broader commitment to including people with disabilities in development programs and to empowering people with disabilities to advocate for their own rights.

In 2006 and 2007, the grants were awarded through a notification of funds availability to USAID missions and of-

fices. Under that notification, requests for concept papers were sent both to USAID/Washington offices and to field missions. The purpose of the request was multifaceted: (a) to build the capacity of disabled persons organizations to better advocate for the rights of people with disabilities, (b) to increase the awareness of disability issues among community members, (c) to empower people with disabilities, and (d) to better integrate people with disabilities into USAID core development programs that deal with issues such as health, education, employment, and disaster assistance. In order to promote increased participation of disability organizations that are based both in the United States and abroad, the availability of funding was announced through all major international electronic mailing lists for people with disabilities and through mechanisms such as the National Council of Disability International Watch Call. In 2007, more than fifty missions and Washington, D.C., offices submitted 100 proposals; among them, twenty-seven programs were selected.

The Disability Fund currently supports programs in more than thirty countries. The programs place a strong emphasis on raising the awareness of government, community, and family on issues concerning people with disabilities, on advocating for rights and services for people with disabilities, and on building the organizational capacities of local disabled persons organizations.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT/ USAID ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In 2004, the Advisory Committee on Persons with Disabilities was established. The purpose of the committee is to advise the U.S. Secretary of State

and the administrator of USAID on the interests of people with disabilities in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance programs. The advisory committee comprises the U.S. secretary of state, the administrator and director of U.S. foreign assistance, an executive director, and eight members drawn from the public. Since its inception, the committee has convened five public meetings and is working to provide USAID and the State Department with recommendations on how to better integrate people with disabilities into their programs and operations. USAID's disability coordinator and team are core participants on this committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous reports have included recommendations on how USAID could improve its inclusion of people with disabilities into programs and operations. Those recommendations not only guided the Agency's focus for the upcoming years, but also helped the Agency monitor and track its past achievements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FOURTH REPORT

The recommendations included in the *Fourth Report on the Implementation of USAID Disability Policy* and the work that has addressed those challenges are discussed below.

1. *Increase the focus on and the technical assistance to missions, offices, and disabled persons organizations.*

Technical assistance to missions, offices, and disabled persons organizations has significantly increased since the last report. Programs such as MIUSA and AIR work directly with missions, disabled persons organizations (DPOs), and implementing partners to provide technical assis-

tance, increase awareness of inclusive practices, and design pilot projects. These programs provide small grants to DPOs and local partners. Their work demonstrates how people with disabilities can be fully integrated into programs.

The disability team has also increased its direct assistance to missions, offices, and bureaus both in Washington, D.C., and around the world by organizing roundtables and trainings on how disability can be integrated in sector-specific issues. For example, USAID has started a working group of international disability leaders to help design guidance for missions on how to develop disability plans and to make their programs inclusive. The USAID disability team and other staff members have also met with representatives from DPOs and disability leaders, suggesting ways to best approach USAID offices and missions to build relationships, make programs more inclusive, and seek funding opportunities. In addition to engaging in such outreach activities, USAID increased its funding directly to disability groups and to other NGOs working on disability issues.

2. *Establish mechanisms for identifying, documenting, and sharing best practices.*

Since the last report, much has been done to further identify, document, and disseminate best practices on disability-specific programs, as well as to look for ways to more fully integrate people with disabilities.

USAID's dedicated web space on disability has become more robust. In addition to providing downloadable links to Agency policy and the previous four disability reports, the space provides summary information for the small-grants program under the Disability Fund. The web space also contains numerous location-specific personal accounts of successful inclusive development efforts.

Much work has gone into developing and disseminating technically specific materials for USAID offices and officers. For example, the Office for Women in Development (WID) now has detailed resources and tools for better integrating women with disabilities in programs. Those resources are available on the WID Internet and intranet sites. Additionally, in June 2007 the disability team and the USAID/

Recommendations for USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Offices

USAID encourages all USAID missions, bureaus, and offices to do the following:

- Develop a disability plan, and disseminate the plan to all implementing partners, government agencies, donors, and other stakeholders.
- Coordinate and consult with disabled persons organizations to receive advice on integration, and use disabled persons organizations as a resource to assess the inclusiveness of current and future programs.
- Appoint a disability focal point within the mission to ensure the full integration of people with disabilities, coordinate disability-related activities, and implement the disability plan.
- Ensure that staff members take the e-learning course, and encourage other staff development activities related to increasing the knowledge of inclusive practices.
- Conduct annual reviews of their programs in relation to the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Establish a mechanism to identify, document, and distribute best practices.

EGATs microenterprise development office used the microLINKS Speaker's Corner platform to organize an electronic discussion between leaders of the microenterprise and disability communities on best practices for disability and economic opportunities. A summary of the event and a list of best practices have been posted on the microLINKS website.

Finally, as noted earlier, USAID has used both internal and external publications to highlight successful programs and disseminate lessons learned. Regular articles appear in

Frontlines, USAID's employee newsletter; the monthly electronic magazine from the Agency's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance; World Bank publications; and online forums such as International Watch.

3. Increase the recruitment and level of people with disabilities within the Agency.

USAID has made great strides in increasing its recruitment and staffing levels of people with disabilities. To increase diversity within the workforce, the Agency hired a full-time recruiter to attract and hire minorities, including people with disabilities. Since the last report, USAID has (a) participated in several career fairs dedicated to recruitment of people with disabilities, (b) encouraged colleges with strong programs for people with disabilities to participate in the Agency's internship program, and (c) advertised job openings in the winter 2008 issue of *Careers & the disAbled* magazine.

Furthermore, to encourage managers to hire and promote people with disabilities, USAID used Schedule A authority to create a new special hiring authorities program, whereby two individuals with disabilities have been placed within offices that have critical needs for additional staff. Salaries for those individuals will be funded through the USAID Office of Human Resources. Each will be given an initial one-year placement and the opportunity for permanent employment. Additionally, USAID's Executive Diversity Council provides promotion potential to minorities working within the Agency, as have the council's many interagency affiliates, including a group specifically

for people with disabilities. That group conducts roundtables on disability and employment, and it encourages managers to hire staff members and interns with disabilities.

4. Increase the level of activity and effectiveness of the Agency Disability Team.

Since publication of the last report, substantial efforts have been made to increase the activity and effectiveness of the disability team, as well as to publicize the disability policy and available support resources. A number of examples point to the Agency's success in these efforts.

First, the disability team has sought opportunities both within and outside the Agency to highlight the need to fully implement USAID's disability policy and to educate its staff members about issues related to disability. Outreach efforts include publishing articles on best practices for inclusion in USAID's *Frontlines* newsletter, issuing Agency-wide announcements to highlight the International Day of People with Disabilities, and providing speakers at international events and seminars.

Second, USAID has increased donor coordination efforts. It meets with the World Bank, U.N. agencies, donors such as AusAid and the Department for International Development (DFID), and private foundations to ensure collaboration among disability programs and funding.

Third, in December 2006 the disability team, through an Investing in Women and Development fellowship, hired a disability expert. That individual is devoted full time to promoting disability integration throughout the Agency.

Finally, through capacity building of the USAID field staff, the disability team is decentralizing inclusive development practices. USAID believes that its technical officers on the ground are best positioned to influence government policies, to strengthen local DPOs, and to ensure that U.S. development efforts are as barrier free as possible.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

To foster the replication and systematization of the many successes that have occurred over the past two years, the fifth report makes a number of recommendations that are discussed next.

1. *Increase outreach to and consultation of disabled persons organizations and disability leaders by USAID missions, offices, and bureaus.*

USAID recognizes that the best experts in the field of disability and inclusive practices are people with disabilities themselves. They and the organizations that represent them can most effectively advise USAID on how to integrate their requirements into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of USAID programs and operations. It is important that missions, offices, and bureaus encourage disability leaders and DPOs to participate in their programs and to help identify the potential barriers that limit people with disabilities from becoming fully integrated into society. USAID has made significant efforts in that regard. In fact, many USAID missions, offices, and bureaus already consult with disabled persons organizations and disability leaders on a regular basis, thus acknowledging the importance of the participatory approach and input of people with disabilities themselves.

Greater emphasis should be placed on people with disabilities and DPOs as participants and partners in the development process and not solely as beneficiaries. USAID will work to increase the number of missions, offices, and bureaus that establish and maintain productive working relationships with local, in-country disability groups and will give those groups systematic opportunities not only to learn about USAID programs, but also to provide potentially valuable input on program design and development.

2. *Systematize the inclusion of disability policy into USAID's program selection criteria.*

Although USAID policy requires all contracting officers and agreement officers to include a provision supporting USAID's disability policy in all solicitations and resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements, that policy has yet to be implemented as emphatically as the spirit of the directive had intended. Often, language supporting the disability policy is found only within the clausal language of a solicitation, which can result in the information being dismissed, ignored, or forgotten, and thus not being integrated into the main text of implementing partners' proposals and applications. For disability issues to be meaningfully and significantly addressed in all applications and proposals, the policy should be incorporated into selection criteria. Although disability issues have been included in some selection criteria in the past, their inclusion is sporadic and relies heavily on individual interest. In instances where review selection criteria clearly noted the need to include disability, applications have provided more robust and systematic inclusion of people with disabilities. Therefore, USAID should systematize the integration of people

with disabilities as part of the selection criteria for requests for application and requests for proposal (i.e., RFAs and RFPs).

3. *Increase formal and informal training opportunities, and raise awareness on inclusive practices for USAID staff members, implementing partners, and disabled persons organizations.*

To ensure full inclusion of people with disabilities, stakeholders must be made more aware of and educated in inclusive practices and designs. USAID should focus more on building the awareness of USAID staff members and implementing partners about best practices for inclusion and the capacity of disabled persons organizations to become more effective in seeking funding, as well as on managing and implementing development programs. All relevant stakeholders should be involved so the development community can achieve a true understanding of the USAID disability policy and the best mechanisms for its implementation. The Agency should conduct training and roundtables for domestic disability groups and other implementing partners. Formal and nonformal trainings will provide opportunities for the Agency to increase its inclusive practices. USAID should also encourage field missions to conduct similar trainings, seminars, or roundtables by providing technical assistance as needed.

4. *Increase the number of missions with disability plans.*

A disability plan within a mission serves as an individualized guide on how that mission will attempt to reduce the physical and societal barriers that may limit people with disabilities from participating in society. It also ensures the equitable participation of people with disabilities in their families, communities,

and society. Although many USAID missions have already established plans that have been disseminated to disability groups, partners, and other stakeholders, more people are in the process of developing such plans. All missions, as well as Washington offices and bureaus should have disability plans.

Efforts to achieve the goal of 100 percent participation are already under way. The Agency's disability team provides direct technical assistance to missions and offices, the Agency is disseminating established plans, and a joint USAID/disability community working group is designing guidelines to facilitate the development of individualized disability plans.

APPENDIXES

GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM USAID MISSIONS AND OFFICES

THE FOLLOWING SUMMARIES REPRESENT SELF-REPORTING BY USAID MISSIONS, AND WASHINGTON, D.C., OFFICES AND BUREAUS.

AFRICA

ANGOLA

USAID's Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) has been supporting rehabilitation efforts in Angola since 1991. In fiscal year (FY) 2007, the LWVF resources supported the Civil Society Strengthening Program, administered by World Learning, which provides funding for Angolan and, potentially, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working with people with disabilities. Partners have been encouraged to submit concept papers, and World Learning is expected to disburse grants in the first quarter of FY 2008. Additionally, in FY 2007 the program launched a website compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

USAID/Angola does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. The working conditions at the mission provide the necessary facilities for people with disabilities, thus there are no physical barriers that would prevent a person with a disability from being employed by USAID/Angola. Employment at

USAID/Angola is open to anyone; the mission does not discriminate on the basis of any kind of disability. However, the mission has not interviewed any applicants with disabilities for any publicized job announcements.

BENIN

USAID/Benin encourages all USAID-supported programs to implement participatory practices in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their activities. All funding awards made by USAID include language that prohibits partners from discriminating against people with disabilities and that requires partners to make every effort to comply with the objectives of the Agency's disability policy.

USAID/Benin includes standard language in all solicitations for employment to indicate that the mission supports equal opportunity employment (EOE). The mission employs one staff member with a hearing disability and is taking steps to increase his responsibilities and to improve his ability to fulfill them effectively through the use of mobile

phone technology and online training. The mission is improving the availability of and access to online training for all employees, including staff members with disabilities. The mission is working with a staff member who has a disability to enable him to learn computer skills and to improve his French language skills (through an online course). Then, he will be able to communicate with mission staff members and to perform his job more effectively. Finally, the staff member uses text-messaging using a mission-provided cell phone to communicate and coordinate work both within the mission and with outside service providers.

USAID/Benin does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. Neither does the mission have any activities with the specific goal of increasing the capacity of disabled persons organizations.

BURKINA FASO

USAID does not maintain an office in Burkina Faso, but it awarded a grant to Handicap International for capacity building in Niger and Burkina Faso. The grant is managed by USAID's West

Africa Regional Program (WARP). The project focuses on strengthening existing disabled persons organizations in those countries. When disabled persons organizations have completed training programs, Handicap International will administer twelve subgrants to those organizations. Additional subgrants are available for disabled persons organizations to implement cultural and sporting events. Each organization must match 50 percent of the grant awarded.

In addition, USAID provides significant funding for projects in the country through Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS Burkina Faso is implementing a Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Program in collaboration with Plan International. CRS was responsible for constructing ninety-one school complexes, each of which included a three-classroom school, a well, three teacher lodgings, two separate latrines (one for boys and one for girls), and a playground. USAID/Ghana approved this undertaking on the contingency that CRS design and build all of the schools with wheelchair-accessible ramps.

BURUNDI

In Burundi, USAID has provided assistance to victims of violence and torture, some of whom are people with disabilities. This assistance is subject to terms and conditions of specific grants and contracts. USAID/Burundi will continue to strive to include people with disabilities as stakeholders and participants in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs whenever possible.

USAID/Burundi does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. In its FY 2007 operational plan, the mission expressed the intent to develop its own

disability plan. The post is awaiting a visit by the Division of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management (SHEM) to make formal recommendations for appropriate improvements to the complex, which was built in the 1960s. The mission will translate any of SHEM's recommendations into a funding request to the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations (OBO).

An option agreement for the purchase of land for a new embassy compound was signed in October 2007. The next phase of the due diligence process is under way, and OBO will seek funding for the project. USAID will co-locate at the new compound. If funded, construction is scheduled to start in 2009, with a targeted completion date in 2011. As OBO guidance stipulates, the embassy compound shall be constructed to be accessible to people with disabilities.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), the mission has a grant agreement with the NGO titled International Polio Victims Response Committee. The program works with children and young adults who have mobility disabilities and whose functionality could benefit from aids such as surgeries, leg braces, or crutches. It actively involves young people with disabilities, who are the focus of the activities. In Kinshasa and Bunia, the program trains children and young adult participants to construct braces and crutches, as well as to manage the operations of the residential centers for project beneficiaries. The project has attempted to become more self-sufficient by means of a program-initiated small business, which older clients manage.

Additionally, the capacity-building support provided to this NGO has allowed it to expand from one center in Kinshasa to six others throughout the country. The organization has also been able to engage in activities to provide young adults with the tools to become self-sufficient and activities to integrate children into mainstream schools. By becoming self-sufficient, the individuals assisted by this program can, in turn, become key advocates for the rights of people with disabilities. The program provides individuals and families with the economic power to have a voice in the community and with confidence that comes from their success, which helps them guide their personal advocacy.

USAID/DR Congo does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. The mission has been successful in removing psychological barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities in its activities by ensuring that staff members have the opportunity to work with people with disabilities as colleagues or supervisors. The mission actively recruited and has on staff two foreign service nationals who are deaf. One of the seven direct-hire Americans—who is an office chief and cognizant technical officer with responsibilities in strategic planning, program management, and evaluation—has a mobility disability. The mission has provided safe physical access to mission housing for this employee by providing a first-floor apartment equipped with a railing to help the employee climb the outside steps. To date, the mission has ensured that its offices are accessible to the employee by implementing an ad hoc system whereby colleagues assist the employee in climbing and descending the two flights of stairs to the USAID offices, as well as the stairs in other post facilities, as needed. The mission continues to consider ways to better address

the issue of accessibility while considering the key issue of security.

DJIBOUTI

In FY 2006, USAID/Djibouti funded the training of people with hearing and speaking disabilities under the community participation and nonformal education activity. This activity has not continued, however, because the government of Djibouti is developing a national nonformal education strategy that will guide future related activities.

In addition, USAID/Djibouti facilitated the distribution of funds from the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa by identifying program beneficiaries. The mission identified people with visual disabilities who were to receive eyeglasses and people with mobility disabilities who were to receive wheelchairs.

Throughout the mission's portfolio, USAID's disability policy is cited in program implementing mechanisms, and partners are required to comply. The mission will include criteria related to people with disabilities in its program monitoring and evaluation activities. USAID/Djibouti does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. The mission is supported by services from USAID/East Africa and the American Embassy in Djibouti, where USAID is co-located.

GHANA

USAID/Ghana engages in a variety of activities that both reach out to the disability community and increase the capacity of disabled persons organizations to provide assistance to people with disabilities and to advocate for their rights. One major initiative is being conducted by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development. The program works to build the capacity of disabled persons organizations, to increase the participa-

tion of people with disabilities in political activities, and to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities. The program is developing the institutional capacities of disabled persons organizations by developing workshops for those organizations. The workshops provide training on a variety of subjects, including group development, advocacy and lobbying, fundraising, understanding and becoming involved in the electoral process, and training for assertive behavior and confidence building (especially for women). The program also aims to enhance the participation of people with disabilities in local elections by monitoring and drawing attention to physical and other barriers that limit their participation. The program makes a strong commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities will contend for positions in the district assemblies and unit committees.

In addition to building the institutional capacities of disabled persons organizations, USAID/Ghana has supported advocacy efforts on behalf of people with disabilities, including the removal of societal barriers, through its work related to Ghana's disability act. The mission promoted the passage of the disability act, which affirms the right of accessibility to public places, employment, transportation, and medical care for people with disabilities. Disabled persons organizations were actively involved in designing the bill and participated as part of the stakeholders' review committee that oversees the project.

The mission also strengthened the institutional capacity of disabled persons organizations through advocacy training and education about implementing the disability act. Seminars were held in Kumasi, Sunyani, Takoradi, and the Cape Coast with an average of sixty-five people at each seminar. The objective

was to ensure the smooth implementation of the disability act. The seminars also sought to ensure that disabled persons organizations and their constituents have a full understanding of the act so they can serve in an oversight capacity during its implementation.

In August 2007, two USAID partners, the Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled and the Center for Democratic Development, organized a disability forum that brought together representatives from leading disabled persons organizations to discuss (a) progress on the implementation of the disability act, (b) use of local government funds earmarked for people with disabilities, and (c) inclusion of people with disabilities within the National Youth Employment Program. USAID increased public awareness of the rights of people with disabilities by funding the production of an abridged version of the disability act and by translating the act into Braille and five local languages. In the future, USAID/Ghana hopes to continue its efforts to educate the general public about the disability act by producing a TV drama and a TV animation project that will inform the public of key disability-related issues and will help to fight against the stigmatization of people with disabilities.

USAID/Ghana has also supported research to develop appropriate training materials for teachers of children with disabilities in the education system. In December 2006, USAID/Ghana sponsored a six-member Ghanaian delegation to attend the ninth International Congress on Community Services for Children, Youth, and Families with Special Health Care Needs. The delegation comprised policymakers; individuals with physical, visual, and hearing disabilities; and advocates for people with disabilities. The conference, held in Washing-

ton, D.C., offered sessions on ways to integrate children with disabilities into everyday community life and disseminated ideas on how to develop appropriate national policies and practical local programs for people with disabilities.

In June 2007, the mission—in collaboration with the Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled—launched a distribution of 280 wheelchairs to all ten regions of Ghana. The project was made possible through a donation from the Wheelchair Foundation in California and was facilitated through the offices of U.S. Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater and U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee. Also in FY 2007, the mission's social assistance activities, which are aimed at improving the well-being and productivity of the most vulnerable populations in Ghana, directed food rations to 11,151 beneficiaries, including people with physical and mental disabilities.

In FY 2008, the mission will launch a sports diplomacy program in collaboration with an established and experienced disabled persons organization. The initiative involves organizing an interregional wheelchair basketball tournament for men and women across Ghana. It will provide specialized training for male and female athletes with disabilities and will fund the procurement and maintenance of sports wheelchairs.

People with disabilities have been systematically included in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of many USAID-supported programs. Specifically, people with disabilities participated in planning civil society strengthening activities, as well as in implementing teacher training methods for children with special needs. USAID/Ghana consistently works with its partners to identify and reduce any barriers that may prevent people with disabilities

from participating in USAID programs and activities. Stigma and discrimination remain the largest barriers. By promoting a stigma-free environment, USAID/Ghana has helped ensure that all individuals are able to participate in family, community, and society.

USAID/Ghana's office chiefs and disability liaison officer distributed the mission's disability inclusion plan to all stakeholders on August 20, 2007. The mission order outlines operational procedures for promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the design and implementation of all USAID programs.

GUINEA

USAID/Guinea's disability inclusion plan, "Disability Policy: USAID/Guinea," is stated in its mission order dated June 27, 2007. USAID/Guinea strives to make its programs inclusive by maximizing awareness of disability issues within USAID, host-country counterparts, and other stakeholders, including contractors, grantees, and donors. USAID will consider all available options if an employee with a disability is unable to perform any essential functions of his or her position—even with reasonable accommodation—because of the disability.

The mission has developed policies that are intended to remove barriers to the participation of people with disabilities in their work. All recruitment announcements state that USAID/Guinea is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) and that people with disabilities are encouraged to apply for vacant positions. The mission makes every effort to assist people with disabilities in accessing its physical space. The new embassy and USAID buildings provide easy access for people with disabilities. All bathrooms have large stalls to accommodate wheel-

chairs, and both buildings have elevators and smooth sidewalks without steps. In addition, the mission acquires, to the extent feasible, the equipment required to enable people with disabilities to perform their duties and to realize their employment potential.

Since the signing of the people with disabilities policy directive in 2004, the mission has included a statement encouraging equitable access to its programs in all annual program statements and program-related announcements of upcoming procurement actions. The program office, in collaboration with the strategic objective teams, will establish a list of contractor sources that represent various forms of disability. The list will be made available missionwide as preferred sources to be consulted on a regular basis. USAID/Guinea does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations, but the program office will maintain statistics suitable for annual reporting requirements on the disability policy and its implementation.

KENYA

USAID/Kenya operates two programs specifically designed to reach people with disabilities. One USAID-supported program is providing health care to hundreds of children with physical disabilities. Those children are from poor households and have no access to specialized medical care. The program is committed to caring for the emotional and physical needs of children and their families. Children with disabilities and their families will receive both counseling and medical services. To build the skills of national physicians to assist children with disabilities, the program has incorporated formal training for doctors working in hospitals and other medical facilities.

The mission also funds a set of coordinated activities in support of education for people who are deaf. Among those services are mentoring support for teachers who are deaf, training for Kenya Sign Language interpreters, and tutoring and scholarship support for students who are deaf. The program has mentored and tutored fifty-four pupils who are deaf (thirty-two girls and twenty-two boys). In addition, ten teacher trainees who are deaf have been granted scholarships, and four sign language interpreters have been trained. Currently, USAID/Kenya does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

USAID/Kenya has a disability action plan that lays out strategies the mission will use to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities are included in implementing its programs. USAID coordinates closely with Germany, the United Kingdom, the United Nations (UN), and the World Bank, to ensure that people with disabilities and groups pursuing their interests benefit from donor programs in Kenya.

The mission is taking several steps to remove barriers that limit the participation of people with disabilities in family and community life. The mission's employment and training policies explicitly prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. The mission will continue to interact with its implementing partners and local disability organizations to ensure that people with disabilities benefit from employment and training opportunities. Furthermore, the mission ensures that any new buildings will be specifically designed to accommodate the needs of people with physical disabilities. Such accommodations consist of constructing ramps and wider

doorways to facilitate access to buildings by adults and children in wheelchairs.

LIBERIA

USAID/Liberia has supported stakeholder consultations on elections, and government sector strategies have included outreach to people with disabilities. Specifically, the mission has supported programs to ensure the participation of people with disabilities in the last national elections. Implementing organizations presented subgrants to organizations working directly with people with disabilities.

USAID/Liberia does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, but it intends to develop such a plan in 2008. Plans for a new embassy compound include recommendations for physical accessibility. The existing public affairs office has a ramp to enable physical accessibility for staff members, partners, and stakeholders.

MADAGASCAR

One of the targeted clients of USAID/Madagascar's Public Law 480 food aid activities is people with disabilities. Components of this program mitigate adverse conditions that people with disabilities might face by removing barriers and helping them integrate into the community. USAID/Madagascar does not currently conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

The mission works to include people with disabilities. It provides training and disseminates information to staff members and stakeholders in order to raise awareness about the concerns of people with disabilities. For relevant staff members, USAID has provided training about programming for people with disabilities. Information and train-

ing materials are shared with its stakeholders, who are encouraged to address, as appropriate, the concerns and needs of people with disabilities. The mission consults with its partners, contractors, and grantees in their respective areas of programming (child survival, reproductive health, family planning, food security, population, human rights, and microfinance) to ensure that people with disabilities have access to U.S. government-funded activities.

USAID/Madagascar has a disability inclusion plan, which is included in all RFAs and RFPs issued by the mission. Offices are responsible for ensuring that applicable components of the disability plan are included in implementation plans. To the extent feasible and appropriate, offices identify and consult with appropriate partners (organizations or individuals) to ensure that the concerns and needs of people with disabilities are addressed and respected under the relevant objectives of their program.

MALAWI

USAID/Malawi refers to the USAID Policy on Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-Financed Construction when the mission is considering any construction or addition to existing construction. When constructing its new compound access control building (completed in 2006), USAID/Malawi included the concepts of "universal design" described in the policy mentioned earlier, as well as the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to create a building that is accessible by everyone, especially people with disabilities.

The mission does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. However, it is in the process of developing a plan that will adopt the Agency's principles as ex-

pressed in the USAID disability policy paper dated September 12, 1997, and Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive (AAPD) 04-17, “Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements.” The mission will distribute this plan to all USAID/Malawi staff members, post it on mission bulletin boards, and encourage its distribution to all implementing partners and other stakeholders.

Following guidance contained in AAPD 04-17, as well as in Automated Directives System 302 and 303, the mission incorporates a disability clause into all active awards. However, USAID/Malawi does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

MALI

The accelerated economic growth team launched a new program with the private voluntary organization titled Trickle Up to help develop small businesses in Mali. Trickle Up has made a real commitment to including people with disabilities in its programming. That commitment is reflected in the goal of ensuring that 10 percent of entrepreneurs supported by the Trickle Up program are people with disabilities. One feature of the marginalization of people with disabilities is their gross underrepresentation in training environments and workplaces as trainees or employees, or as individuals who are self-employed. Such lack of representation in the workplace yields obvious negative consequences in terms of unemployment, destitution, and dependency on family or social services. Trickle Up focuses on two critical components of economic empowerment: the acquisition of business and vocational skills, and the access to appropriate financial services.

USAID’s other activities in Mali that address people with disabilities include increasing access to health services (a) by improving availability and quality at a community level and by conducting outreach activities to ensure that people with disabilities are aware of such services, (b) by training teachers and developing curricula with Mali’s Ministry of Education that better meet the needs of Mali’s people with learning disabilities, and (c) by expanding radio programming with development information. In addition, more than 4,000 community health volunteers have worked to increase access to health messages, counseling, and commodities for persons with disabilities. Continued financial and technical support to the polio eradication campaign has prevented the outbreak of new polio cases along with the disability that frequently results from polio infection. USAID/Mali does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations, and it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

MOZAMBIQUE

Although USAID/Mozambique employs two people with disabilities, to date the mission has not otherwise sought the specific participation of people with disabilities in planning, implementing, or evaluating USAID’s in-country programs. It is possible that individual government counterparts or implementing partners may have specifically targeted people with disabilities in the past, but the mission has not consciously noted such action. USAID/Mozambique does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations, nor does the mission have a disability inclusion plan in place.

USAID/Mozambique uses language in all recruitment advertisements indicating that the mission is an EOE. The mission staff includes two professional employees with physical disabilities. Neither employee has any limitations in performing work-related duties. The mission offices are located in a high-rise building, with direct street access and functioning elevators for easy wheelchair accessibility.

NAMIBIA

Under its democracy and governance program, the U.S. government supported a train-the-trainers workshop designed to facilitate dialogue among representatives from the Namibian government about gender-related issues for persons with disabilities. The participants, including ten women and six men, were civil servants linked to the disability resource unit in the prime minister’s office. This workshop has led to a motion in Parliament to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that requires member countries to adapt their national laws to encourage the participation of people with disabilities at all levels of government. USAID/Namibia does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

Although USAID/Namibia does not have an independent disability plan, the mission has adopted the Agency’s principles as expressed in the USAID disability policy paper dated September 12, 1997. This policy paper has been distributed to all USAID/Namibia staff members and posted on the mission’s bulletin boards.

NIGERIA

USAID/Nigeria’s implementing partners for peace and democratic governance

joined forces to provide a well-rounded program to ensure that people with disabilities receive necessary health care and education and that they are given the assistance they need to actively engage in political activities and to advocate effectively for their rights. The USAID mission director has displayed remarkable commitment to the cause of people with disabilities and has participated in all events carried out by the peace and democratic governance team in support of people with disabilities. USAID/Nigeria has a disability plan that will be shared with disabled persons organizations and other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development. The mission has installed a ramp to the front door of the USAID building for accessibility. The mission also has appointed as the disability focal point within the mission a foreign service national who has a disability.

People with disabilities have been faced with the issues of marginalization and exclusion, especially in political activities in Nigeria. This exclusion is not connected with the fact that the government and civil society still regard people with disabilities as warranting charitable interventions, but rather is based on issues related to human rights and development. In this context—and with the idea of finding a way forward—the International Republic Institute (IRI), a USAID implementing partner, hosted for stakeholders in Abuja in March 2008 a one-day electoral reform seminar about political participation of people with disabilities. Issues and concerns from the seminar have been submitted to the electoral reform committee in the hope of removing barriers to the active participation of persons with disabilities in the overall electoral process. Participating in the event were the peace and democratic team leader and USAID/Nigeria's disability coordinator. The event,

which was chaired by a former Supreme Court Justice, attracted prominent personalities from human rights organizations, political parties, disabled persons organizations, and the general public. The USAID mission director was a presenter, along with the minister for women's affairs and the former chairman of the Nigerian Court of Appeal.

IRI and Pact Inc. (another USAID/Nigeria implementing partner) are working to better integrate people with disabilities into society and to ensure equal access to opportunities. Pact—through its Advocacy, Awareness, and Civic Empowerment project—is involved in civil society strengthening, including (a) civic engagement on elections and electoral reform, (b) national- and state-level budget monitoring and advocacy, (c) anticorruption and transparency, and (d) advocacy for legislative initiatives and implementation. To date, the program has supported twenty-six local organizations through grants and capacity-building activities. Among those groups is the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), an umbrella organization that brings together all of the civil society organizations in the country that deal with people with disabilities.

Support has included financial management, mentoring in strategic planning, and program implementation. One of the successful results of that support has been the appointment of a JONAPWD member as the special assistant for disabilities and destitute matters to the governor in Kebbi State.

IRI's support to people with disabilities includes helping more than twenty organizations to develop a common strategy for increasing their political participation and representation, as well as helping to protect and ensure

their fundamental human rights as recognized in various international legal instruments. IRI's partnership with people with disabilities has been driven by a deep commitment (a) to clearly recognize the needs of people with disabilities in Nigerian society; (b) to take appropriate measures to promote the realization of the rights of people with disabilities; (c) to ensure that adequate resources, including education, are available to the most vulnerable members of society, and (d) to combat all forms of discrimination against people with disabilities.

Working with Pact, JONAPWD, and local civil society groups, IRI facilitates both the participation of people with disabilities and the articulation of issues to expand their political participation at the ongoing zonal public hearings on electoral reform. Specifically, the program helps streamline strategies for rights advocacy by facilitating their participation at public hearings, submitting their position papers, and articulating the issues affecting their political participation. IRI will continue to work with the leadership of people with disabilities to develop new strategies and techniques to advocate more effectively for their rights at the grassroots level. IRI will empower advocates to run campaigns to engage with legislators on how district policies and programs can be changed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. Additionally, because of its historically strong working relationship with Nigeria's political parties, IRI will assist disability organizations in effectively communicating their needs and interests to appropriate parties. The program will educate political parties on the importance of this prominent segment of their constituency, while simultaneously assisting them and their supporters to develop the skills necessary to make sure that their interests are

incorporated in political party platforms and legislative strategies.

Consistent with IRI's overall political party-strengthening objectives in Nigeria, the institute sees the emphasis on issue-based advocacy as an important way to enhance IRI's existing USAID-funded party work. The goal is to encourage political parties to develop issue-based strategies to target special interest groups and thereby to broaden party support for all citizens. Already, the People's Democratic Party (Nigeria's largest political party) has created an office that will focus on disability-related issues, including inclusiveness.

There is considerable interest among members of the national assembly in equalizing opportunities for people with disabilities. This sense of urgency came after IRI brought together members of the national assembly, the judiciary, and the media to discuss issues affecting people with disabilities and ways to support them. Members of the disability community—including representatives from groups dealing with leprosy and hearing and vision impairments—traveled from across Nigeria to attend the workshop.

USAID is also partnering with the government of Nigeria to eliminate polio through child immunization. The Agency continuously engages with the media and local partners to create awareness of and mobilize initiatives on the need to immunize children against polio. The Agency assists individuals who have contracted polio to fully integrate them into society. Under its Investing in People team, USAID/Nigeria supports the Kano Polio Victims Trust Association project, funded by the Leahy War Victims Fund, to improve the socioeconomic status of its members through institutional capacity building,

vocational skill training, and advocacy to reduce stigma toward and discrimination against people who have had polio.

In December 2006, the mission sponsored nine people with disabilities to attend the ninth International Congress on Children, Youth, and Families with Special Health Care Needs in Washington, D.C.

OMEGA INITIATIVE

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Omega Initiative, with implementing partner Pact Inc., provides funding and technical support through subgrants for a broad range of advocacy, awareness raising, and rehabilitation services for civilians with disabilities that resulted from war in that region. In September 2001, USAID awarded a cooperative agreement to Pact to manage this \$8 million initiative. Pact serves as the lead organization and is responsible for overall program management and coordination. The key elements of the Omega Initiative revolve around the mandate (a) to award, manage, and support subgrants to local and international organizations, including disabled persons organizations; (b) to support its broader program goals; and (c) to provide technical assistance to award recipients and other organizations. Omega has subgrants in Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda.

Since June 2005, the Omega Initiative has piloted a small-grants and technical assistance program within two districts in northern Uganda. The program has provided more than fifty grants—primarily to local disability organizations—totaling more than US\$1 million. A peer monitoring mechanism has been established in each district to support and monitor projects for at least one year after the funding period has ended. This unique mechanism helps promote

community buy-in and strengthens efforts toward sustainability.

RWANDA

The mission in Rwanda has several programs that integrate people with disabilities. USAID's agribusiness activities do not discriminate against people with disabilities. In fact, those activities include people with physical disabilities resulting from the 1994 genocide. Title II food is distributed to food-insecure people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as to those in institutional feeding centers. Food aid also benefits residents of orphanages and homes for the elderly and for people with disabilities. Democracy and governance efforts involve people with disabilities in a variety of ways, including several activities that focus on genocide survivors—a group that has a disproportionate number of people with disabilities. A program of more than 400 small grants to community organizations will be reviewed to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access. The mission does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

USAID/Rwanda does not have a separate disability inclusion plan, but the mission is committed to upholding USAID's disability policy and to ensuring that the policy is adopted by all partners. The mission provides office and meeting spaces that are accessible for people with disabilities. USAID/Rwanda also has a mission order about implementing USAID's disability policy in country. The USAID/Rwanda *Partners' Handbook*, which is given to all new USAID implementing partners, informs those partners of the Agency's policy with regard to people with disabilities and asks them to abide by the policy's guidance and spirit.

SENEGAL

USAID/Senegal does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. However, the mission has reaffirmed its approach to serving people with disabilities by addressing their needs and concerns through mainstream development activities rather than by targeting them as a separate group. In doing so, the mission tries to avoid the stereotypes and stigma attached to a group-specific approach. Under the economic growth strategic objective (USAID/Wula Nafaa program), people with disabilities are members of some village committees that have been established to implement local conventions and forest management plans. They are also members of producer groups organized and supported by USAID/Wula Nafaa. Community members, including people with disabilities who are no longer able to engage in traditional agricultural activities, are trained to earn money by collecting and selling forest products such as cashew nuts, natural gums, and fruits.

In FY 2007, the architectural plans for middle schools to be constructed with USAID funding were revised to include ramps for each building, including classrooms, the administrative block, and bathrooms, to facilitate access by students, teachers, and administrative staff members with disabilities. Furthermore, the education program has added disability as a recognized element in the revised scholarship eligibility criteria for girls, thereby giving preferential treatment to girls with disabilities.

USAID/Senegal does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations. However, under the mission's health program, disabled persons organizations participated in a census of people with disabilities to assist them in enrolling in community-based mutual health orga-

nizations in Louga, Thiès, and Ziguinchor. People with disabilities helped establish those organizations. Disabled persons organizations negotiated health insurance arrangements for their members to access health services. As one result, Handicap International set up a health insurance system for landmines survivors in Ziguinchor. In Louga, thirty-five people with disabilities enrolled as members in the new mutual health organization titled La Linguere.

SIERRA LEONE

In Sierra Leone, political process and elections initiatives sponsored by the U.S. government specifically employ and target people with disabilities. The goal of these activities is ensuring access to all phases of the political process, including election information, participatory meetings, and voting. Training for people with disabilities and disability organizations are part of the program. Democracy Sierra Leone, supported by the U.S. government, is an umbrella civil society organization that consists of more than eighty organizations, some of which are for DPOs. In addition to including people with disabilities in the election process, the mission is providing broader support for activities that raise awareness of and that sensitize people toward disability issues. Advocacy training and organizational capacity building continue.

USAID/Sierra Leone is paired with and operates under the disability inclusion policy of USAID/Guinea. Under that policy, the key to making programs more inclusive is maximizing the awareness of disability issues within USAID and among its host-country counterparts and other stakeholders, including contractors, grantees, and donors. In keeping with this policy, the mission has attempted to remove internal barriers to the participation of persons with disabili-

ties in its work, and it has encouraged partners to include people with disabilities in their activities.

USAID/Sierra Leone includes in all its recruitment announcements a statement that USAID is an EOE and that persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply for vacant positions. The new embassy building is designed to be fully accessible. The mission acquires, to the extent feasible, equipment necessary to enable employees with disabilities to perform their duties and to realize their employment potential. Additionally, USAID will consider all options available to an employee who has a disability and who is unable to perform essential functions of his or her position—even with reasonable accommodation—as a result of the disability.

The mission will include a statement encouraging equitable access to its programs in all program-related solicitations and announcements of upcoming procurement actions. The program office, in collaboration with technical unit teams, will establish a list of contractor sources that represent disabilities. The list will regularly be made available missionwide. The program office will also maintain statistics that are suitable for annual reporting requirements concerning the disability policy and its implementation.

SOMALIA

USAID does not have a mission in Somalia; issues and activities in Somalia are supported by and housed within USAID/East Africa. The USAID/East Africa disability plan drafted in FY 2006 covers USAID/Somalia. The disability plan seeks to empower people with disabilities and organizations representing them through existing programs and activities. Existing USAID/East Africa pro-

grams work with regional partners (a) to reduce the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, (b) to mitigate conflict throughout the region, (c) to increase the awareness of gender-based violence, and (d) to reintegrate victims of violence and torture into the family and community.

The disability plan seeks to improve awareness among staff members and partners about the challenges faced by and the opportunities open to people with disabilities. The disability plan calls for people with disabilities to be included as program participants and as stakeholders in the planning and evaluation process whenever possible.

SOUTH AFRICA

People with disabilities have been incorporated into several of USAID/South Africa's broad initiatives. For example, four Thuthuzela centers funded through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) under a cooperative agreement, are providing specialized counseling and offering sign language interpretation, when necessary, for people with disabilities to facilitate communication between rape victims and the center's management. Thuthuzela centers are one-stop shops providing services to victims of sexual assault. The centers' buildings are user-friendly.

From 2008 to 2010, the Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative will support fifteen to twenty such centers, in addition to those supported by PEPFAR. The operating unit will ensure that the new centers are accessible to people with disabilities and have special facilities that address their needs.

The National Association of Childcare Workers (NACCW) provides accredited child and youth care training to community members in order to provide holistic services to orphans and other vulner-

able children. Since 2004, PEPFAR has supported NACCW's Isibindi projects, thus providing direct services to vulnerable children and training for child and youth care workers in seven provinces in South Africa. In 2008, NACCW conducted a needs assessment of each Isibindi site to identify children with disabilities requiring care and support. The staff will network with health care facilities and service providers in each site to foster access to specialized services for orphans and other vulnerable children with disabilities. A report for each site will (a) document the number of children with special needs, (b) describe the identified needs (for individual children and groups), (c) outline existing local health and social service facilities, and (d) articulate an action plan. NACCW mentors will meet with appropriate rehabilitation departments at local hospitals or clinics for follow-up actions.

USAID/South Africa finalized a mission order on disability inclusion in April 2008. In advance of the mission order, the operating unit adopted the broader USAID disability policy supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of its work, including employment, program implementation, and evaluations. The operating unit promotes a policy of broad inclusion regardless of gender, race, or physical disability. All solicitations and associated awards issued by the Office of Assistance and Acquisition include provisions regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities, as stipulated in AAPD and titled "Supporting USAID's Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements" and the Programming Policy Interim Update 05-07 titled "Increased Utilization of Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses."

The mission's physical environment is accessible to people with disabilities.

The facility is wheelchair accessible, and other accommodations are provided on an "as needed" basis for employees and visitors. When selecting new staff members, the mission does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or physical disability.

TANZANIA

USAID/Tanzania's primary disability focus is the support of educational activities that improve access to education for children with disabilities in Zanzibar. This goal is being addressed primarily through a partnership with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training's inclusive education unit. However, the mission is also actively partnering with two local NGOs representing people with disabilities to ensure that the new Zanzibar Education Policy appropriately addresses disability issues.

USAID/Tanzania is actively supporting the finalization of the Zanzibar Education Development Program, which will include education for children with disabilities as a part of inclusive education. The Zanzibar Education Policy and its Education Development Program were finalized in late 2007. In conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training's inclusive education unit, community sensitization seminars were conducted in all ten districts in Zanzibar during late 2007 and early 2008.

Interactive radio instruction heard throughout Zanzibar is also sensitizing children and parents to the rights of people with disabilities. Additionally, the mission's educational activities continue to work with twenty pilot schools in Zanzibar that are being mainstreamed with government schools in mid-2008. The education programs are working closely with the regional governments

of Lindi and Mtwara (southern coastal mainland) to begin pilot activities based on the work being done in Zanzibar.

In addition to the activities that focus on improving access to education for children with disabilities, the mission also provides capacity-building support to disabled persons organizations. On the mainland, the civil society strengthening activity supports the Association of People with Disabilities Tanzania, a network of NGOs working on a variety of disability issues.

USAID/Tanzania does not have a disability inclusion plan in place; however, the mission does work to implement the broader USAID policy. A mission notice of August 10, 2005, stipulates that the U.S. government will not discriminate against any minorities, including people with disabilities. The contracting office ensures that the disability clauses provided in AAPD 04-17 are included, as stipulated, in RFAs and RFPs and in resulting grants and contracts. USAID is co-located in a new office building that was constructed to give full access to people with disabilities. There are ramps, elevators big enough to accommodate wheelchairs, and bathrooms outfitted for people with disabilities.

UGANDA

USAID/Uganda reports that disability is one of the mission's cross-cutting issues. The program office takes advantage of new activity and performance reviews to raise issues relevant to the inclusion of people with disabilities in mission programs. However, USAID/Uganda reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

During FY 2007, USAID worked with the National Union of Disabled People in Uganda, the primary national umbrella group for disability organizations

in Uganda, to enhance the capacity of leaders in the disability community to participate effectively in the planning and budgeting process of local governments. To strengthen the potential sustainability of the process, a training of trainers at the regional level was conducted for selected disability leaders so that they could cascade the training to other people with disabilities, both individually and in groups. No other significant action was taken in FY 2007.

ZAMBIA

USAID/Zambia reports that people with disabilities have improved access to its mission offices. A new office building addition completed in 2006 was constructed in accordance with the USAID policy titled "Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-Financed Construction." The new addition provides workspace that is accessible by everyone, including people with disabilities. USAID/Zambia incorporates the concepts of universal design, as well as the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act when it considers any new construction or addition to existing construction. For the new addition, the concepts were incorporated in the design of access ramping, door openings, hall widths, meeting rooms, office spaces, and bathrooms.

In December 2007, Zambia began working with the American Institute for Research (AIR) to implement the Engaging with Disabled Persons Organizations in Development Cooperation (ENGAGE) program that has as its objective the introduction of a disability dimension to HIV/AIDS programs. This project will specifically focus on reaching those students with disabilities who attend Zambia's "segregated" schools. The project seeks to assess, through survey instruments, the level of

awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS among students. It will introduce into schools an HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention curriculum that is based on and adapted from existing curriculum used by PEPFAR providers, as well as a civic education curriculum on the responsibilities and rights of citizens with disabilities. As part of the overall program, the Zambian Federation of the Disabled will form a working group on disability and development that will position Zambian disability leaders so they can participate in international development activities carried out by USAID's implementing partners and other donors. In particular, the working group will work to position the federation and its member organizations as potential stakeholders and partners in USAID-funded (PEPFAR) programs addressing HIV/AIDS.

USAID/Zambia does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, but the mission has adopted the Agency's principles as expressed in the USAID disability policy paper dated September 12, 1997, and in AAPD 04-17 titled "Supporting USAID's Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements." The mission has distributed those documents to all USAID/Zambia staff members, posted them on the mission's bulletin boards, and encouraged their distribution to all implementing partners and other stakeholders.

ZIMBABWE

USAID/Zimbabwe reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. However, in FY 2007, the mission's civil society program provided capacity-building support to the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH), which represents fifty-three member organizations. All members provide assistance

to or advocate on behalf of people with disabilities. USAID's support for NASCOH's advocacy for promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities has resulted in the government's reserving fifteen seats in parliament for people with disabilities.

This mission also incorporates people with disabilities in its work through its orphan and vulnerable children program. The mission works with the J. F. Kapnek Trust, a local organization that helps to care and provide for orphans and vulnerable children, including those with disabilities. Under this program, the mission supports advocacy on behalf of children with disabilities. Orphans and vulnerable children were also included as participants in a workshop to develop standards of quality for services for such children.

REGIONAL OFFICES

East Africa Regional. USAID/East Africa's programs work with regional partners (a) to reduce stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, (b) to mitigate conflict throughout the region, (c) to increase awareness in the region of gender-based violence, and (d) to reintegrate victims of violence and torture into their families and communities. USAID/East Africa reports that a disability plan has been completed. The plan encompasses the areas served by USAID/East Africa, as well as the limited presence country of Somalia. As outlined in its disability plan, USAID/East Africa seeks to empower people with disabilities and the organizations representing them through its existing programs and activities, and to improve awareness among staff members and partners of the challenges faced by and opportunities available for people with disabilities. The plan calls for the inclusion of people with disabilities whenever possible as participants in pro-

grams and as stakeholders in planning and evaluating programs.

South Africa Regional. In FY 2007, the regional agriculture program provided technical expertise and training in vegetable production to a community of people who are blind. The vegetables were then sold to the Sun International Hotel in Zambia.

USAID/Southern Africa does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. A draft mission order dated March 21, 2007, to establish the mission's disability policy was not finalized because of the merger of the regional mission with USAID/South Africa and the subsequent relocation of the regional program from Botswana to South Africa. That mission order will be finalized and implemented in FY 2008.

West Africa Regional. USAID/West Africa provides support for Handicap International's project titled Improving the Participation of Citizens in a Disabling Situation in Burkina Faso and in Niger for the Recognition of their Rights through the Strengthening of Their Organizations. The project extended from September 2006 to September 2008. The target group for the project is people with disabilities, institutional stakeholders, and civil society.

The Handicap International project provides substantial capacity-building support for disabled persons organizations in Burkina Faso and Niger. Capacity building for those organizations takes the form of workshops for project development, trainings, and support in the implementation of microprojects that promote the rights and participation of citizens with disabilities in each country. The project also supports and prepares disabled persons organizations to conduct participative territorial diagnoses of the local situation of people

with disabilities in the two regions of Burkina Faso that are involved in the activities (Fada and Tenkodogo). Finally, Handicap International provides technical and financial support for organizing workshops that will assist disabled persons organizations in developing training and monitoring plans.

USAID/West Africa does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, but it acknowledges the need to develop such a plan in 2008. In the future, USAID/West Africa will make the inclusion of people with disabilities a part of its program implementation review by encouraging cognizant technical officers to request that implementing partners identify and provide opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in activities or to be employed by partner organizations. Furthermore, the mission will work to ensure that buildings are updated or new arrangements are made to facilitate requests for reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities who are newly hired or already employed by USAID and are working in USAID-supported buildings.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

AFGHANISTAN

USAID/Afghanistan supported the NGO Consortium for the Psychosocial Care and Protection of Children (Christian Children's Fund, International Rescue Committee, and Save the Children Federation Inc.) from April 2003 to June 2008 to implement the Assistance for Afghanistan's Most Vulnerable Children program. The project assisted particularly vulnerable Afghan children, including orphans, children living with disabilities, working children, and former child soldiers. Project

teams worked with communities and government workers in six provinces in four regions (a) to identify threats to the physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being of children; (b) to provide assistance for particularly vulnerable children and families; and (c) to advocate for government action on child protection issues. Among the programs' accomplishments in the past year was its role in integrating more than seventy children with disabilities into mainstream government schools.

In addition, USAID/Afghanistan and the Leahy War Victims Fund issued twelve service contracts to both national and international NGOs to implement services for people with disabilities in the areas of Faryab, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar, and Parwan. Those programs provide services in a number of areas, including physical rehabilitation, community-based rehabilitation, income generation, education, awareness raising and community education, sign-language development, and audiometrics. The programs have directly reached 7,964 people with disabilities (2,753 women and girls; 5,211 men and boys). In addition, the program has conducted workshops and exchange visits with seventy-three people with disabilities who represent five national disabled persons organizations. The program has provided them with information about their basic rights and knowledge on lobbying and advocacy skills; produced a weekly radio program, "Qahir-Qarman," which shares information and informs the public of issues related to disability; and established a resource center on disability in the National Program for Action on Disability office, which is accessible to the government, NGOs, and disabled persons organizations. The resource center houses more than 400 publications, including CDs, videos, and printed materials.

BANGLADESH

USAID/Bangladesh supports several projects related to disability issues. People with disabilities and disabled persons organizations are actively incorporated into aspects of relevant mission programming. The U.S. government held a high-profile conference in conjunction with the National Alliance of Disabled People's Organizations (NADPO) to increase access for voters with disabilities and to encourage their participation in the elections process. NADPO presented the concerns and recommendations raised at this conference to election commission officials, civil society, and political party leaders. As a result, the election commission has incorporated many of the recommendations in its voter registration implementation plan, and it has made special provisions to ensure that voters with disabilities receive registration forms and have their photographs taken for national ID cards—a by-product of the voter list preparation.

USAID's early childhood development projects specifically target inclusive development. USAID-sponsored SUCCEED preschools encourage the enrollment of children with mild disabilities, who make up approximately 5 percent of total enrollment in USAID-funded preschools. *Sesame Street Bangladesh* television episodes encourage children with disabilities to develop self-esteem for their own abilities and efforts. Live segments of television episodes highlight what children with disabilities are capable of rather than what limits them. *Sesame Street Bangladesh* programs teach children to understand different types of disabilities—including motor, vision, speech, hearing, communication, physical, and behavioral—and how people with disabilities can be included in community activities. Furthermore, the television show promotes awareness that, even though chil-

dren with disabilities may experience different challenges from children without disabilities, they should be given appropriate opportunities to participate.

The mission reports that some barriers to direct participation in USAID activities have been removed while others remain. Although USAID/Bangladesh reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, the mission intends to develop a plan in FY 2008. Human resources sends every notice of employment opportunities at the mission to a group that advocates for people with disabilities. However, the mission does not have specific language encouraging people with disabilities to apply. The mission reports that such information can and will be added.

Accessibility also varies. Websites developed locally may meet some requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, but they are not designed to specifically address the Section 508 requirement. Some portions of the U.S. mission facilities meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. For example, the chancery has elevators that provide access to all floors, a main lobby with push switches on both doors, restrooms that are on the ground floor and that are accessible to men and women with disabilities, and a parking space reserved for people with disabilities. Although the main entrance has push switches installed, they are currently rendered inoperative for security reasons.

CAMBODIA

USAID/Cambodia supports a partner that works in the disabilities sector, Veterans International–Cambodia (VI-C). This organization focuses on rehabilitation services within a framework of social and economic integration of people

with disabilities. Funding for the VI-C project has been provided by USAID's Leahy War Victims Fund. VI-C, one of the mission's few partnering organizations managed by a Cambodian staff, has taken steps to establish an endowment that will ensure a continual flow of funds to successfully maintain its operations—providing support to people with disabilities well into the future.

USAID also provides grants to the Disability Action Council (DAC). This organization secures rights and services for people with disabilities. Through those initiatives and in cooperation with other donors, stakeholders, and the government of Cambodia, the mission supports the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth in its attempts to establish legislation that focuses on the rights of Cambodians with disabilities.

In FY 2006, USAID/Cambodia supported an evaluation of the DAC, thus soliciting input from Cambodians with disabilities. The feedback guides the organization in further efforts to support people with disabilities in the country through activities such as job training, access to education, and microfinance opportunities. The U.S. government also supported an evaluation of the rehabilitation sector. Input from people with disabilities was used to study how the provision of rehabilitation services could be made sustainable in the long term.

USAID/Cambodia also implements an education program that assists children with disabilities through both medical and classroom activities. Medical assistance is provided to children with disabilities and with health issues that restrict them from attending school. Children from target communities who have visual, auditory, or mobility disabilities are provided with medical ser-

vices, which in some cases are paid for by USAID. The program works closely with other organizations such as Operation Smile and Handicap International. For example, Handicap International recently provided a wheelchair to a student with a disability as a result of polio.

After the children return to their homes and communities, they are integrated into the local schools, sometimes for the first time. Within USAID-sponsored schools, the program also trains teachers on how to work with students with disabilities. Simple solutions such as moving students with low vision or who are hard of hearing to the front of the classroom are encouraged. The program also uses a child-to-child network to provide in-school assistance to students with disabilities, as well as to other disadvantaged students. Older students provide assistance in core subjects.

USAID/Cambodia reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. However, the mission is diligent in ensuring that partners are aware of their obligation to include people with disabilities in their programs. In June 2006, the mission moved into a new facility that complies with all current U.S. standards for access and inclusion of people with disabilities. USAID/Cambodia is an Equal Opportunity Employer and promotes this fact in all hiring initiatives.

CYPRUS

Implementation of the Action for Cooperation and Trust program has benefited people with disabilities. Through the program, USAID has provided subgrants to organizations whose objective is to employ and mainstream people with disabilities. For example, grants were provided to Cyprus Dyslexia Association to strengthen special education

and to the Association for the Welfare of People with Handicaps to provide a center for people with high support needs disabilities.

USAID/Cyprus does not have a disability inclusion plan. Instead, it uses the USAID disability policy as the basis for implementation.

EAST TIMOR

In previous years, USAID provided small grants to organizations working with people with disabilities, including a grant to the Ministry of Labor and Community Reinsertion to develop a national policy on disability and a grant to the Association for the Equality of the Disabled People of Timor for “stop-gap” support for an international physiotherapist. The International Catholic Migration Commission is implementing an ongoing USAID-supported Survivors of Torture program for victims of torture and their families who suffered during the twenty-four-year occupation by Indonesia.

USAID/East Timor reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. New USAID/Timor-Leste facilities have been constructed to facilitate access by people with disabilities. For example, a ramp has been installed at the building's entrance and doorways and hallways are wider. Automatic door openers have not yet been installed; however, office guards are available at doorways to assist people with disabilities. People with disabilities are always encouraged to participate in USAID-supported programs.

EGYPT

USAID/Egypt supports programming aimed at both the prevention of disability and the greater inclusion of people with disabilities in all areas of society,

including education and economic and civic participation. Disability prevention activities are primarily focused on the eradication of polio from Egypt. The mission has been working closely with the government of Egypt toward that goal.

The mission operates an information and communications technology project under its economic growth objective. One of the subprojects consists of a grant to Ain Shams University, one of Egypt's most important centers of learning, for its audiology unit. The objective is to develop a localized Arabic-language multimedia software package to assist children with central auditory processing disorder. Two other grants were awarded to help people with visual disabilities access computer systems. Software, hardware and training were provided.

People with disabilities are included in the mission's program for small and microenterprises. One of this program's activities helps people with disabilities in Upper Egypt through a partner micro-finance institution, the Assiut Business Association.

The democracy and governance annual program statement promotes citizenship and tolerance for all Egyptian citizens. It has focused on supporting groups that promote the inclusion of people with disabilities, a historically disenfranchised group, with USAID support. Two grants—one with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the other with a local disability NGO, Shumuu—directly targeted the promotion of civic and political participation of people with disabilities nationwide. Under the grant to Shumuu, the first Braille training manual in Egypt was developed and widely disseminated. Activities included raising awareness

and knowledge about disability rights, empowering people with disabilities to work collectively to attain those rights in the public sphere, and sensitizing governorate-level decisionmakers to issues affecting people with disabilities in order to facilitate their inclusion and participation. In addition, the mission supported the establishment of governorate-based disabilities committees in all governorates to ensure that disability issues are not neglected.

Aid to another local NGO, Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), supported a rights-based initiative to engage people with disabilities in the decision-making processes of their communities. Examples of the types of issues dealt with in the CEOSS activities are (a) access to public transportation for people with disabilities and (b) allocation of space in literacy classes. CEOSS worked at the local level to raise the awareness of people with disabilities regarding their right to participate in the community, facilitated engagement with local decisionmakers, and assisted in the issuance of birth certificates and national identity cards to help people with disabilities fully integrate in life. CEOSS partnered with three disabled persons organizations and other groups to implement those activities. The CEOSS-funded subgrants involved capacity building for the partner disabled persons organizations, which are located in Beni Seuf and Cairo.

Finally, the education program is involved with the National Book Program. To cultivate a culture of inclusion, some of the books are distributed to school libraries for children with disabilities.

USAID/Egypt incorporates the standard provisions supporting USAID's inclusive disability policy in all solicitations and resulting awards for contracts,

grants, and cooperative agreements. However, USAID/Egypt reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

The mission's new office building was built in compliance with U.S. standards to ensure universal accessibility for people with disabilities. The facility has, for example, curb cuts, ramps, modified elevators, and parking spaces designated for people with disabilities. The mission has employed a number of people with disabilities, both American and Egyptian, and it has taken steps to meet staff needs for specialized furniture and equipment.

INDIA

USAID/India operates a variety of programs that incorporate people with disabilities into their goals and activities. The mission's disaster management program aims to reduce the vulnerability of all segments of society, including persons with disabilities. The mission's access to education program addresses the special needs of children with disabilities, working to ensure that those children are enrolled and retained in school. The program has three NGO partners that work with children with disabilities. The environment program has helped facilitate an environmentally green building certification program, which includes access for people with disabilities as a criterion for building certification. Finally, people with disabilities are beneficiaries of activities in the health arena. USAID/India does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

The offices of USAID/India are fully accessible to people with disabilities. The mission is co-located with the Department of State on the U.S. Embassy compound. Embassy facilities have

ramps, and those facilities are reported to comply with Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. The USAID mission is accessible by elevator on a single level, and an open office environment is maintained. USAID offices and public areas are equipped with signs marked in Braille, and wide and unobstructed hallways are maintained to accommodate people with disabilities.

USAID/India reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, and the mission does not target people with disabilities for participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs. USAID/India's disability policy includes the objective of ensuring that employment opportunities are open to people with disabilities. The mission accordingly considers hiring people with disabilities when appropriate. As a result, one person with a disability, a foreign service national, was hired by the mission in 2004.

INDONESIA

USAID/Indonesia operates a number of programs designed to improve access for people with disabilities to basic rights such as voting and education. For example, the local government support program assists a citizen-led good governance task force in West Java Province that places a high priority on providing access to basic education for children with disabilities. The program's efforts to make local governments more effective, accountable, and responsive involve, in part, working to strengthen the management capacity of local institutions and their financial capacity to handle issues related to people with disabilities. The program is also working with people with disabilities, including disabled persons organizations, to increase their participation in local government decision making and advocacy for their rights.

The goal of the Targeted Election Management Assistance (TEMA) Program is to ensure that—throughout Indonesia during the 2009 national elections—polling operations and voter registration processes are more inclusive of the needs of people with disabilities. Disabled persons organizations and disabled advocacy groups in the TEMA program will participate in the development of electoral procedures. For example, one activity will assist the national election commission in creating posters and guidebooks in Braille about how to vote.

The Opportunities for Vulnerable Children (OVC) program is improving access to education. Continued collaboration with government counterparts, disabled persons organizations, and other stakeholders is ensuring the inclusion of children with disabilities in the public school system. The OVC program partners with 158 schools in Jakarta and is looking to expand to 100 schools in three other provinces. The program has provided access to education and support services to more than 1,000 children with disabilities.

The OVC program provides capacity building and direct technical assistance in the form of training, management support, and grant writing to more than fifteen local disabled persons organizations. Such support will allow those organizations to increase their technical, management, and fundraising capacities. Eventually, those organizations will become proficient in designing and implementing programs similar to OVC.

OVC also has a substantial number of people with disabilities who participate in all aspects of the program, including senior management and OVC staff members, as well as experienced educators with disabilities. Those senior stake-

holders have a wealth of experience in inclusive education training, monitoring, and evaluation. They provide input on curriculum and learning materials; counseling support; and training, monitoring, and evaluation of headmasters, teachers, trainers, and government partners. They are also members of the policy task force for inclusive education in Jakarta and three provinces where the Decentralized Education Program is operating.

People with disabilities are also being incorporated into reconstruction efforts through the promotion of accessibility. The ongoing construction of the Banda Aceh to Calang road includes accessible sidewalks with approaches on both sides of the roadway and to and from all bridges. A number of those facilities are under construction.

USAID/Indonesia reports that a mission order on the USAID/Indonesia disability inclusion plan is in the final clearance stage and that the plan will be shared with all stakeholders once it has been approved.

JORDAN

USAID/Jordan is engaged in a project with Handicap International to help improve the advocacy capacity of community development organizations to promote democracy, human rights, and development for people with disabilities in their communities. The objective of the project is to establish a comprehensive local network of disabled persons organizations that will promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities. This network will serve as a model for the rest of the country. In addition to training and equipping those groups to advocate effectively and be involved in the decision-making process on behalf of their communities, local authorities will be trained and equipped with

relevant information and skills to prepare a disability policy that can be introduced into their routine procedures. Local partners also will receive assistance to design and implement a cycle of small grants that address issues of inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities in local communities, thereby targeting infrastructure and information campaigns to raise public awareness of disability issues. Several community-level grants from the outreach program have been provided to community-based organizations that work with children with disabilities to increase opportunities for those children.

USAID/Jordan does not have a disability inclusion plan, but the mission works closely with the U.S. Embassy to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities. USAID/Jordan has no barriers to participation of people with disabilities. The mission is located within the embassy, where facilities are available to eliminate barriers to communication, physical accessibility, and employment opportunities. The mission also has an active equal opportunity policy, which is closely followed. Qualified individuals are hired regardless of any disabilities.

LAOS

USAID does not maintain a mission in Laos, so all programming is managed through the Regional Development Mission Asia. In Laos, USAID supports Handicap International Belgium, which, in partnership with people with disabilities, their families, and communities, employs medical, educational, socioeconomic, and advocacy interventions to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. Among the program's accomplishments are (1) training of thirty community-based rehabilitation workers who work in thirty target communities (three districts, with

ten communities each); (2) completion of the *Baseline Study Report: People with Disabilities in Target Communities of Nong, Vilabuly, and Xepon Districts, Savannakhet Province and Vangvieng District, Vientiane Province, Lao PDR* (September 2005); (3) creation of a resource room at the Provincial Rehabilitation Center, which houses a reference library; (4) enrollment of nine people with disabilities in a six-month vocational training course; and (5) production of weekly national radio broadcasts on disability issues in support of the advocacy issues of the Lao Disabled People's Association.

In addition, USAID has supported Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, has been implementing an inclusive education program titled Strengthening Community and School Support for Children with Disabilities. This project builds on the experience and lessons learned by the USAID-funded CRS/Vietnam inclusive education program while adapting it to fit the Laotian context. The project can be divided into three main components: (a) developing capacity within the Ministry of Education, the provincial and district education offices, and the National Rehabilitation Center; (b) improving the skills of teachers and school principals to implement inclusive education at the school and community levels; and (c) working with communities to support children with special needs, both in and out of school. Working with every teacher in all 140 primary schools and with every village in the target districts, the three-year project aims to directly benefit 800 children with disabilities in three districts.

LEBANON

Meeting the needs of persons with disabilities has been integrated into

USAID's planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs. An ongoing portion of USAID's assistance portfolio is designed to improve the livelihood of and to empower people with disabilities in Lebanon. Under economic growth programs, the war and landmine victim assistance program through the World Rehabilitation Fund Inc. provides job opportunities and creates income-generating activities for landmine and war victims in southern Lebanon. The small-grants program provides social services and assistance to vulnerable populations, including marginalized persons with disabilities. Under democracy and governance programs, the transparency and accountability grants program supports the advancement of rights of persons with disabilities in Lebanon.

USAID also provides technical assistance, training, and equipment to build the capacity of local NGOs and disabled persons organizations to, in turn, provide assistance to people with disabilities and to advocate successfully for their rights. For example, under the war and landmine victim assistance program and through the provision of equipment, sustainable income-generation activities, and capacity building, USAID is empowering a local development cooperative whose members and beneficiaries are landmine survivors and their families. The small-grants program improves the capabilities of local NGOs to provide assistance to persons with disabilities. To illustrate, in FY 2007 USAID provided equipment for a skills-training workshop of the Father Roberts Institute, a local NGO that provides skills and education services for young people with hearing loss.

USAID/Lebanon does not have a disability inclusion plan that has been distributed to all partners. However, staff-

ing for the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and U.S. implementing partners is based on EOE principles. Evaluation of applicants is based on the skills and expertise required for the position and excludes any type of discrimination. USAID/Lebanon has implementing mechanisms documents that have been issued by the regional contracting office in Egypt and that include certifications and assurances of compliance with laws and regulations governing nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs.

Despite those policies, some barriers remain. The Lebanon operating unit has unique working conditions; it is located in a temporary compound where the sloped topographic gradient and high security measures create accessibility challenges. However, the operating unit can provide alternative office space and assistance to increase accessibility for visitors and employees with disabilities on a case-by-case basis. The operating unit has also reduced barriers to accessing its public outreach websites by bringing the websites into compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities.

MONGOLIA

In Mongolia, people with disabilities have been assisted by USAID projects that provide business services, loan facilitation assistance, and vocational training. A USAID judicial reform project has resulted in locating public access terminals on the first floor of courtrooms to ensure maximum access. USAID/Mongolia does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

Although USAID/Mongolia does not have a specific disability inclusion plan in place, the Agency's policy on people with disabilities has been distributed to all implementing partners. USAID/Mongolia recruits without prejudice regarding disability. Should people with disabilities be hired, USAID would remove any and all barriers to their active participation as a member of the mission team. All restroom facilities in the USAID office are located on the first floor.

MOROCCO

USAID/Morocco does not have any programs for people with disabilities. However, the mission has incorporated in its office compound layout a number of ramps that give access to its two office buildings, to its main conference room, and from its parking to each of the locations.

PAKISTAN

USAID/Pakistan's health and population welfare program provides support to programs that strive to prevent disability. When prevention efforts fail, programs are implemented that aim to improve the lives of persons with disabilities through effective referrals for assistance.

Disability prevention efforts focus on a polio eradication initiative. USAID is providing funding to UNICEF to strengthen routine immunization, to hold national immunization days for polio eradication, and to conduct follow-up campaigns to reach all children still unvaccinated. Social mobilization is a particular focus of activities to ensure community demand for immunization. *Polio True Stories* is a thirteen-part television series of four-and-one-half-minute episodes that were produced as part

of the government of Pakistan's polio eradication campaign in collaboration with USAID funding to UNICEF. Each episode tells a personal story of what it is like in Pakistan to have a disability as a result of polio. The episodes are aired during prime time across Pakistan ahead of polio immunization campaigns to draw public attention to the ongoing dangers of the polio virus and to encourage compliance with eradication efforts. The episodes have also been adapted for the print media, and copies have been shared with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative so that other countries where polio is endemic may produce a similar series in their own contexts.

In December 2007, the American Institute for Research (AIR) began the ENGAGE project in Pakistan to complement the work being done by the Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education (RISE) program and to integrate people with disabilities into the programming by strengthening teacher skills and education system readiness to address the needs of children with disabilities. Specifically, the ENGAGE project will introduce a two-day training program for all 10,000 teachers on inclusive education and will work with local disability and education partners to deepen training for primary school teachers in Bagh, a district in Kashmir with a population of nearly 400,000. AIR will work with Pakistani education and disability experts to develop a training curriculum that will (a) support teachers in the classroom in one-on-one sessions to develop educational strategies for improving learning outcomes for students with disabilities and (b) instruct clusters of teachers about how to share classroom case studies and to how introduce and advance strategies of inclusive education.

To complement that work, the EN-GAGE team has also been asked (a) to work with the Bagh-based teacher training institutes to introduce curriculum on inclusive and special needs education, (b) to work with Bagh's district public education officers to help them develop a strategic plan for educating children with disabilities, and (c) to work with individual school management committees (composed of parents, teachers, and community leaders) to help them conduct prevalence studies of childhood disabilities in their communities.

USAID/Pakistan does not have a disability inclusion plan. The Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Program has two programs designed to benefit people with disabilities directly. Under the implementation phase of the new programs, the reconstruction office is conducting social assessment studies whereby people with disabilities are consulted to determine the number and needs of people with disabilities.

The first project, CDM, is reconstructing schools and health care facilities in the earthquake-affected areas of the Mansehra and Bagh Districts. This program formulates architectural designs and implements construction that will enable easy access to and use of the ground level of new facilities for people with physical disabilities. The second project, RISE, aims to strengthen the education sector in the earthquake-affected areas. RISE has included interventions whereby a study assesses the number of people with disabilities who are currently not enrolled in or attending primary school. The study, completed in mid-2008, will yield data that can be used to design interventions intended to motivate and facilitate stakeholders in enrolling children with disabilities in nearby schools.

PHILIPPINES

The Wheelchairs for Mindanao project is a USAID-supported program of Handicap International. The project provides for the first customized wheelchair production facility in Mindanao and establishes distribution and maintenance centers in strategic locations throughout Mindanao. The grant provides technical assistance for developing local capacities to provide services to facilitate integrating people with disabilities, including war victims, into the socioeconomic life of their communities. Wheelchair production, distribution, maintenance, training, and other support have been developed in partnership with five local organizations. USAID funds provide initial working capital for wheelchair production and distribution facilities, technical assistance, public advocacy, and information dissemination.

USAID/Philippines envisions no further efforts on disability assistance under the current strategy for FY 2004 to FY 2009. The mission reports that the government of the Republic of the Philippines is fully committed to addressing the issues and concerns of people with disabilities and is relatively advanced in addressing those concerns.

USAID/Philippines reports that, although it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, the mission is cognizant of the Agency's disability policy and encourages partners to seek opportunities to involve people with disabilities in their programs. USAID/Philippines took a number of steps to reduce barriers for people with disabilities when the mission offices moved to a new location in 2001. Ramps were installed for access, a restroom was built for staff members with disabilities, and an agreement from the building administration was obtained to run elevators on weekends to ensure access to USAID offices.

The mission's website has also been developed to meet disability standards under Section 508 of the amended Rehabilitation Act. With regard to employment, the mission provides equal opportunities to people with disabilities and, in choosing the most qualified candidate, does not include any evaluation criteria that would put people with disabilities at a disadvantage.

SRI LANKA

USAID/Sri Lanka's humanitarian assistance efforts included a program in FY 2007 to improve the availability and quality of services for people with disabilities. The mission worked in conjunction with Motivation Charitable Trust (MCT), an international NGO based in the United Kingdom, that acted as the implementing agency and with six Sri Lankan disability organization partners. With funding from the Leahy War Victims Fund, the disability support program represented a \$3.74 million, five-year commitment to comprehensive rehabilitation for people with mobility disabilities. The program made strides in building the organizational and service-provision capacity of partner organizations, supported international standards training and certification of prosthetic and orthotic practitioners, and made important contributions to improving the status and quality of life for people with disabilities through job skills training, advocacy, and public awareness raising.

In the planning stages of the disability support program, people with disabilities were consulted and their input directly influenced how the program took shape. Two of the program's former local partners are themselves staffed and governed by people with disabilities. Those individuals partnered with USAID in

day-to-day planning, service implementation, and regular evaluation.

The program's rehabilitation services and activities were managed by USAID's implementing partner, MCT. Over the life of the program, MCT has served nearly 10,000 people with disabilities, including 4,000 patients who received prosthetic limbs and 1,500 patients who received spinal and upper limb orthotic devices. It has provided more than 700 customized wheelchairs and other mobility devices and has facilitated employment for more than 200 people with disabilities.

The program also worked to build and strengthen the capacity of indigenous organizations to provide high-quality, sustainable services. To that end, MCT conducted a comprehensive assessment of the capacity and training needs of its partner organizations. New activities and training modules addressing identified needs were installed, including (a) developing a standardized patient database, (b) streamlining the clinical service structure, and (c) training twenty-eight technicians in metal workshop skills. The program made infrastructure improvements that were necessary for the local partner organizations to provide services and equipment to people with disabilities, including improved workshop area design and safety, computer equipment, and office furnishings.

The disability support program contributed significantly to improving the social status and quality of life for people with mobility disabilities. Through three initiatives, the program facilitated employment searches, advocated to state authorities on behalf of people with disabilities, and provided for public awareness activities. The program also conducted training courses for 737 people with disabilities to provide knowledge, skills, and confidence building for peo-

ple with disabilities attempting to seek and maintain employment. It was successful in placing 233 people with disabilities in jobs.

The program reinforced the legal protection and status of people with disabilities through advocacy activities, making major contributions to the drafting of a disability rights bill and accessibility regulations for the built environment. The bill was translated in all local languages and was submitted for parliamentary review by the end of the reporting period. Finally, the program contributed significantly to advocacy and public awareness activities to ensure that all reconstruction efforts for tsunami-damaged infrastructure be designed with accessibility needs in mind. The USAID/Sri Lanka disability support program for 2003–2007 has ended, but it has received follow-on funding from another donor.

USAID/Sri Lanka seeks to have the highest level of participation from people with disabilities in its work. Staffing opportunities are posted as widely as possible, with an open invitation to the general community, including people with disabilities. As necessary, the mission is prepared to accommodate an individual's specific needs with physically accessible workspaces. USAID/Sri Lanka reports that all stakeholders are aware of USAID's policy of inclusion; however, no disability inclusion plan exists. Future solicitations are expected to include language reflecting a policy of inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

VIETNAM

People with disabilities and disabled persons organizations are widely consulted in the planning and execution of USAID-funded activities in Vietnam. With funds from the Leahy War Victims Fund and the Displaced Children

and Orphans Fund, USAID has developed several key components in Vietnam's planning: the creation of the Barrier Free Codes and Standards, which codifies accessibility into all new public infrastructure, and the development of the National Action Plan for Disability, which lays out the government of Vietnam's long-term plan for promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

Technical and financial support from USAID has been key to developing Vietnam's new law on disabilities. USAID has supported technical guidance for the drafting procedure as well as for the extensive citizens' consultative meetings on the draft law.

In support of government legislation on disabilities, USAID has created pilot bus routes for people with disabilities, provided technical assistance to make future transportation accessible, worked with the Ministries of Construction and Transportation to incorporate accessibility into their training programs, created provincial "enforcement units" to enforce accessibility codes, and continuously lobbied for the inclusion of issues important to people with disabilities in any new government activities.

With USAID's financial support, the government of Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training and its Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs have developed special curricula and didactic materials for children with disabilities. USAID programs promote the inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular education system, support the development of Vietnam's National Education Program for Children with Disabilities, provide teacher training, and assist with policy development for inclusive education systems and for legislation to increase educa-

tional opportunities for children with disabilities.

In addition to promoting primary and secondary education opportunities, USAID has supported vocational training for adolescents with disabilities and job placement services. Through the Hanoi College for Information Technology, USAID has provided a pilot information technology (IT) project to train adolescents with disabilities. The first class of twenty-seven students graduated in June 2008, and a number of them have found work in Vietnam's growing IT sector. In the lowland provinces and in Vietnam's central highlands, USAID provides vocational training and business development services for adolescents with disabilities and for the businesses that employ them.

Economic inclusion has been a focus of USAID/Vietnam's programs, including the establishment of the Blue Ribbon Employers Council. As a groundbreaking initiative by a consortium of public and private partners who saw the need to link into Vietnam's vast untapped labor force of people with disabilities, the council brings together a diverse group of employers and national and international organizations to promote employment of people with disabilities in Vietnam. The council reaches out to potential employees with disabilities and encourages them to share their experience with other businesses. That exposure encourages those businesses to diversify their workforce and to hire persons with disabilities. The council also gives public recognition and awards to companies that hire people with disabilities.

USAID continues to invest in organizational capacity building in Vietnam. The mission supported the establishment and development of a Hanoi-based disabled

persons organization titled Inclusive Development in Action. It is now an independent, self-supporting institution that focuses on building the capacity of disabled persons organizations through training in leadership skills, team building, information and communication, and resource development activities. In total, USAID/Vietnam's programs assist eighty-eight disabled persons organizations throughout Vietnam and are working to establish the National Disabled Persons Association.

With assistance, Vietnam's National Coordinating Council on Disability was established to improve strategic planning for policy development and coordination among line ministries and to incorporate the needs of people with disabilities in their strategies. USAID also worked with the Committee of Social Affairs of the national assembly to promote the Ordinance on Disabled Persons and to solicit feedback from grassroots-level organizations on the effectiveness of the implementation of the ordinance.

USAID's disability policies have been widely shared with its implementing partners, including grantees and cooperative agreement awardees, as well as institutional contractors. Those policies also instituted at the mission through employment practices and the removal of barriers to accessibility. USAID's ultimate objective is to ensure that all of the mission's development programs consider the needs and concerns of people with disabilities and include people with disabilities in program planning, implementation, and evaluation. The U.S. Embassy now posts all job opportunities on the disability forum distribution list.

As vacancies arise or as new positions are approved, they are advertised in the major daily newspapers. Applicants are

screened on the basis of their qualifications, experience, and overall responsiveness to the requirements of the position. No staff members with disabilities are now employed by the mission, although a top-ranked candidate with a mobility disability was recently offered a position but declined. USAID offices and work space are designed and equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities, including physical accessibility upgrades and facilities to accommodate mobility aids such as wheelchairs.

YEMEN

USAID/Yemen, in line with its mandate, addresses the needs of people with disabilities within its operations, as evidenced by the education program, Yemen Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) 1. That program is renovating seventy-seven schools and is building eight multipurpose rooms. All EQUIP 1 designs feature classrooms, bathrooms, and multipurpose rooms that are accessible to people with mobility disabilities and to those who are blind. The construction projects comply with U.S. standards set out in the Americans with Disabilities Act. People with disabilities are included in the planning and implementation of all stages of the EQUIP 1 project.

People with disabilities are included in the mission's development programs, as appropriate. However, USAID/Yemen does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations. USAID/Yemen reports that, although it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, the mission is located within the premises of the U.S. Embassy and follows the embassy's administrative procedures.

REGIONAL OFFICES

Middle East Regional. USAID/Middle East does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. The office reports that disability tends to be a bilateral, country-specific issue, rather than a regional or transboundary issue, thus placing it out of the scope of the Office of Middle East Programs.

Regional Development Mission Asia.

The Regional Development Mission Asia (RDMA) makes every effort to include people with disabilities in the design and implementation of USAID programming. To that end, there are two positions at RDMA that directly involve people with disabilities: the disability program coordinator in Hanoi and the equal opportunity officer in Bangkok. The disability program coordinator has conducted disability awareness sessions and has ensured that the facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. In Bangkok, the equal opportunity officer maintains fairness in recruitment and hiring, relevant training, career mobility and counseling, and equal pay and promotion for all employees. In addition, RDMA's regional office of procurement ensures that every contracting mechanism contains language that encourages contractors and grantees to involve people with disabilities in their activities and to provide people with disabilities with equal opportunities for employment.

RDMA conducts programming in Laos, Vietnam, and Burma that focuses on people with disabilities; in turn, this target group is directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of RDMA's programs. In Laos and Vietnam, for example, RDMA supports the inclusion of people with disabilities in community working groups dealing with inclusive education, rehabilitation and medical services, vocational train-

ing, and disability policies. RDMA and its partners recognize the importance and value of including people with disabilities in all aspects of its assistance to people with disabilities.

In addition, through the American Refugee Committee International and Right to Play, RDMA provides refugee children and youth in Thailand with access to regular and inclusive sports and play to enhance their physical and psychosocial development. The project aims to provide all children in the refugee camps—including girls and children with disabilities—with life, leadership, and communication skills, as well as with a sense of discipline and fair play.

RDMA does not have a disability inclusion plan. However, the mission intends to draft and distribute an inclusion plan to all employees and stakeholders in FY 2008. RDMA programming in Laos and Vietnam supports disabled persons organizations in advocacy and policy efforts, and RDMA specifically assists people with disabilities in establishing such organizations and community groups. RDMA also provides those groups with assistance in conducting awareness campaigns regarding issues that affect people with disabilities.

USAID/South Asia Regional. USAID/South Asia Regional, which is co-located with the mission offices of USAID/India, is fully accessible to people with disabilities. The program offices are co-located with the Department of State on the U.S. Embassy compound. Embassy facilities have ramps, and these facilities are reported to comply with Federal Accessibility Standards. The USAID mission is accessible by elevator on a single level, and an open office environment is maintained. USAID offices and public areas are equipped with signs marked in Braille, and wide and unobstructed hall-

ways are maintained to accommodate people with disabilities.

USAID/South Asia Regional reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, nor does it target people with disabilities for participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of its programs. No capacity-building activities have been conducted with or for disabled persons organizations.

Office disability policy includes the objective of ensuring that employment opportunities are open to people with disabilities. The mission accordingly considers hiring people with disabilities, when appropriate. In 2004, one foreign service national with a disability was hired, and he continues to work within the mission.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

ALBANIA

The Albanian Disability Rights Foundation program focuses on promoting and protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities by facilitating the implementation of a disability policy and a legal framework, as well as by developing an instrument for their ongoing monitoring. The project focuses on the following actions: (a) improving the understanding and attitudes of relevant governmental and nongovernmental agencies and policymakers through the promotion of the national disability strategy at national and local levels; (b) increasing the capacity of disabled persons organizations and relevant stakeholders through training and technical expertise and through consultancy by national, regional, and international disability professionals; (c) increasing responsibility and accountability by developing annual monitoring and shadow reports to assess the implemen-

tation of the national disability strategy; (d) developing extended networks to advance and mainstream disability in other advocacy and reform agendas, thus challenging exclusion and fragmentary intervention; and (e) promoting an all-inclusive society.

In 2007, USAID supported the advocacy components of the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation program and provided a grant so the foundation could provide support services to people with disabilities. As a result, more than 150 wheelchairs were produced for and provided to people with disabilities.

In June 2007, Mobility International USA conducted in Albania a series of workshops that were about inclusive development policies and practices and were attended by USAID staff members, contractors, and grantees. The technical assistance and expertise were intended to advance disability inclusion from policy to practice. As a result, a coalition of stakeholders agreed to work together on promoting and supporting disability and development work.

USAID/Albania does not have a disability inclusion plan. However, the office building is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the mission adheres to U.S. government standards in all hiring practices and evaluation standards.

ARMENIA

USAID/Armenia is implementing several key projects to support people with disabilities. In addition to projects that aim to improve the situations of people with disabilities, USAID supports training initiatives and the development of capacity around a variety of disability rights issues. For example, a series of grants provided support to disabled persons organizations that work on spe-

cial education in schools; other grants were designed to address transportation problems for people with disabilities to ensure their greater integration into society.

As part of the Social Protection Systems Strengthening project, five grants were awarded to local Armenian NGOs to create community daycare centers for people with disabilities. The project is working to expand protection systems for vulnerable populations by developing appropriate policies and regulations, including those related to people with disabilities.

The mission supported a number of activities about rights of children with disabilities. USAID/Armenia supported the participation of four people to the ninth International Congress on Community Services for Children, Youth, and Families with Special Health Care Needs held in the United States (December 4–7, 2006). The theme of the congress, “Community Access and Resources for Everyone,” focused on ways to protect the civil and human rights of people with disabilities.

The Community Connections project supported the participation of ten special education teachers and government representatives in a three-week practical internship in the United States. Topics addressed included the following: (a) new teaching methodologies in the field of special education, (b) curriculum development for special needs schools, (c) use of modern methods with special needs children, (d) ways to provide permanent support to students with special needs to help them become full members of society (e.g., job opportunities and placement), (e) ways to create equal education opportunities for people with disabilities, and (f) ways to provide psychological support to the parents of

special needs children. The Community Connections special education participants were also provided training in advocacy for inclusive or integrated education practices.

USAID/Armenia provided training to the staff of fourteen community centers to better serve 690 children with disabilities and special needs, and it helped establish two new centers through the mission’s Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances project. The project also helped forty-five children with disabilities in boarding schools to reunify with their families and provided training on inclusive education to 320 teachers and 486 parents.

USAID/Armenia supports activities related to the promotion of disability rights in general. The mission’s civic advocacy support project monitors the implementation of laws related to disability issues, as well as drafting amendments to laws on psychiatric care for persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Finally, the mission developed a pilot project to increase the number of voters with disabilities who participated in the 2007 parliamentary elections. In eight cities across Armenia, polling stations were made fully accessible to voters with disabilities. Among other activities, the project is working with local election officials in those cities to include components in voter information campaigns that inform voters with disabilities about improved access to polling stations and that encourage them to vote.

USAID/Armenia does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. The mission moved to a new embassy compound in 2005. The building is accessible to people with mobility disabilities.

AZERBAIJAN/CAUCASUS

The USAID/Azerbaijan/Caucasus office targets children with disabilities through the Community-Based Children's Support Program. The program promotes inclusion of vulnerable populations and provides services to at-risk children—including those with disabilities—through its Children and Family Support Centers. Those services include (a) assisting pre- and primary-school-aged children with special educational needs by addressing their physical and psychosocial rehabilitation needs, (b) improving children's communications skills and promoting creative thinking, (c) training children in basic life skills, and (d) working with parents to ensure that sustainable community-based alternatives to institutionalization are available.

USAID funded a nine-month advocacy grant and a related campaign to raise consciousness and reform support for a coalition of disabled persons organizations. The coalition is led by the Intibah Social Development Union, which represents various regional government and nongovernmental organizations. The coalition worked to protect the rights of women with disabilities, to ensure that relevant government institutions respond effectively to their needs, to increase public awareness about the problems and rights of women with disabilities, and to provide legal and psychological assistance to those women. The coalition's campaign principally covers the Aran-Garabakh region and the surrounding areas of Aghdam, Tartar, and Agjabedi.

USAID increased the advocacy capacity of two disabled persons organizations—the Parallax and the Zaur Charity Foundation—by providing training in web design and presentation skills. As a result, Parallax has created a pub-

lic website on the rights of people with disabilities; the Zaur Charity Foundation organized an online forum on the problems and challenges faced by people with disabilities in Azeri society. USAID will continue to promote the active use of the Internet and improved computer literacy skills to build understanding of the treatment needs of people with disabilities and to promote the effective integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society.

USAID/Azerbaijan/Caucasus does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

BELARUS

In FY 2007, the USAID-funded project for orphans and vulnerable children maintained a special focus on services for children with disabilities and their families to better integrate them into community life. More than 200 families of children with disabilities in three communities of Belarus were directly involved in implementing the Together for a Special Child project. In the three targeted communities, parents of children with disabilities participated in the elaboration of community strategies for deinstitutionalization, the development of integrated community-based services for vulnerable groups, and the evaluation of project results.

The NGO titled Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities was chosen as a national partner for the Together for a Special Child project, which was implemented by the Christian Children's Fund. The association represents 4,000 families of children with disabilities and has rich experience in implementing various rehabilitation, social adaptation, and professional education programs. The NGO was also involved in a par-

ticipatory needs assessment for the Together for a Special Child project.

Small grants were then awarded to the Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities, the Kobrin branch of the association, and the NGO titled Healthy Choice. As a result, 270 children with disabilities in targeted communities enjoyed community-based services such as toy libraries, ergotherapeutic equipment, day and night care, integrated playgroups, volunteer assistance, and recreation retreats.

USAID/Belarus has also incorporated people with disabilities into several of its other programs targeting vulnerable populations. For example, in FY 2007, among the beneficiaries of measures to prevent trafficking in persons in Belarus were eighty-four people with disabilities who fell in the group "potentially highly vulnerable to mistreatment and trafficking." Also in FY 2007, USAID continued to support capacity building of university legal clinics that provide pro bono legal consultations to vulnerable groups such as people who are unemployed, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

The USAID mission for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova is committed to pursuing advocacy for, outreach to, and inclusion of people with physical, sensory, and mental disabilities to the maximum extent feasible in the design and implementation of its programs. USAID programs work to engage host-country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations, and other donors in promoting nondiscrimination against—and equal opportunity for—people with disabilities. The mission communicates the USAID disability policy and sets legal requirements (special provisions), including nondis-

crimination requirements, for every FY 2007 and FY 2008 award, and it provides guidance to all implementing partners for making that commitment operational.

The USAID office in Belarus is accessible for people with disabilities. All program information, including event announcements, calls for grant proposals, and employment opportunities, is distributed among all Belarusian NGOs (including disabled persons organizations and other groups working with people with disabilities) through e-mail and public web resources. USAID/Belarus does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

USAID/Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) does not implement any activities targeted specifically at people with disabilities; however, representatives of disabled persons organizations are involved in some of the mission's initiatives. Through the Center for Civil Society Promotion, a local NGO, USAID/BiH is partnering with government and business sectors to implement the Sustainable Development of the Non-Profit Sector project in BiH. The overall objective of the project is to modernize civil society in BiH by supporting local NGOs in assuming ownership of the agenda for civil society development. The center aims to institutionalize relationships between the government and the entire NGO sector including people with disabilities. A cooperation agreement between NGOs and the BiH council of ministers was signed in May 2007; as a result, the first BiH NGO council, consisting of representatives of thirty-one different NGO categories, was established. The purpose of the council is to represent the interests of civil society in the work of the gov-

ernment by giving input into strategic planning, influencing decision making, and advocating for change or reform. Disabled persons organizations are represented on the council. The representative from the Association of Youth with Invalidity "InfoPart" is tasked with representing all local NGOs and citizen associations of people with disabilities. The center also works with the NGO coalition To Work and Succeed Together, which consists of nearly 400 NGOs. More than forty of those NGOs work on disability issues.

USAID/BiH does not have a disability inclusion plan, but the mission's building is designed to allow for persons with disabilities to use all facilities. The evacuation plan for the building includes instructions to floor wardens for providing special assistance to persons with disabilities.

BULGARIA

The Health for Everyone Foundation, Pleven, program in Bulgaria focuses on job creation and employment for people with disabilities. The project is establishing twelve social enterprises that offer jobs and skill development in collaboration with local businesses. In addition, a social network consisting of twenty-eight regional partners is being established with disabled persons organizations, local government, and business. Through four training centers, 1,000 people with disabilities per year will receive job skills training and placement services. Through those programs, the project will improve the capacity of the participating displaced persons organizations. Bulgaria became a member of the European Union as of January 2007. Under the Support to Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act, economic assistance provided by USAID ended as of September 2008.

GEORGIA

The central activity that addresses issues affecting people with disabilities in USAID/Georgia's portfolio is the Supporting Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities (SEOPD) project. Funded by the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, the project was initiated in September 2006 and has been extended until the end of September 2009. The Coalition for Independent Living, which is made up of disabled persons organizations throughout Georgia, is the primary local counterpart for the project's implementing partner, Save the Children.

The SEOPD project is primarily meant to increase the capacity of disabled persons organizations to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. To meet that goal, SEOPD fosters the conditions for equal opportunities and full participation of people with disabilities in the political, economic, and social life of Georgia. The project aims to (a) support inclusive education for children with disabilities; (b) establish social rehabilitation services for people with disabilities; (c) strengthen the institutional capacities of the Coalition for Independent Living; (d) enhance advocacy skills and networking of local and regional disabled persons organizations; (e) increase the organizational capacity of disabled persons organizations and NGOs; (f) enhance coordination among NGOs, international organizations, and governmental organizations to elaborate a coherent policy and strategies to respond to the needs of people with disabilities; (g) increase the participation of disabled persons organizations and people with disabilities in elections at local and national levels; and (h) enhance public awareness of the rights and needs of people with disabilities.

The Coalition for Independent Living was actively involved in the SEOPD project from the initial planning stage, including assessments of the existing situation, identification of needs, and overall project design. Those activities were conducted through discussions and meetings with the coalition's management and its member disabled persons organizations, as well as with the involvement of international organizations and the Ministry of Education and Science. The coalition's involvement in all aspects of the project implementation process is the key means for strengthening its capacity for independently continuing disability initiatives in the future.

Achievements of the first year of implementation of the SEOPD project include capacity building for twenty of the coalition's member organizations through six trainings on coalition building and management, strategic planning, community mobilization, advocacy and networking, project management, and training-of-trainers skills. The skills and knowledge gained from those training sessions will enable the coalition to act as a strong representative body of disabled persons organizations.

The project also mobilized national working groups for disability issues in several regions of Georgia and established a national working group on disability comprising relevant ministerial departments and disabled persons organizations. Approximately 200 people with disabilities were involved in various project activities including the development of disability policy recommendations that cover (a) policy priorities on disability, (b) strategic objectives, and (c) proposed changes in governmental structural and functional alignments to meet strategic priorities. Other seminars, workshops, campaigns, and pro-

motional broadcasting on disability issues throughout Georgia involved about 1,000 people, including people with disabilities, their family members, the government, and NGO representatives. Finally, the first National Disability Day was celebrated on a large scale in Georgia on June 14, 2007. Plans for future activities include the production of four programs on elections and accessibility that will air on television and radio.

The Strategic Technical Assistance for Results with Training activity provided funding for eight people (members of the Coalition for Independent Living and representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs) to attend the ninth International Congress on Community Services for Children, Youth, and Families with Special Health Care Needs, in Washington, D.C., in December 2006. The congress, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was held in support of the U.S. government's New Freedom Initiative. That initiative is committed to tearing down barriers to the full integration of people with disabilities into community life by (a) increasing access to assistive technology and design, (b) expanding educational and vocational opportunities, (c) promoting homeownership, (d) improving health and medical care, (e) integrating into the workplace, (f) expanding transportation options, and (g) promoting full access to community life. On their return, members of congress shared information with their colleagues and counterparts, and then that information was integrated into SEOPD's activities.

USAID/Georgia has supported two other initiatives aimed at the fuller integration of people with disabilities. The USAID-sponsored management team at the United Energy Distribu-

tion Company (UEDC) developed a set of approaches for promoting the interests of people with disabilities. For instance, UEDC management noted that 9 percent of Georgians have some sort of disability and that the company should take a leadership role in both (a) promoting employment of people with disabilities, including making proper accommodations as feasible; and (b) easing barriers to people with disabilities in their interactions with the company (e.g., paying bills, contacting company personnel). Those ideas were shared with the new private utility operator, Energo-Pro, and are being expanded for the rollout of a new program to employ people with disabilities (with employment targets expected to be 1–2 percent of the workforce within the first year's time, and growing thereafter). The plan identified the steps to be taken through the customer service unit of the company to improve interaction with consumers who have disabilities. Energo-Pro, working with representatives of a local NGO on the design of these efforts, was to roll out those changes before the end of 2007.

Through a small project assistance activity, a Peace Corps volunteer worked with Orioni, a local NGO that supports people with disabilities and their families in the Zestaponi region. Orioni runs a day center where children with disabilities study independent living skills, receive physical or speech therapy, and plan and prepare for their future endeavors. The assistance contributed to (a) the organization of the first integrated children's festival on June 1, 2007, which was devoted to the International Day for Children's Protection; (b) the establishment of an integrated children's theater; and (c) the production of a show that promoted child protection. Fifty children with and without disabilities participated in presenting the

show at nine different schools. Children with disabilities from three other towns of western Georgia also participated.

USAID/Georgia does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. However, USAID/Georgia will soon be removing some barriers to participation for people with disabilities by increasing physical access to its offices. USAID moved in April 2008 to new U.S. government-built facilities in the new U.S. Embassy compound, which has appropriate accessibility infrastructure. Additionally, USAID's website complies with the Agency's guidelines to support use by people with disabilities.

KAZAKHSTAN

USAID helps support the Eurasia Foundation Central Asia, which operates programs in Kazakhstan that include people with disabilities. As part of the foundation's Enbekshaikazakh Community Development Program, the organization titled Kamfor, in cooperation with a Kazakhstan municipal government, helped place seven people with disabilities in jobs, worked with children with disabilities, and distributed wheelchairs and clothing to people with disabilities. Furthermore, as part of the program, the Shelek Association of people who are blind set up a Braille training center for rural residents.

USAID also provides significant capacity-building resources for disabled persons organizations through Counterpart International. There are four core components of Counterpart International's Promoting the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities program: (a) organizational development training and mentoring for disabled persons organizations that are based on Counterpart's newly created precertification methodology; (b) advanced advocacy training and

technical assistance to disabled persons organizations; (c) public hearings and regional and international networking among disabled persons organizations and the government; and (d) partnership, advocacy campaign, and social enterprise grants. Counterpart's implementing partner for this program is the Civil Society Support Center Network Association in Kazakhstan, which is active nationwide. Counterpart also works with a variety of disabled persons organizations from the United States, Europe, and countries of the former Soviet Union as resource partners through its partnership grant program.

USAID/Kazakhstan does not have a disability inclusion plan. Although USAID/Central Asian Republics (USAID/CAR) does not employ people with disabilities on its staff in Kazakhstan, the mission is fully prepared to include people with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. To ensure full accessibility, USAID installed an elevator in the building where the USAID/CAR mission operates in Almaty. Also, the office of USAID/CAR's representative from Kazakhstan moved from Astana to a new embassy compound in FY 2007 that is equipped with wheelchair accessibility, elevator signs in Braille, and emergency exit signs in Braille.

KOSOVO

People with disabilities are among the target groups in USAID/Kosovo's civil society and community-level assistance programs. Wherever appropriate and within resource limitations, USAID/Kosovo includes disability considerations into the mission's portfolio and supports initiatives that promote and address disability issues, including initiatives led by disabled persons organizations.

During FY 2007, under the sponsorship of USAID's civil society program, a number of people with disabilities-led advocacy efforts addressed issues such as employment, access to education, and capacity building for disabled persons organizations. In addition, assistance was provided to the Kosovo government in drafting a plan for deinstitutionalizing the Special Institution for People with Mental Disabilities.

USAID/Kosovo's civil society program supported seven campaigns, six of which were implemented by disabled persons organizations. The project titled Increasing Awareness to Employ People with Disabilities at the Local Level advocated for increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities through raising the awareness of local officials. The project engaged 140 people with disabilities in seven regions and thirty municipal representatives. Another project, Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities, helped raise awareness about disabilities among the local community in north Mitrovica. Efforts to initiate sustainable partnerships among people with disabilities included inter-municipal exchange visits, social activities, and sport gatherings.

Initiating and Implementing Draft Laws for People with Disabilities promoted increased participation of people with disabilities in the drafting process of construction and public transportation laws. The Place for Equal Opportunities project created a network of NGOs working on disability issues in the ethnic minority enclave of Gracanica. The Disabled Access to Prizren Schools project promoted equal access to education for children with disabilities in Prizren municipality. Fifteen public debates were held. The goal of the Who Am I project was to increase integration of children with Down syndrome into

preschool and primary schools through television campaigns and educational lectures. Finally, the Equality for All program advocated the opportunity for people who are blind or have low vision to vote in local and central elections. Activities included awareness-raising through media campaigns and advocacy efforts that promote the use of Braille in elections.

As part of the larger community enhancement and development program focusing on minority communities in Kosovo, USAID/Kosovo partnered with a local disabled persons organization, HandiKos, in constructing accessible road crossings in north Mitrovica. The mission also continued to support a stand-alone activity funded with FY 2005 funds, the Initiative for Inclusion for People with Mental Disabilities, which over two years created regional peer support programs for people with mental disabilities. The activity established a National Council on Disability to represent people with psychosocial and developmental disabilities. The initiative also drafted a plan which was submitted to the government of Kosovo, to close institutions in Shtime/Štimlje. The plan recommended the transition of services from institutional to community-based settings, as well as the inclusion of people with mental disabilities in the planning of services.

USAID/Kosovo does not have a formal disability plan that supports disability-related programs. However, a mission order issued in January 2002 defines the USAID/Kosovo disability policy in accordance with the USAID disability policy paper dated September 12, 1997. USAID/Kosovo is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, ethnic origin, age, or disability. Mission advertise-

ments and solicitations emphasize diversity and equal employment opportunity principles. Physical accessibility for people with disabilities to USAID/Kosovo facilities is a great challenge because the mission is constrained by uneven terrain on the physical site, thus preventing the installation of ramps, and by scarce resources. To the extent possible, the mission explores ways to increase accessibility. For example, a back entrance door enables access from the car parking area to the mission's public area and conference room.

KYRGYZSTAN

USAID helps support the Eurasia Foundation Central Asia, which operates a program in Kyrgyzstan that includes people with disabilities. The foundation was integral in setting up the NGO Phenomenon that has assisted people who are blind by creating more than twenty audio books covering Kyrgyz legal topics, including the Kyrgyz constitutions and the Kyrgyz criminal code.

USAID/Kyrgyzstan does not have a disability inclusion plan. Although USAID/CAR does not employ people with disabilities on its staff in Kyrgyzstan, the mission is fully prepared to include people with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. In FY 2007, USAID/CAR's country office in Bishkek moved into a new embassy compound that is equipped with wheelchair accessibility, elevator signs, and emergency exit signs in Braille.

MACEDONIA

USAID/Macedonia supports both disability rights advocacy initiatives and projects designed to foster inclusiveness through the removal of barriers to participation in education and employ-

ment. The Parliamentary Development Program has established a partnership with the local NGO, Polio Plus, which is Macedonia's leading advocacy organization for people with disabilities. Polio Plus benefits people with disabilities by providing them with a voice in the political process. USAID supports Polio Plus's efforts to advocate for legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities, as well as its work to raise issues of disability rights directly with members of Parliament.

USAID/Macedonia also supports the NGO titled Open the Windows, which uses specially equipped computers to assist people with disabilities in accessing information, education, and training. Six assistive IT centers, each run by a different organization, are now equipped with special computer hardware and software. The project also includes training for staff members. Support has been provided by the Foundation of Lord Michelham of Hellingly. The project was conceived and is being implemented by a team including Dao Tran, a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer who works with Open the Windows and who helped the NGO prepare a proposal for USAID funding. The interactive software provided to the centers aims to help improve the user's memory, concentration, attention, analysis and synthesis, and ability to differentiate colors and forms. All kinds of educational games are included: puzzles, games with rules, games that require fast reactions, and identification of sounds and forms. Computers have enlarged icons on the desktop, cursor, and captions buttons.

In each of the new awards in Macedonia, the standard USAID disability policy, dated September 12, 1997, is included in the RFP. USAID/Macedonia works with implementing partners and host-country counterparts to proactively foster a cli-

mate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities. That effort includes working with all stakeholders during the design and implementation of program activities and, in particular, during the work planning process. USAID/Macedonia promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities, both within USAID programs and in host-country programs that have USAID involvement. Unfortunately, because of budgetary constraints, the mission has not been able to evaluate the effect and effectiveness of its disability programming.

MOLDOVA

The anti-trafficking initiative, Better Opportunities for Youth and Women in Moldova, offered direct assistance to people with disabilities who have left State orphanages and boarding schools and are presumed to be victims of trafficking. Those beneficiaries were offered social reintegration services and a safe, affordable, supervised learning and living environment. In addition, USAID supported capacity-building in university legal clinics by providing pro bono legal consultations to vulnerable groups, including people who are unemployed, people who are elderly, and people with disabilities.

The USAID Mission for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova is committed to pursuing advocacy for, outreach to, and inclusion of people with physical and mental disabilities—to the maximum extent feasible—in the design and implementation of its programs. USAID programs engage host-country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations, and other donors in promoting nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. The mission communicates the USAID disability policy and sets legal requirements (special provisions), including

nondiscrimination requirements, for every FY 2007 and FY 2008 award and provides guidance to all implementing partners for making that commitment operational.

The location and layout of the USAID office in Moldova are accessible for people with disabilities. All program information, including event announcements, calls for grant proposals, and employment opportunities, is distributed among all Moldovan NGOs (including disabled persons organizations and those working with people with disabilities) through e-mail distribution and public web resources. USAID/Moldova does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

MONTENEGRO

Through capacity-building activities implemented by The Society of Handicrafts and Agricultural Work, the U.S. government provides grant assistance to the Association of Paraplegics of Montenegro, which advocates for the rights of the estimated 80,000 people with disabilities in the country. Under the Montenegro advocacy program, the association monitors enforcement of the law governing education of children with disabilities by the Ministry of Education. The aim is to ensure that all school buildings in the capital and two other cities are made physically accessible to people with disabilities, according to a key provision in the law. To date, the NGO has ensured that fourteen school buildings have been adapted to the needs of people with disabilities.

In addition, the Northern Montenegro Community Revitalization through Democratic Action—Economy program has procured packaging equipment for the Association of Paraplegics in Pljevlja, which has fifty-eight members. With

the equipment, the association bags single-serving packets of sugar and sells them to local businesses such as hotels, cafes, and restaurants. The project was supported to provide employment and income-generating opportunities for people with disabilities. It was cofunded by the municipality of Pljevlja.

USAID/Montenegro does not have a disability inclusion plan.

ROMANIA

USAID/Romania manages the Motivation Romania Foundation program that works to create regional solutions to the overwhelming need for affordable, high-quality wheelchairs and to improve the quality of life and integration of people with disabilities in southeastern Europe. In addition to providing direct services to people with disabilities, this program has trained seventy-two people in wheelchair use and independent living skills, such as driving, to increase their opportunities for integration; has raised awareness of the issues and needs of wheelchair users among 152 doctors, parents, and specialists in Romania; has conducted a regional peer group consensus conference; and has initiated a network of disabled persons organizations in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. On January 1, 2007, Romania joined the European Union. Development assistance from the U.S. Government ends in 2008.

RUSSIA

USAID/Russia has a disability action plan in place that outlines the measures needed to best support the inclusion of people with disabilities in its work. The mission will incorporate, as appropriate, a disability analysis into the design stage of program activities. In many cases, people with disabilities have the same or

similar needs as others for health care, family planning, training, and employment. Through minor modification at the design stage, many activities can be developed to include people with disabilities among the targeted population. For instance, economic activities, such as small-business loans, can be developed to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to loans. To the greatest extent possible, people with disabilities and those who provide services or advocate on their behalf will be included in program activities. And as appropriate, the mission will consult with people with disabilities, those who provide services, or those who advocate on their behalf during the design stage.

USAID/Russia will continue, through specific activities of its health strategic objective, to emphasize prevention of disabling diseases and support for people with disabilities. USAID/Russia will also continue—through its rule of law, civil society, and cross-cutting strategic objectives—to emphasize (a) the enhancement of services provided to people with disabilities by NGOs, (b) the protection of their legal and human rights, and (c) their broader integration into society.

The mission also promotes increased awareness of disability issues. USAID/Russia explores existing opportunities in the Agency to provide training to its staff members and implementing partners on disability issues. Training sessions will introduce practical recommendations on how people with disabilities can be included in mainstream program activities. USAID/Russia is making its website fully responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.

Since the completion of the disability action plan in 2003, the mission staff has focused its attention on the needs

of people with disabilities in Russia through its programs. Simultaneously, USAID/Russia has consistently operated in an inclusive manner within the mission, providing all assistance necessary for people with disabilities to access the mission's facilities.

Since 1999, the Assistance to Russian Orphans program has served almost 70,000 of Russia's most vulnerable children, including more than 32,000 children with disabilities, in the program's priority regions of Khabarovsk, Magadan, Novgorod, Tomsk, and Tver, as well as in other regions of Russia. More than 140 grants have been awarded to support innovative rehabilitation and community-integration services for children with visual or hearing disabilities, as well as children with developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome, Usher syndrome, autism, cleft palate, cerebral palsy, and hearing and visual disabilities. Early developmental programs have been set up for children with disabilities who are living in families, as well as for those who are orphans. Early habilitation assistance has been introduced in four baby homes in Khabarovsk and Tver to help 126 orphans with disabilities, from birth to four years. As the result of early intervention, thirty-one of those children have been adopted by Russian families.

In 2007, Assistance to Russian Orphans initiated the rollout of successful models of habilitation and mainstreaming assistance to children with disabilities in six new regions, including Khabarovsk Krai and Vladivostok. The program also began establishing an association of Russian baby homes that provide skilled early developmental techniques specially adapted for institutionalized children, and it began replicating the program in baby homes in forty-eight regions of Russia. The program introduced early

intervention services in the Krasnoyarsk region to assist children residing in families, as well as in baby homes. The other important area of program assistance for children with disabilities is mainstreaming them into regular schools.

USAID/Russia also supported the Special Olympics program from July 2004 to February 2007. That support established a comprehensive model of community-based services in eleven regions: Chelyabinsk, Irkutsk, Moscow, Omsk, Saratov, Smolensk, St. Petersburg, Stavropol, Sverdlovsk, Tomsk, and Yaroslavl. In 2005, a USAID representative participated in the sixth All-Russia Conference, with the theme "Special Olympics Russia: Adaptive Physical Culture is the Scientific Basis of Our Work." During that conference, the USAID representative also attended a special meeting and discussion on the USAID-funded Special Olympics activity to brief the regional representatives of Special Olympics Russia on the status, perspectives, and future challenges of the activity.

The Special Olympics activities enable children and adults with intellectual disabilities to participate in sports activities. Those sports activities, combined with community mobilization activities, facilitate community involvement, advocacy, and public awareness related to people with disabilities and their needs. Children and adults with intellectual disabilities are integrated into all those activities. The program's seven main components which were realized in each of the eleven participating regions, are adapted physical education, the Special Olympics Get Into It curriculum, the leadership programs for athletes, the family support network, the Healthy Athletes health screenings, the a Special Olympics torch run, and the opening and closing ceremonies.

The Athlete Leadership Programs component of the Special Olympics has allowed athletes to explore opportunities in roles previously considered nontraditional. Examples of such opportunities are (a) serving as a member of a board of directors or local organizing committee; (b) acting as a team captain, assistant coach, or referee or official; or (c) being the spokesperson in the media. A total of 152 athletes from throughout the participating regions were trained by Special Olympics Russia to serve as advocates.

The Special Olympics programs were organized for approximately 790 athletes, who received oral and dental screening, and more than 7,890 family members. More than 15,300 children and adults participated, including 13,401 students from regular schools who served as volunteers. Among the 5,503 coaches who were retrained, more than 170 were certified to work with Special Olympics teams in sports schools and sports academies throughout the eleven project regions. Special Olympics teams from the project regions participated in the 2007 World Summer Games in Shanghai, China.

USAID/Russia also supports the use of legal advocacy in attempts to promote inclusiveness for people with disabilities. The Protection of the Human and Legal Rights of Russians with Disabilities program strengthens the capacity of disabled persons organizations to use legal advocacy to enforce and defend the human and legal rights of adults and children with disabilities to an equal education. Program activities increase the public's awareness and support for the human and legal rights of adults and children with disabilities, and community coalitions are used to enforce laws supporting access to equal education.

The mission also supports similar projects being implemented by Perspektiva, a Russian NGO. Draft legislation on inclusive education was developed in 2006 by Perspektiva's lawyers, together with lawyers of the Federal Duma Committee on Education and Science. The need for such a law was expressed by Russian ombudsmen, members of the public chamber, and the disability community. The draft legislation has been presented to the Duma, and official feedback from the government is expected.

Within Russia, Perspektiva has also been closely involved in promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Perspektiva's lawyer participated as an observer in the last ad hoc committee meeting in August 2006. Her participation led to close ties with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were responsible for negotiating the convention. The Perspektiva representative, together with other members of the disability community, made corrections to the translation and lobbied for the removal of a footnote that was proposed by the Russian delegation. Finally, Perspektiva, the United Nations Information Center (UNIC), the World Bank, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a roundtable to inform government officials and NGO leaders about the convention and to discuss steps for its ratification in Russia. Perspektiva continued close collaboration with UNIC and became one of the leaders of a disability rights working group established by UNIC. Perspektiva's lawyers have also started to educate the disability community in Russia about the convention.

USAID/Russia supports a variety of programs that work to improve access to education for children with disabilities. Perspektiva, together with eleven regional members of the Education for

All Coalition, implements a program to ensure educational equality for Russian youth and children. The program uses disability advocacy teams to focus on twelve communities of Russia. Objectives include the following: (a) strengthening the capacity of the Education for All Coalition to effectively advocate, promote, and implement inclusive education practices at the local and national levels; (b) promoting positive images of people with disabilities in twelve communities to break down barriers and negative attitudes toward implementing inclusive schools; and (c) increasing the ability of parents and people with disabilities to advocate locally and nationally for the rights of children and youths with disabilities to an equal education and for the rights of people with disabilities in general.

The program also works to expand the network of advocates that focus on disability issues by including legal professionals, parents, and disability activists. Seventeen lawyers and ten law students are part of the Education for All network, providing legal assistance and support to parents and disability activists in their communities, including representing their interests in court.

In May 2007, the Children Should Go to School Together campaign was launched in twenty-one regions of Russia. The campaign works with regional disabled persons organizations and parents' organizations as partners to promote inclusive education in their communities by (a) leading disability awareness trainings for children and teachers, (b) raising awareness of children and adults without disabilities through public education activities, (c) training professionals and special educators, (d) supporting schools in becoming inclusive, and (e) working with officials and legislators to develop new

policies that aim to include children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Those activities have built capacity among disabled persons organizations and parents' organizations to effectively advocate, promote, and implement inclusive education practices at the regional and national levels. Those organizations have become recognized experts and are influential in their communities, and they have been included in a number of government committees as well.

Since 2005, more than 5,000 members of the community across Russia—government officials, schoolchildren, school administrators, media representatives, and activists—have participated in trainings and awareness-raising activities. Rallies and public education activities were held in seven Russian cities. In Moscow, Department of Education officials, school teachers, and children from Moscow's inclusive schools joined parents and disability activists to speak out for inclusive education. Coalition members in nine regions of Russia have established close ties with mainstream schools and are actively working with twenty-four of them. Nineteen schools are receiving support from partners in order to become inclusive. Twenty-three advocacy projects, which aim to improve access to education for children with disabilities, were carried out in the coalition regions. Additional funds have been solicited from UNICEF and the European Union to support inclusive education in the coalition regions.

Disability and parents' organizations are preparing for a public education campaign to promote inclusive education. Public service announcements and posters are being designed for the campaign, which will declare that "All Children Should Study Together." Fi-

nally, as part of a public advocacy campaign, the Third International Disability Film Festival, "Breaking Down Barriers," took place in November 2006 in Moscow. More than 100 documentaries, animated films, and public service announcements from twenty countries were featured. More than 1,500 people attended the four-day event.

SERBIA

USAID/Serbia strives to ensure that all activities with applicable components remove barriers to the participation of people with disabilities. Mission programs are designed to enhance citizens' participation with local governments. To the extent that people with disabilities are engaged at the local level, their needs should be reflected in USAID–municipal government activities that improve physical access and assistance to people with disabilities. For example, Community Revitalization Through Democratic Action (CRDA) implemented a six-year project, working with target municipal authorities and public institutions. Each CRDA implementing partner organized a number of public town hall meetings where local community members, including people with disabilities, presented their own priorities. Many of those concerns were used to guide subsequent activities, including accessibility improvements, provision of assistive technologies, employment support and job training for people with disabilities, sports programming for people with disabilities, and provision of equipment for children with disabilities in schools and classrooms.

USAID/Serbia does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. Current USAID activities focus on capacity building and technical assistance to promote Serbia's entry into Euro-Atlantic institutions. Organizations engaged in providing as-

sistance to and advocating for persons with disabilities are not directly engaged in USAID/Serbia's programs. Mission activities are in full compliance with USAID environmental procedures 22 CFR 216.

TAJIKISTAN

USAID/Tajikistan helps support Eurasia Foundation Central Asia. Through the foundation, the Khamodoni Zonal Society of Disabled People rehabilitated a fish farm to provide sustainable income for its members and a new source of nutritional food for the community.

Although USAID/CAR has no people with disabilities on staff in Tajikistan, the mission is fully prepared to include people with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. In FY 2007, USAID/CAR's country office in Dushanbe moved into a new embassy compound that is equipped with wheelchair accessibility and with elevator and emergency exit signs in Braille.

USAID/Tajikistan does not have a disability inclusion plan in place.

TURKMENISTAN

USAID/Turkmenistan does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, and no projects in FY 2007 were specifically designed or implemented with the goal of increasing the capacity of disabled persons organizations.

Although USAID/CAR has no people with disabilities on staff in Turkmenistan, the mission is fully prepared to include people with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. USAID/CAR's country office in Ashgabat is equipped with ramps into the

building and elevators that allow wheelchair accessibility.

UZBEKISTAN

USAID/Uzbekistan does not have a disability inclusion plan in place, and no projects in FY 2007 were specifically designed or implemented with the goal of increasing the capacity of disabled persons organizations.

Although USAID/CAR has no people with disabilities on staff in Uzbekistan, the mission is fully prepared to include people with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. USAID/CAR's country office in Tashkent moved into a new embassy compound that is equipped with wheelchair accessibility and with elevator and emergency exit signs in Braille.

REGIONAL OFFICE: CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL

In FY 2007, no projects that used USAID/CAR regional funds were designed or implemented with the goal of increasing the capacity of disabled persons organizations or of incorporating people with disabilities into regional initiatives. However, there were some relevant country-specific activities in the region, which are described in the individual country reports.

USAID/Central Asia Regional reports that it does not have a disability inclusion plan. Although USAID/CAR has no people with disabilities on its staff, the mission is fully prepared to include people with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. To ensure full accessibility, USAID installed an elevator in the building where the USAID/CAR mission operates in Almaty.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

BOLIVIA

In December 2006, USAID/Bolivia sponsored several Bolivian participants—young people with disabilities, policymakers, advocates, and organizational leaders—to attend the ninth Community Services for Children, Youth, and Families with Special Health Care Needs, in Washington, D.C. Follow-up meetings were held to ensure that the synergies from the conference would continue among the various groups represented.

The mission developed a disability action plan in late 1999, which was submitted to and approved by USAID/Washington. That plan will be reviewed to ascertain whether it meets current Agency and U.S. government policies on disability issues. In FY 2007, the mission continued to incorporate disability issues into its operations and into the planning and implementation of its programs to the fullest extent possible in the absence of additional resources for this purpose.

The mission's acquisition and assistance office, cognizant technical officers, and activity managers ensure that grant/agreement recipients and contractors comply fully with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and with related policy directives on disability issues in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID programs. The office also incorporates required provisions that support the Agency's disability policies into all solicitations and resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.

USAID/Bolivia ensures that it is in full compliance with standards regarding disabilities in the workplace, including

accessible buildings and grounds. Provisions for the safety of staff members and visitors with disabilities are also explicitly covered in the mission's security and emergency contingency planning.

BRAZIL

USAID/Brazil considers disability a priority and a cross-cutting issue. The mission met with all implementing partners and reviewed their working plans in order to increase their awareness of disability issues, as well as to advocate on behalf of the interests of people with disabilities. USAID/Brazil is encouraging the formation of effective partnerships between U.S. private voluntary organizations and local NGOs that are interested in disability issues.

USAID/Brazil, through a program managed by the American Institute for Research (AIR), works to increase the employability of disadvantaged youth in the northeastern cities of Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador by offering training in job readiness and related skills. Among the program's accomplishments in the past year has been the enrollment of more than 100 youth with disabilities its basic training module, which provides classes in language and math, information communication and technology, and job hunting.

The mission is in the process of translating its disability inclusion plan and intends to distribute it by the end of FY 2008. Mission offices are located within the embassy compound, which is accessible to people with physical disabilities. USAID/Brazil will identify and address further barriers as the disability inclusion plan is implemented within the mission.

COLOMBIA

USAID/Colombia supports the work of the NGO Tecnovo, one of the leading

NGO advocates for disability rights in Colombia. After more than forty years of armed conflict, Colombia has a large population of people with war-related disabilities, including both veterans and civilians. Many of those people are unable to provide for their families because of their disabilities. Tecno is a vocational training and assistance program that helps people with disabilities develop the skills needed to reintegrate into society and to live productive, satisfying lives.

With Tecno's support, beneficiaries receive psychosocial counseling to help them regain the self-confidence and social skills needed to function in Colombian society. All students participate in state-of-the-art training in computer systems; they learn to use the Internet and to work with Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office software packages. After they have completed the systems training, students choose from a number of vocational skill-training programs. Along with the vocational training, students receive complementary training in business development and administration. After the students complete the training, they participate in a job placement program.

Tecno also works with the private sector to sensitize firms on the needs of people with disabilities and to bring increasing numbers of people with disabilities into the formal workforce. USAID's support to Tecno was originally channeled through the Organization of American States (OAS) Trust for the Americas, which provided institutional strengthening support. A second phase of the program is now under way, and it is focused on marketing products produced by people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Tecno is considered a model for public-private sector alliances because, in addition to receiving support from USAID and the OAS trust, the program has received significant cash and in-kind support from Microsoft, the Colombian Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Merchants, universities, and other donors. Tecno products are now being marketed in Colombia in some of the country's largest department store chains and in the United States by such well-known companies as Donna Karan.

Other efforts to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities are implemented through the USAID-supported Más Inversión Desarrollo Alternativo Sostenible (MIDAS, Increased Investment in Alternative Sustainable Development) alternative development program. The program aims to increase and expand the small- and medium-size enterprise sector. Three MIDAS projects have incorporated the employment of people with disabilities into their business plans. With technical support delivered by MIDAS, Distribuidora de Aceites y Grasas del Valle (Distributor of Oils and Vegetable Greases of the Valley) is implementing a commercial strategy to attract institutional clients and big chain stores. If successful, its actions should result in the need for an increased labor force to meet the market demand. The company is focusing on hiring people from vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities. Súper de Alimentos (Super Food), a candy and sweets enterprise targeting both domestic and export markets in Latin America, is also receiving support from MIDAS. The firm has received International Organization for Standardization 9000 quality certification and Social Accountability 8000 social responsibility certification for including within its

labor force persons who are deaf or persons who have low hearing.

USAID/Colombia also supports some capacity-building efforts for both disabled persons organizations and service providers for people with disabilities. USAID/Colombia is currently developing support for the National Federation of the Deaf in Colombia (FENASCOL) to address issues of public policy for people with disabilities. A proposal from the Alberto Arango Restrepo Cooperation is also being considered to support public policy efforts in the Caldas region.

El Instituto Para Niños Ciegos y Sordos (Institute for Blind and Deaf Children) of the Cauca Valley specializes in the rehabilitation of children with visual or auditory disabilities. Operating for more than seventy years, the institute provides services, especially to the needy and poor population of Cauca Valley through its facilities in Cali. The institute's auditory and visual services have experienced a high growth rate in recent years; in 2006, the number of medical consultations increased by 13 percent from 2005. To respond to this growing demand, the institute is in the process of improving, expanding, and modernizing its services. USAID's assistance through MIDAS is focused on strengthening the institute's service capacity, keeping the ISO 9001:2000 certification that the institution has had since 2004, and achieving the accreditation as an "institution of excellence," which is awarded by the Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certifications (ICONTEC) for reaching international standards.

Other efforts for enhancing the participation of people with disabilities in USAID programs occur at both the mission and the implementing partner levels. For example, USAID is planning a new program for landmine survivors. The pro-

gram, which involves people with disabilities in the design, will be an integrated initiative providing prostheses, psychosocial support, and income-generation alternatives for the beneficiaries. A number of USAID grantees have procured special equipment that gives people with disabilities access to office equipment. For example, Tecno has special equipment so that people who cannot use their arms can operate computers with their feet. Finally, Applying Global Experience for People-Oriented Results (ARD), the contractor for the mission's large alternative development programs, has an affirmative action program that addresses workers with disabilities.

USAID/Colombia drafted an initial disability plan in early 2006. An assessment looking at USAID's work on disability issues, as well as on the overall situation for people with disabilities in Colombia, will be conducted in FY 2008. This assessment will be used to update the earlier plan and to serve as the foundation for a future strategy on disability issues. After USAID/Colombia has updated its disability plan, the mission will distribute the plan to its partners.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

USAID/Dominican Republic has not yet prepared a disability inclusion plan; however, the mission has been working in FY 2008 to fully comply with requirements so that all USAID/Dominican Republic stakeholders ensure appropriate conditions for the inclusion of people with disabilities. Over the course of FY 2008, USAID will also work to ensure that people with disabilities are included in the planning of USAID-supported programs. Capacity-building activities for disabled persons organizations are not part of the mission's programs and activities under its current strategic plan.

USAID/Dominican Republic has remodeled the front entrance to its building to make it accessible to people with physical disabilities.

ECUADOR

Since 2006, USAID/Ecuador has made a concerted and missionwide effort to sensitize all of its employees to inclusiveness concerns, to implement programs specifically targeted to people with disabilities, and to proactively modify its other programs to incorporate disability elements.

Five national disabilities federations, comprising 166 associations of people with disabilities throughout Ecuador, used a participatory workshop to prepare a proposal aimed at promoting the ability of people with disabilities to exercise their political and labor rights. Subsequently, USAID/Ecuador received funding from the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/Office of Democracy and Governance to support an eighteen-month program for promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The overall objective of the project, which is implemented by the National Federation of Ecuadorians with Disabilities (FENEDIF), is to contribute to the practice and enforcement of the rights of people with disabilities in Ecuador by promoting political participation and job placement.

The project encourages people with disabilities to participate in elections by implementing public awareness campaigns, increasing access to polling stations, and providing transportation to the polls for people with disabilities. In 2007, the project reached approximately 50,000 people with disabilities through its public awareness-raising activities. In addition, the project sensitized ap-

proximately 100,000 members of the electoral tribunal, the military, and the police force about the rights of people with disabilities to access their polling stations and to vote. All 36,000 polling stations completed a survey that will provide FENEDIF and the government of Ecuador with information on poll accessibility. Finally, the project printed and distributed 24,000 Braille ballots to all polling sites.

During the September 2007 elections, FENEDIF's project titled They Have the Right to Vote was expanded from Quito to include two additional cities, Cuenca and Tulcan. Through its *taxi solidario* (shared taxi) campaign, the project assisted more than 300 people with disabilities during the election process. It provided 200 free taxis to transport voters with disabilities from their homes to the polls and back, and it organized a cadre of volunteers to provide assistance to individuals. When a person with a disability was unable to navigate the stairs at a poll, a volunteer would either advise a poll worker to bring a ballot down to the street level so the person with a disability could vote, or the volunteer would carry the person up the steps to the polling place—a fairly common occurrence. In an unusual twist, former members of the youth gang Latin Kings participated as volunteers in Quito in September 2007. Approximately 80 university students and 120 former gang members volunteered on election day to help people with disabilities so they could vote.

FENEDIF is also implementing a job placement service for people with disabilities. In December 2005, Ecuador passed an amendment to its labor code that requires public institutions and private companies with more than twenty-five employees to hire persons with disabilities. FENEDIF is making public-

and private-sector entities aware of their responsibilities in hiring and training people with disabilities so that they can find permanent employment. In 2007, the job placement service trained 722 people with disabilities, and 243 people with disabilities were hired. Additionally, the project contacted 454 companies and sensitized them about the labor rights of people with disabilities.

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) also implemented a Building an Inclusive Development Community (BIDC) program in Ecuador to strengthen the capacity of disability groups to participate in development, collaborate with other development organizations, and manage grants. The BIDC program partnered with FENEDIF and focused on three main components: (1) training disability groups and implementing partners, (2) providing technical assistance to the various stakeholders, and (3) supporting disability groups by providing small grants to establish pilot projects on inclusive development. In addition to supporting FENEDIF programs through the small grants component, MIUSA also provided a grant to the Association of People with Disabilities in Azuay to implement a microenterprise program and a grant to the National Commission of Women with Physical Disabilities (CNMDF) in Guayaquil to support inclusive women's health care.

In August 2007, USAID staff members, along with the president of FENEDIF and the chargé d'affaires, inaugurated the construction of USAID-funded ramps for people with disabilities. USAID, through FENEDIF, purchased the materials to construct the ramps, and U.S. Navy Seabees in conjunction with the *USNS Comfort* constructed the ramps at two schools, one hospital (at the emergency entrance), and one gov-

ernment building. One mobile and thirteen permanent ramps were constructed at those four sites.

Two other programs of USAID/Ecuador assist people with disabilities. In December 2006, FENEDIF received a grant from Microsoft to complement the USAID-funded program. That grant will equip four telecenters with appropriate information technology (IT) for people with disabilities, and it will allow people with disabilities to access information and benefit from classes that will improve their IT skills and their ability to find gainful and permanent employment. One center has already been inaugurated.

USAID/Ecuador complemented its FENEDIF program through small grants to five disabled persons organizations in FY 2007. The organizations used the grants to finance the purchase of equipment so that people with disabilities could establish microenterprises, such as a bakery, a furniture-making workshop, a document center, a cafeteria, and housecleaning services. Those enterprises are run by and employ people with disabilities. The program benefited an estimated 150 direct and 1,300 indirect beneficiaries.

The mission has also integrated disability concerns into other components of its portfolio. The economic growth office has directed its trade and investment contractor to give preference—when selecting for its cluster program—to productive sectors where people with disabilities can readily work (e.g., the flower and garment industries). In addition, the World Organization of Credit Unions program established ten rural telecenters and modified their designs to include the construction of ramps and accessible facilities so that people with disabilities could use those telecenters.

The democracy office, working in conjunction with Participación Ciudadana (Citizen Participation), included in its election survey questions regarding access to polls for persons with disabilities. FENEDIF was incorporated as a member of a national NGO federation titled Grupo Promotor (Advocacy Group), to formulate constitutional reform proposals by civil society, including human and political rights for people with disabilities. The proposals will be disseminated to the public and the Constituent Assembly in FY 2008. Another NGO coalition, which includes FENEDIF and Participación Ciudadana, incorporated the need for disability policies as one of seventeen priority topics identified by FENEDIF and Participación Ciudadana coalition for discussion with presidential candidates and their technical advisory teams in early FY 2007.

USAID/Ecuador has also made significant efforts toward internal inclusiveness. The mission completed its disability inclusion plan in September 2005. The plan was distributed internally and to implementing partners. At the mission's request, the contracting and agreement officers included a provision supporting the disability policy in all solicitations for awards and in current grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts. Furthermore, all mission staff members have taken the e-learning course titled Inclusive Development, which is designed to assist in implementing USAID's disability policy.

Mission facilities (i.e., entrance gate, elevators, office space) have been adapted for persons with disabilities, and the new embassy compound is accessible. In FY 2007, the mission used mission operating expenses for the disability project to purchase a small bus with a lift. The cognizant technical officer/systems manager of the persons with disabilities

program, uses the wheelchair-accessible bus. In 2006, that individual, who has worked for USAID/Ecuador for seventeen years, assumed the responsibility as inclusive development coordinator and cognizant technology officer for the project titled Promotion and Enforcement of Political and Labor-Related Rights for People with Disabilities in Ecuador.

EL SALVADOR

USAID/El Salvador supports the Strengthening Basic Education program. This program works with the Ministry of Education's special education unit, which includes a staff member with a disability, to ensure that educational materials such as textbooks, teacher guides, and student workbooks that are being developed for primary-level education actually incorporate inclusive education. It also works to incorporate inclusive education as a cross-cutting topic in the in-service training program for teachers and school principals. Modules being developed to address the topics of diversity and continuous assessment should include academic reinforcement for children with special learning needs.

A second program, the USAID Artisan Development Program, worked with two groups of artisans with disabilities, who are based in San Salvador. El Hogar de Parálisis Cerebral (Cerebral Palsy Home) and the Cooperative Association of the Integral Pro-Rehabilitation Independent Group (ACOGIPRI), sewing and pottery workshops respectively, employ around thirty-two artisans. The program provided marketing and design support to ACOGIPRI, with resulting sales totaling US\$3,000. During FY 2007, El Hogar received technical and marketing assistance in its efforts to export products to a U.S. importer and to

Guatemala Wal-mart stores, with sales totaling approximately US\$10,000.

USAID/El Salvador does not have a formal disability inclusion plan. In each statement of work to be completed, USAID incorporates specific language requesting contractors and recipients to consider people with disabilities in program implementation and to explain how this effort will be achieved. Contractors and recipients are also encouraged to promote a climate of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. The mission reports that most proposals describe how people with disabilities will be considered, when appropriate.

The mission provides equal employment opportunities in all personnel operations. The physical environment of the office complies with norms and requirements for people with disabilities.

GUATEMALA

USAID/Guatemala does not have a disability inclusion plan in place; however, the mission has been addressing issues of inclusion for people with disabilities in partnership with Mobility International USA (MIUSA) through a DCHA-funded project, Building an Inclusive Development Community (BIDC). BIDC is a centrally funded small-grant program that focuses on inclusive education and capacity building for disabled persons organizations. In 2007, as part of the BIDC project, MIUSA, the Coordinating Association of Organizations of People with Disabilities of Guatemala (COPDIGUA), the Association for Training and Technical Assistance on Education and Disability (ASCATED), and FENEDIF worked with various development entities to further inclusive practices and to build the capacity of local disabled persons organizations and activists. Through

its activities, the BIDC project reached a total of 129 people from disabled persons organizations, advocacy groups, government, and service organizations in workshop and training settings.

MIUSA, COPDIGUA, and ASCATED conducted eight onsite disability and development discussions with USAID personnel and USAID partners, including Catholic Relief Services, the National Coffee Association (ANACAFE), the ministry of education, Juarez and Associates, Counterpart International, Foundation of Support to the Generation of Local Income (Fundación AGIL), Centro para la Acción de la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (CentraRSE, Center for the Action of the Enterprise Social Responsibility of Guatemala), and USAID democracy and governance contractors working on the elections (Organization of American States [OAS], National Democratic Institute, and Acción Chidden).

Each of the organizations participating in the onsite disability and development sessions identified several action items. Several participating organizations have designed and conducted a variety of follow-on activities resulting from the BIDC project. Catholic Relief Services requested follow-on training for forty-five staff members based in Guatemala City and the regional office. In September 2007, COPDIGUA facilitated a training event on disability in development for all staff members. The training covered disability culture and the rights of people with disabilities. Fundación AGIL also requested a training event for its staff on aspects of disability and development that affect rural and agricultural families. In September 2007, COPDIGUA facilitated two staff meetings. As a result, Fundación AGIL staff members and representatives of rural-based disabled persons organizations are coordinating activities

at the community level. COPDIGUA is also following up with ANACAFE to further promote the integration of people with disabilities into the implementation of USAID-funded programs.

OAS facilitated a meeting between Guatemalan disabled persons organizations and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal; the intended outcome was to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the September 2007 and November 2007 elections. In August 2007, representatives of COPDIGUA, the Association of the Blind, and the Association of the Deaf met with the electoral tribunal. They agreed to produce an awareness-raising campaign on election information for multiple media outlets. As a result, the tribunal produced a range of communications products to raise awareness among the public and elected officials about the needs of people with disabilities during an election. For the election board members, the tribunal printed training material that described ways to assist people with disabilities during the voting process. Other materials, such as ballots printed in Braille, provided assistance to people with disabilities at the polls. As a result, information on voting in sign language and Braille was, for the first time, much more systematically available before the elections. Television spots using sign language were aired before the elections, and the voting tables carried ballots printed in Braille on election day. The efforts to make voting more accessible to voters who are blind and deaf had mixed results.

Acción Ciudadana (Citizen Action), a local Guatemalan organization that promotes citizen participation in the elections, invited COPDIGUA to participate in a nationwide domestic observation effort called Mirador Electoral (Electoral Observer). As part of the project, representatives of four disabled persons orga-

nizations took part in a training event aimed at increasing the participation of people with disabilities in the elections.

BIDC activities also resulted in follow-on activities relating to access to education for people with disabilities. MIUSA has been working with Juarez and Associates and the local Guatemalan parent advocacy organization, ASCATED, to support inclusive education across Guatemala. There are two levels of support: (a) recommendations and guidance to better incorporate inclusion in the Guatemalan national standards in education, and (b) the involvement of disabled persons organizations and parent advocacy organizations in the implementation of the Guatemalan ministry of education's inclusive education plan. During the in-country training and technical assistance activities, MIUSA, ASCATED, and Juarez and Associates facilitated a meeting that generated commentary from disabled persons organizations; parent advocacy groups; school representatives, including special education instructors and standard education instructors; and representatives of the ministry of education.

BIDC is also implementing a small-grants program, providing two small grants of \$3,000 to \$4,000 for institutional strengthening and one larger grant of \$18,000 to local disabled persons organizations. Ten applications for the small-grants program were received; five met the basic program criteria and were evaluated by an outside panel of experts. Awards were made in October 2007. The review team selected the Association of Parents and Friends of People with Disabilities (ADISA) of Santiago, Atitlan, as the recipient of a small grant that will integrate children with disabilities into the formal education system. The goal of the grant is to raise awareness among parents about the

importance of education and to train teachers to better integrate children with disabilities into classes.

HAITI

The OAS human rights project, funded through a grant from USAID, aims to increase the capacity of people with disabilities to participate in society. OAS has begun efforts to support the newly developed position of the secretary of state for the integration of handicapped persons. In August and September, 2007, the activity provided technical assistance for the preparation of an inaugural event, the National Forum on the Problems of the Handicapped, which was attended by President René Préval, many cabinet members, NGOs, and members of the press. The activity plans to deepen its support to the secretariat through additional technical assistance and financial support so it can acquire mobility devices and aids (canes, wheelchairs, and walking sticks for people who are blind) for people with disabilities, as well as office materials for the bureau.

USAID/Haiti does not have a disability inclusion plan. In FY 2008, the mission will be moving to the new embassy compound, which will be accessible to people with physical disabilities.

HONDURAS

USAID/Honduras is financing technical assistance to help the Ministry of Education develop and implement monthly student progress tests in Spanish and mathematics for more than 1.2 million children in primary schools in Honduras. The monthly tests are being implemented and validated to track student progress and to identify students having difficulties, including those with sight or hearing disabilities. USAID/Honduras does not conduct any capacity-building

activities with or for disabled persons organizations.

USAID/Honduras does not have a disability inclusion plan. The USAID-leased office building is equipped with two wheelchair-accessible ramps at the building's two entrances, as well as two elevators for access throughout the seven-story building. The mission employs one person with a physical disability in its mailroom, and it has facilitated the employee's accessibility within the office by providing an electric cart.

JAMAICA

USAID/Jamaica collaborated with the Global Deaf Connection and the Jamaica Association for the Deaf to implement an academic enrichment program known as Building Human Capacity among At-Risk Deaf Jamaican Youth through Academic Support. Through that program, Fast Track was implemented for forty-two at-risk people who are deaf. Fast Track helps students achieve the literacy skills and knowledge to pass matriculation examinations for the national teachers' college or for the teacher training program at the University of the West Indies (UWI). The program also trained ninety teachers and interpreters so they can educate students who are deaf and to interpret for students who are deaf and who are already attending teacher training colleges.

USAID/Jamaica has been engaged in one capacity-building activity to increase the ability of a disabled persons organization to provide assistance to people with disabilities. The mission supported the Jamaica Association for the Deaf in its partnership with UWI to develop a diploma program in sign language interpretation. The program has evolved to become the Caribbean's first such bachelor's degree program.

Approximately thirty to forty students from Jamaica and its neighboring islands entered this unique program in September 2007. When the students who are deaf matriculate into Mico Teachers' College and UWI's teacher training program, fifteen interpreters will be ready. Global Deaf Connection will assist UWI in developing a new partnership with an interpreter training program in Minnesota. The partnership will help strengthen UWI's program by providing support and supervision during student internships and by providing networking opportunities within the field of sign language interpreting.

USAID/Jamaica does not have a disability inclusion plan. The mission reports that there are no barriers to the participation of people with disabilities in the mission's work. However, people with disabilities have not been included in the planning or evaluation of any USAID-supported programs, and they have been beneficiaries of only one project.

MEXICO

USAID/Mexico supports several projects designed to build capacity among service providers for people with disabilities. The Agency supports the Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships (TIES) partnerships program, a comprehensive program with North Texas University and the Independent University of Guadalajara to improve the leadership capabilities among service providers for persons with disabilities. TIES supports exchanges between Mexican and U.S. universities to provide advanced professional training in Mexico.

Institute of the New Dawn provides education, medical attention, and human development to 340 children and young people with cerebral palsy. USAID/Mexico has a grant with the Center for

Discovery, a nonprofit agency dedicated to providing nurturing, supportive, healthy, and accessible environments for people with disabilities. The grant will create a Discovery International Fellowship Program that will bring eight individuals from Mexico—primarily from the border states of Chihuahua and Sonora—to the Center for Discovery for a six-month intensive program on leadership training and skills building in the community and on patient-centered themes of clinical, rehabilitative, and family care.

The U.S. Embassy in Mexico released a management procedure to all embassy employees in Mexico City in May 2004 that outlined the embassy's equal employment opportunity policy for locally employed staff members. The policy defines relevant terms, outlines the Department of State's responsibilities under the policy, and describes the employees' rights and responsibilities under the policy. When hiring people with disabilities, the embassy provides reasonable accommodations so that those individuals can effectively perform duties essential to their given positions. In support of the disability employment program, the embassy established a disability review committee to ensure equal employment opportunity for individuals with disabilities and to make determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation. The USAID/Mexico Mission is in full compliance with the U.S. Embassy's equal employment opportunity policy for locally employed staff, the embassy's discriminatory harassment policy, USAID's equal employment opportunity policy, and USAID's disability employment program.

One key member of USAID/Mexico's rule of law staff has a disability. He is an essential team member and contributes (a) to the drafting of the codes of

criminal procedure for state and federal jurisdictions; (b) to the development of training modules for judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, and human rights defenders; and (c) to the design of implementation plans for jurisdictions adopting a new code of criminal procedure. USAID/Mexico has also mandated that its rule of law contractor, Management Systems International, abide by ADA requirements because one of the contractor's key personnel is a person with a disability. As a result, USAID/Mexico's Mexican counterparts have been sensitized concerning the integration of people with disabilities into their programs and operations.

NICARAGUA

USAID's Alliances Project in Education and Health proposes, in part, to increase access to quality primary education, including education for children with disabilities. During the proposal process, the project openly accepted all proposals from prospective grantees, and it recognized people with disabilities as a special group during its review of proposals. Through the Alliances project, USAID/Nicaragua is funding a twenty-one month program, implemented by Handicap International. The project aims to benefit at least 1,200 students who have specific educational and special needs and who attend fifty primary schools in four departments of the northern region of Nicaragua. The project will also benefit 908 teachers and 116 departmental and municipal Ministry of Education personnel through activities such as (a) performing psychosocial evaluations of children with disabilities; (b) planning and revising the curriculum in coordination with teachers and parents; (c) monitoring and evaluating the revised curriculum; (d) performing accessibility diagnostics in twenty of the fifty schools; (e) training departmental and municipi-

pal ministry personnel on Nicaraguan disability law; (f) training teachers and parents on inclusive education; and (g) presenting the results of the project in a national forum.

USAID/Nicaragua also has activities planned in its ruling justly and democratically program. At the end of the reporting period, USAID/Nicaragua's partner received funding from DCHA to undertake a census of voters with disabilities in order to ensure that they have voter identification cards and that their names appear on the voter rolls.

USAID/Nicaragua does not have a disability inclusion plan. All official solicitations include language reflecting the post's standards for EOE for all people, including people with disabilities. The mission's current facilities are not accessible, but the mission will be moving soon. Handrails have been added to all stairways, but the second floor of the building is not easily accessible to people with disabilities. The new office annex at the new embassy complex has an elevator and access for people with disabilities at all points. The facility complies with all U.S. government regulations regarding physical access for people with disabilities.

PANAMA

People with disabilities are included in implementing USAID/Panama-supported programs through relevant contract clauses. USAID/Panama does not conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations. The mission does not have a disability inclusion plan, but—subject to receiving funding in FY 2008—the mission will proceed with developing a disability inclusion plan.

In September 2007, USAID/Panama moved into a new embassy compound;

the new facilities are in full compliance with U.S. Department of State standards for people with disabilities. The mission complies with the Equal Opportunity Employment (EOE) Act. As such, it considers all applicants for job positions, regardless of disabilities.

PARAGUAY

USAID is funding the Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo (CIRD) program in Paraguay. The program increased the participation of people with disabilities by inviting disabled persons organizations to compete in a bidding process for subgrants under the People with Disabilities Initiatives Program. The program also works through a coalition of disabled persons organizations to improve the participation of people with disabilities in all facets of government programs. Community service organizations and disabled persons organizations with national coverage provide technical assistance. Moreover, the program provides institutional capacity-building services to disabled persons organizations throughout Paraguay.

PERU

USAID/Peru does not have a disability inclusion plan, but it is reviewing models from other regional missions. USAID provides technical assistance to the congress of Peru to improve its policy regarding and services for individuals with disabilities. The health office sponsors child health programs, including a nutrition program to prevent physical and developmental disabilities in children. The mission also sponsored the participation of several teachers in a conference on disability issues held in early 2008 at the Ann Sullivan Center in Lima, Peru.

USAID/Peru is co-located in a state-of-the-art facility where the U.S. Depart-

ment of State's Bureau of Overseas Building Operations has ensured that both offices and grounds are accessible to employees and visitors with disabilities. All offices and conference rooms are numbered and identified with signs in Braille.

The mission does not discriminate against people with disabilities in its employment practices and provides annual equal employment opportunity training for its entire staff from the certified officers at the post. People with disabilities are currently employed as budget analysts in the controller's office and in support offices.

REGIONAL OFFICE: SOUTH AMERICA REGIONAL

The South America Regional Office does not have a disability inclusion plan in place. However, it is reviewing model plans from regional missions for whom the South America Regional Office provides contracting, financial, legal, and program support.

The office is co-located with USAID/Peru in its state-of-the-art facility, which was described earlier.

The mission does not discriminate against people with disabilities in its employment practices. It provides annual equal employment opportunity training to its entire staff from the certified officers at the post. The controller's office currently employs people with disabilities as budget analysts; various support offices also employ people with disabilities.

REGIONAL BUREAUS

BUREAU FOR ASIA NEAR EAST (ANE)

As of February 29, 2008, the USAID Bureau for Asia Near East (ANE) has been divided into two new bureaus: the

Asia Bureau (A) and the Middle East Bureau (ME). The former ANE supported the Education and Employment Alliance, which has established a youth center in Morocco to provide disadvantaged youth with IT training and life skills that will improve their employability. The youth center is making adjustments to its infrastructure so that young people with disabilities have access to the building and its activities.

The former ANE does not have a disability inclusion plan, nor does it conduct any capacity-building activities with or for disabled persons organizations. All activities under the ANE bureau comply with the guidance in USAID's automated directives system. In line with that guidance, all RFPs and RFAs in connection with ANE mechanisms include language about USAID's disability policy.

BUREAU FOR EUROPE AND EURASIA (E&E)

The USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) engages in a range of activities related to disability issues. For Fiscal Year 2007, the E&E bureau designated inclusive development as a key issue in its operating plan. A cornerstone of the bureau's activities is the production of analytic products related to disability. For example, E&E updated a searchable database in 2006 that describes all donor-funded disability programs in the region. An initial analytic report, "Improving Use of Information on Disability and Related Social Services in E&E" (produced in 2007), focused on increasing knowledge about the prevalence and causes of disability, and it described the status of people with disabilities in the region, many of whom receive few or no services, or reside in institutions.

A companion report, "The Prevalence of Disability in Europe and Eurasia," will soon be finalized. That report includes data tables that document the numbers of children and adults with disabilities in each E&E country, thereby helping to increase the awareness of the issues regarding people with disabilities in the E&E region. It also provides a compendium of information that is for USAID operating units and that will encourage additional mission programming in this region. It offers practical recommendations to assist missions in initiating activities that support people with disabilities.

At the end of FY 2008, the bureau will finalize an additional paper that will review best practices and lessons learned in providing vocational training and jobs skills for people with disabilities and adolescents graduating from institutions (i.e., orphanages) in the region. The paper will include a series of definitive and practical "how-to" steps and recommendations to guide missions seeking to develop programming related to this very important issue.

The bureau expects those and other upcoming analytic activities to improve E&E mission programming related to disability, to increase the awareness of disability issues among a variety of key stakeholders, and to promote collaboration and leveraging of resources among the various donors and NGOs that work on disability in E&E countries. Ultimately, the reports are intended to reduce stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities and to improve their quality of life by decreasing institutionalization and by increasing opportunities for education and gainful employment.

In addition to producing information about disability, the bureau engages in extensive knowledge-sharing efforts.

For example, the reports that are produced are distributed to mission and other U.S. government staff members, regional think tanks, libraries, interested target groups, and development partners. Missions routinely receive updates on disability issues in the region, program successes, new resources, and other pertinent information through a managed e-mail list. In the most recent edition of its newsletter, the social transition team focused on disseminating new resources related to disability programming. In October 2007, the social transition and health teams jointly sponsored an “Investing in People” workshop in Tbilisi, Georgia. More than seventy USAID staff members from across the E&E region attended the workshop, which included a disability session that highlighted innovative ways to integrate disability issues into ongoing programming and provided examples of best practices in inclusive education, awareness raising, and legislative and policy reform.

Although most programs are funded and managed by the bureau’s field missions, the E&E bureau in Washington, D.C., is implementing one small program related to disability through a cooperative agreement with the Education Development Center. The program’s goal is to increase the capacity of local disabled persons organizations and to help promote sustainable progress on disability issues in Georgia and Armenia. In Armenia, the activity will focus on developing a national coalition to bring together local disability NGOs that have joined forces to create a recognized, cross-cutting advocacy institution. In Georgia, a strong advocacy coalition of disabled persons organizations already exists. Thus, this activity will focus on further strengthening its base by asking the coalition to serve as secretariat for a cross-institutional or cross-

sector disability initiative that supports coalition priorities. The bureau’s efforts in Georgia and Armenia will complement and interface with existing mission programming on disability and will seek to stimulate increased knowledge sharing across borders.

The E&E bureau does not have a disability inclusion plan. However, the bureau complies with USAID disability policy, for example, by providing access to the workplace for people with disabilities.

BUREAU FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (LAC)

The Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean in Washington, D.C. (LAC/Washington) continues to participate in the Agency’s disabilities working group, under its Diversity Council. LAC/Washington also works to ensure the LAC missions’ full support for the participation of people with disabilities in worldwide conferences and events. LAC has had continued success with such efforts, and it continues to work with the Agency’s disabilities working group to ensure the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities as appropriate.

The LAC/Executive Management Team is unaware of an LAC/Washington disability inclusion plan that has been distributed to all stakeholders. LAC’s historical practice has been favorable to disability inclusion in all activities.

BUREAU FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (GH)

The USAID Bureau for Global Health (GH) supports programs that strive to prevent disability. When prevention efforts fail, programs are implemented that aim to improve the lives of people with disabilities through effective treatment. GH programs contribute to

improvements in the health of people in countries of the developing world, including people with disabilities. However, GH does not specifically focus on advocating for the rights of people with disabilities.

Several of GH’s disability prevention efforts focus on improved nutrition in developing countries. For example, USAID, in partnership with UNICEF and Kiwanis International, contributes to salt iodization programs that reduce iodine deficiency worldwide. Iodine deficiency constitutes the single and most common cause of preventable mental disabilities. Adequate iodine intake, however, enables proper fetal neurological development and improved cognitive function in children. More than two in three households throughout the world now consume iodized salt, in large part as a result of USAID’s commitment to country-level efforts to iodize salt.

Similarly, vitamin A deficiency has historically been the cause of more than two-thirds of the cases of childhood blindness. USAID’s leadership in vitamin A supplementation has led to the establishment of national programs that provide routine supplementation of vitamin A for young children and fortification of commonly consumed foods. The result has been a rapid reduction of the incidence of severe vitamin A deficiency in developing countries.

USAID continues to be the leading international donor for such programs, with vitamin A supplementation programs implemented in more than thirty countries worldwide. The success of those programs has reduced the mortality rate among children who become blind. Previously, more than half of children who became blind died within one to two years of losing their sight. USAID has also implemented eye health

programs in thirty countries. Programs offer a range of services, including vision screening; low vision and rehabilitation services, including training in Braille; correction of refractive error; free eyeglasses; and cataract surgery.

In addition, through the Academy for Educational Development, the Global Health Bureau supports two programs with the Perkins School for the Blind—one in the Philippines, the other in three countries in Latin America—to provide direct services to children who are blind. To date, in the Philippines the program has provided services to more than 1,500 children. Those services include enrolling children in model classrooms and in occupational, physical, and speech therapy services; providing consultation visits to children in their homes and schools; and developing individual learning plans for children.

Recently, GH launched an initiative in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Mexico to expand educational opportunities for children who are blind with multiple disabilities. This initiative, the Perkins Partnerships for Children/Latin America (PC/LA) project, aims to build the capacities of local schools and agencies to provide improved quality services to children and to work with administrators and decision makers in Ministries of Education to strengthen national policies. Specific objectives of the PC/LA project are as follows: (a) strengthening the capacity of teachers to integrate best practices into the education of children with visual impairment and multiple disabilities, (b) increasing parents' knowledge of their children's capacities and of community resources, (c) training administrators and representatives from Ministries of Education on the educational needs for those children, and (d) collaborating with representatives from Ministries of Education to develop poli-

cies that support the educational needs of children with multiple disabilities.

Other disability prevention efforts focus on immunization or treatment of conditions that can cause disability. USAID has played a pivotal role in mobilizing worldwide support to eradicate polio, a major cause of disability in children. USAID is a global leader—with partners UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the Rotary Club—in the fight to eradicate polio through the support of national immunization days and the strengthening of routine immunization services. The United States has allocated more than \$260 million to USAID's polio eradication initiative since 1996. More than 3 billion people—half the world's population—in 134 countries and territories now live in areas that are free of polio.

GH does not have a disability inclusion plan, but as a pillar bureau based in Washington, D.C., GH follows the guidance issued by USAID's management bureau on removing barriers to the participation of people with disabilities, including the guidance on disability inclusion contained in the "USAID Disability Policy Paper."

BUREAU FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE (EGAT)

The Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) does not have a disability inclusion plan; however, the bureau complies with Agency policies, rules, and regulations pertaining to people with disabilities. The bureau's administrative management staff members maintain and distribute guidelines and procedures to ensure EGAT's compliance with Agency policy in this area. EGAT complies with an Agency-wide schedule initiated by USAID/

Washington for the collection of indicator data pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of activities affecting people with disabilities.

Key staffers are assigned to monitor the implementation of activities that support access to and entry into bureau facilities, particularly during emergency situations. The bureau currently employs people with disabilities.

Office of Microenterprise Development. From June 25 to June 27, 2007, the USAID disability team and USAID/EGAT's Office of Microenterprise Development organized an electronic discussion on the microLINKS Speaker's Corner platform around the issue of disability and economic opportunities. The objective of this dialogue was to identify barriers to inclusion, to look at best practices for inclusive economic programs, and to provide future recommendations that could be used by both disabled persons organizations and the microenterprise and microfinance community to ensure equal access to programs. The discussion was fed by the active participation of forty-five experts on disability issues and microfinance and microenterprise, including academics, donors, and representatives of NGOs. Discussion organizers divided the three-day e-discussion into three sections, dedicating one day to each of the following topics: (a) barriers to inclusion and issues of readiness, (b) good and bad practices, and (c) recommendations. The discussion transcript, a summary of the event, a list of best practices, and other resources are available on the microLINKS website.

Office of Women in Development. EGAT's Office of Women in Development (WID) dedicated a large, new section of its external website to women with disabilities and international de-

velopment, thereby raising the topic to the level of a “special priority” on the website. The section provides substantial information on this topic in three perspectives: overview, common myths, and additional resources. The content is rich in examples and pragmatic suggestions on what can be done to better integrate people—especially women and girls—with disabilities into development assistance programs. The website provides direct e-mail addresses to principal USAID disability specialists. Content for the pages was drafted by the Investing in Women in Development (IWID) Fellow and disability and gender specialist. EGAT/WID supports the Investing in Women in Development Fellows program through which USAID/DCHA’s Office of Democracy and Governance (DG) through the Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors (SPANS) sponsored the IWID disability fellowship.

BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)

Disability planning from the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) is a mixture of operating unit disability plans and disability provisions incorporated into grant guidelines and program implementing documents. Efforts to support inclusion through the removal of barriers to participation also vary by operating unit.

Office of Democracy and Governance (DG). The Office of Democracy and Governance (DG) supports various programs pertaining to disability issues, primarily through Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors (SPANS), which is located in DCHA/DG. The SPANS portfolio works to ensure that especially vulnerable populations have access to social services and protection,

which enable them to manage risks and gain access to opportunities that support their full and productive participation in society. SPANS comprises five congressionally directed funds: the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF), the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), the Victims of Torture Fund (VTF), the Wheelchair Fund, and the Disability Fund. Broadly, those programs seek to reduce the risks and reinforce the capacities of communities, local NGOs, and governments to provide services and protection for vulnerable groups. Each fund has a particular purpose and strategy, but the five funds share a focus on poor and vulnerable people and an emphasis on community.

The LWVF focuses on the needs of civilian victims of conflict in developing countries, with the primary objective of expanding access to affordable and appropriate prosthetic and orthotic services. Established in 1989, the program has slowly expanded beyond the provision of essential orthopedic services and related medical, surgical, and rehabilitation assistance to include programs that enable amputees and other people with disabilities to regain accessibility to mainstream educational, recreational, and economic opportunities. Most programs also have a capacity-building component so disabled persons organizations can provide assistance to, and advocate successfully for, the rights of people with disabilities. The LWVF is implementing programs in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Laos, Lebanon, Romania, Sri Lanka, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Details of the programs can be found elsewhere in this section of the report.

The Disability Fund was established in 2005 to enhance and complement USAID’s commitment to including people who have physical and mental

disabilities and those who advocate and offer services on behalf of people with disabilities. This commitment extends from the design and implementation of USAID programming to advocacy for and outreach to people with disabilities. The Disability Fund supports programs that build the capacities of local disabled persons organizations; that conduct advocacy and awareness-raising activities; and that facilitate the integration of people with disabilities into health, economic, education, and political participation programs, among others.

For example, the Disability Fund supports the Building an Inclusive Development Community project, which is implemented by Mobility International USA. The project seeks to increase the participation by people with disabilities, including women and girls, in U.S.-based international development programs as participants, agents, administrators, and consultants. The project focuses on strengthening USAID mission responses and the capacities of local disabled persons organizations to reduce the barriers that people with disabilities encounter when participating in civic, social, and employment activities. In addition, the American Institute for Research was awarded a two-year cooperative agreement to implement the Engaging with Disabled Persons Organizations in Development Cooperation (ENGAGE) program, which will develop pilot programs and advocacy strategies to address the needs and to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in developing countries.

Through a competitive process, USAID also provided funds to USAID field missions to support qualified NGOs (U.S., non-U.S., and local) through existing and new assistance mechanisms. Under this targeted RFP, USAID, in collaboration with its local missions,

identified local partners and provided them with the means to build the capacity of disabled persons organizations, to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in political processes, and to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities. Proposals selected for funding were submitted by missions working in Albania, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Niger and Burkina Faso, Paraguay, and Russia. Details of those programs can be found in the Global Highlights herein. In 2008, the Disability Fund will extend its support to twenty-seven programs in an additional twenty-three countries.

Although the Disability Fund and the LVWF work directly with people with disabilities throughout all of their programming, DCOF and VTF often have strong disability components. DCOF addresses the needs of children who are most at risk and vulnerable or children who live without the care and protection of a family. That focus often includes providing services to children with disabilities. Programs center on strengthening the capacities of families and communities to address the physical, social, educational, economic, and emotional needs of children in crisis. DCOF aims to preserve the family structure; to promote the growth and development of vulnerable children; and to develop community structures to care for, support, and protect vulnerable populations. Programs funded under DCOF that have specifically addressed the needs of people with disabilities or have advocated for their rights have been implemented in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, and Thailand. Details of those programs can be found in the Global Highlights herein.

The goal of the Victims of Torture Fund is to enable people and com-

munities affected by torture to resume their roles within family and community and to protect those individuals, many of whom have permanent physical or mental disabilities as a result of torture, against future incidents of torture. VTF provides four major categories of service: treatment, rehabilitation, training, and research. Through its in-country partnerships, VTF works to heal the psychological and physical trauma caused by torture; to provide direct medical, psychological, and social services for torture survivors, as well as responding to other needs of torture survivors, families, and communities; to restore survivors as functioning and contributing members of their families and communities; to help societies understand the consequences of torture; and to work with civil society to protect individuals against future acts of torture.

The SPANS program, which is housed within DG, has an annual disability work plan that addresses ways to better integrate people with disabilities throughout all of USAID's programs and activities. The plan, which specifically notes targets of opportunity in FY 2007, was developed in close collaboration with SPANS stakeholders, including leading international disabled persons organizations and other leaders in the disability community. The DG office, primarily through SPANS, has worked aggressively and proactively to remove barriers to the participation of people with disabilities. SPANS provides major funding for disability organizations, promotes and enforces USAID policy related to people with disabilities in all of its funded programs, has offices and programs that are accessible to people with disabilities, and provides capacity-building and training opportunities for people with disabilities. SPANS holds regular consultations with

people with disabilities, as well as with disabled persons organizations and other disability advocacy groups. Those individuals and groups are included in program design and evaluation decisions. Numerous consultants, both of and for people with disabilities, have been hired to work on behalf of the DG office.

The DG office has managed and implemented several other initiatives to increase the participation of people with disabilities in its programs and activities. DG oversees and manages the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), which implemented the Enfranchising Persons with Disability found in USAID Electoral and Political Process program in 2006 and 2007. CEPPS comprises the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Republican Institute, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. The CEPPS program has focused on reversing the political marginalization of citizens with disabilities in four countries—Nicaragua, Armenia, Albania, and Sierra Leone—by advancing their political and electoral participation.

The DG office has also incorporated disability inclusive practices into all of its training for new staff. The new entry professionals entering the Agency in 2007 and 2006 and junior officers entering in 2008—who will be working in the area of democracy and governance—were required to participate in an afternoon training session on how to better integrate disability into future and current programming. Moreover, a session on disability was included in the June 2008 DG officer training, which provided new skills and innovative best practices in the area of democracy and governance for DG officers in the field and in Washington, D.C.

Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) includes two disability provisions in its grant guidelines: a general provision implementing USAID’s disability policy, and a provision for construction and rehabilitation, which requires structures to be constructed or renovated to meet local, in-country standards for accessibility for people with disabilities or, if there are no local standards, to those standards imposed by the ADA. OFDA is in charge of its own domain within the USAID/Internet Resources Management network and is responsible for ensuring that this domain is compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act to eliminate barriers in information technology for people with disabilities. Over the past few years, OFDA-funded partners have increasingly identified people with disabilities as individuals in need of humanitarian assistance, recognizing them as often being among the most vulnerable in disaster settings. In the upcoming revision of the *OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*, disabled populations will be listed as a new-crosscutting theme that will be tracked in the OFDA programming database. OFDA is also integrating sensitization on disabled populations into sessions and case studies within its training courses.

Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM). The Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) has no barriers to the participation of people with disabilities in its workplace. CMM does not specifically target people with disabilities; however, many of its programs overseas provide services for or remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities. Some CMM programs under Program Element 1.3.2., Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, help to

reintegrate ex-combatants into society by providing them with workforce development, employment opportunities, and life skills. Ex-combatant programs, which may include some participants who are people with disabilities, are being implemented in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda.

Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation–American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (PVC–ASHA). The Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation–American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (PVC–ASHA) includes USAID’s disability policy in the standard provisions of its grant agreements, which are provided to all ASHA grantees. That section describes standards for accessibility that contractors must meet if a portion of ASHA funding is used for the construction of new or the rehabilitation of existing facilities. PVC–ASHA holds grantee workshops almost every year and always includes in its agenda a presentation and discussion of USAID’s disability policy and the need to make USAID-financed construction accessible to people with disabilities. A contracted civil engineer works with ASHA activities and approves plans for the construction or rehabilitation of facilities, ensuring that ASHA-assisted construction is accessible to people with disabilities.

ASHA grants are used to promote U.S. ideas and values in education and medicine abroad and to support a wide range of related institutions. Some of the medical institutions supported by ASHA grants have facilities for the training and rehabilitation of people with disabilities. In those circumstances, people with disabilities are closely involved with the planning and implementation of programs. In at least one other instance, an ASHA-assisted university is working with representa-

tives of people with disabilities to ensure that all buildings and facilities are accessible to those with disabilities.

Office of Food for Peace (FFP). Emergency programs supported by the Office of Food for Peace (FFP) deliver food aid to populations—often those residing in areas of civil conflict or fleeing war-torn regions—who are affected by natural and human-made disasters. Many of the beneficiaries are refugees and displaced persons, especially children and mothers. The provision of emergency food aid becomes the first priority under unusual circumstances in the field, when harsh and challenging conditions prevail. Such situations are not conducive to facilitating a focus on systematically removing barriers to the participation of people with disabilities. Nevertheless, most of FFP’s implementing partners are USAID-registered private voluntary organizations that must comply with the ADA at the headquarters level. In addition, under the requirements for use of nonemergency funds, FFP implementing partners must identify and target for food aid those members of the communities in which they work who are the most vulnerable to food insecurity. For many private voluntary organizations, persons with disabilities—in addition to people living with chronic diseases such as HIV, displaced persons, the poor, orphans, children under five years of age, and pregnant and lactating women—fall in that category.

USAID DISABILITY POLICY PAPER

I. USAID DISABILITY POLICY

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to the inclusion of people who have physical and mental disabilities and those who advocate and offer services on behalf of people with disabilities. This commitment extends from the design and implementation of USAID programming to advocacy for and outreach to people with disabilities. USAID's policy on disability is as follows: To avoid discrimination against people with disabilities in programs which USAID funds and to stimulate an engagement of host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in promoting a climate of nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. The USAID policy on disability is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries where USAID has programs.

For purposes of this policy, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that affects a major life function, consistent with the definition of the Rehabilitation Act.

USAID commitment to disability issues is not new. A 1996 report ("Activities Addressing the Needs of Person with Disabilities," USAID document PN-ABY-746) described the many and varied Agency-sponsored activities in provisioning of prosthetics, treatment and prevention of blindness and special education, providing medical training of individuals who assist persons with disabilities, building advocacy and management capabilities of local organizations that represent the disabled, and the like. This policy is designed to build upon current activities and to enhance the effectiveness of the Agency's commitment.

The policy applies to Agency program funds only, and complements existing USAID disability policies which relate to staffing and personnel procedures. One of the best means of raising awareness in programs is to actively pursue those personnel procedures so that Agency staffing patterns reflect the intention of Agency programs.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is generally not applicable to USAID's overseas programs. While the ADA applies to U.S. citizens (including USAID employees) overseas, it does not apply to non-U.S. citizens,

who are the primary beneficiaries of USAID programs. The USAID disability policy is thus in part an effort to extend the spirit of the ADA in areas beyond the jurisdiction of U.S. law.

II. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the USAID policy on disability are (a) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (b) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (c) to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and (d) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities.

III. POLICY FRAMEWORK

A substantial segment (often 10 percent or more) of any population has im-

pairments. Those individuals are often limited in participating in society by obstacles in the physical or social environment. It is widely recognized that the response to this problem must be a balanced combination of prevention, rehabilitation and measures for the equalization of opportunities. Individuals with disabilities and their caregivers often are taken out of the workforce. The reasons are many: discrimination, lack of educational, vocational rehabilitation or training opportunities, etc. These factors place further economic burden on poor countries where USAID has sustainable development programs. People with disabilities have the same needs as others for nutrition, family planning, health care, training and employment. Many mainstream programs, with minor modification at the design stage, help address these needs. For example, education programs can be developed which promote inclusion of children with physical or mental disabilities to the maximum extent feasible. Economic growth activities, such as small business loans lending, can be developed to assure that people with disabilities have equal access to credit. Infrastructure projects can be designed, with acceptable marginal cost, to assure barrier-free access.

In providing humanitarian assistance in post-conflict situations and disaster assistance, early strategically aimed programs both help address the immediate needs of people with disabilities and also provide

a foundation on which these individuals more effectively make a positive contribution to the economic development of their country. The disabling injuries caused by landmines provide yet another compelling reason for such programs.

USAID promotes advocacy as an integral part of its democracy and governance objective. As a world leader in the civil rights movement for people with disabilities, the U.S. has seen a strengthening of many local organizations which have formed to support independent living and other disability initiatives as a critical need. In many countries, individuals with disabilities have been 'warehoused' in abysmal conditions with total disrespect for their rights. Those rights must be respected. As young democracies decide where they will concentrate scarce resources, people with disabilities and those interested in the issues of people with disabilities must be among the voices that are heard.

Recently, in certain developing countries, indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) interested in the concerns of people with disabilities have emerged. USAID's general policy with regard to partnership with private voluntary organizations (PVOs) encourages the use of U.S. PVOs to help strengthen indigenous NGOs ("USAID-U.S. PVO Partnership," April 12, 1995; Handbook 1, Policy Papers); inclusion of NGOs

interested in issues of persons with disabilities should be considered for this kind of support.

USAID also recognizes the appropriate role of host country governments in creating the enabling environment for disability advocacy and services. Host governments not only create the regulatory environment, but they also assure quality standards and, for donor programs, provide the basis for sustaining these efforts.¹

IV. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A. CONSULTATION

Each USAID Bureau, Mission and Center of the Global Bureau must determine the best ways to consult with the disabled and with those who advocate on behalf of, or provide services for individuals with disabilities.

Each USAID Bureau, Mission and Center of the Global Bureau must also determine best ways for consulting with appropriate host government officials to assure that issues are reviewed with respect to the enabling environment, regulatory concerns, quality assurance standards and maintenance of donor-financed disability activities. USAID will also look to organizations and individuals with in-depth local experience to assist in designing and implementing

¹ The National Council on Disability (NCD) is an independent federal agency which was established to promote policies, programs, practices and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities and to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society, and to provide an annual report to the President and the Congress. The NCD issued a report on August 1, 1996, entitled, "Foreign Policy and Disability" which asked whether the United States maintains a coherent disability policy within its foreign policy and found in the negative. In fact, the report concluded that "those responsible for creating and implementing U.S. overseas policies and programs generally lack awareness of disability issues, cannot articulate our national policies with respect to people with disabilities, do not incorporate the interests of people with disabilities into U.S. foreign policy objectives, and do not see the importance of U.S. disability advances and achievements for people with disabilities in other countries." The NCD recommended:

- creating a comprehensive foreign policy on disability to advocate for people with disabilities through activities on international levels;
- extending U.S. disability law by legislation or executive order to include unambiguously the international operations of the U.S. government;
- employing domestic standards of nondiscrimination in U.S.-sponsored international activities;
- training U.S. foreign affairs agencies and their contractors to plan for programmatic accessibility; and,
- establishing the principle that no U.S. international activity should have a lower standard of inclusion than its domestic correlate.

participatory mechanisms to ensure that USAID strategic objectives and activities incorporate, to the extent feasible, the priorities and values of people with disabilities and groups pursuing these issues and interests in the host country.

B. AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

The concerns of people with physical and mental disabilities should be considered in the variety of USAID programs for the poorest elements of society including but not limited to programs for children and women, especially early childhood interventions, child survival programs and curriculum development for special education within basic education programs; mass communication and printed materials; development of basic infrastructure (e.g., roads, water and sanitation, public transportation, telecommunications); development of small scale industries or workshops; introduction of new machinery; development of products the use of which requires specific skills; urban or rural community development; development of health care facilities or systems; development of formal and non-formal education, training, career development and job placement services; family planning and health education programs; design and construction activities; and activities related to democracy and good governance, human rights initiatives, and income generation. Where appropriate, USAID may also encourage relevant policy dialogue with host governments.

C. SUPPORTING U.S. PVO AND INDIGENOUS NGO RELATIONSHIPS

Indigenous NGOs, as part of the host society, can serve as a voice for the inter-

ests and perspectives of the community of individuals with disabilities or groups interested in their issues. USAID will look to an increasing role for indigenous NGOs to carry out service delivery and to advocate on behalf of the interests of people with disabilities. USAID will actively encourage the formation of effective partnership relations between U.S. PVOs and indigenous NGOs interested in issues of concern to people with disabilities.

D. TRAINING AND ENHANCED AWARENESS

USAID employees and contractors will be trained in issues of relevance to people with disabilities so that, as appropriate, USAID programs reflect those issues. Grantees and contractors will be encouraged to provide relevant training to their staff.

ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVE (AAPD)

FROM THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE ISSUED: JUNE 16, 2005

AAPD 05-07

SUPPORTING USAID'S STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN CONTRACTS, GRANTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

PURPOSE: The purpose of this AAPD is to require contracting officers (COs) and agreement officers (AOs) to include a provision in all solicitations and resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements involving construction or renovation of structures, facilities or buildings. The provision is an affirmative statement that contractors and recipients will comply, to the extent practicable and within the scope of the award, with the intent of USAID's Policy on Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-Financed Construction.

BACKGROUND: In September 1997, the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination (PPC) issued a USAID General Policy Notice stating USAID's Disability Policy. This Policy Paper "articulates the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) commitment to pursue advocacy for, outreach

to, and inclusion of people with physical and mental disabilities, to the maximum extent feasible, in the design and implementation of USAID programming, and provides guidance for making that commitment operational."

The policy applies to the use of Agency program funds only and complements USAID's personnel and staffing disability policies.

PPC includes the Policy Paper as a Mandatory Internal Reference to ADS 200 "Introduction to Programming Policy" (see ADS 200.4.2 Internal Mandatory References, under the category "Other Issues." Full text is available through USAID's Development Clearinghouse at http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PDABQ631.pdf). [Please note that the web address for the document has changed since the original publication of this policy. ADS 200 is available in its entirety on the USAID

website at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/200.pdf>. Policies and publication related to USAID's disability policy can be found on the USAID website at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/.]

As part of the effort to more fully incorporate the Disability Policy into USAID's program planning (see Executive Message Dated 09/03/2004), PPC has developed policy guidance on accessibility standards for the disabled in USAID-financed construction. A USAID inter-bureau committee and stakeholders developed this guidance for any new or renovation construction project funded by USAID. This AAPD is the first and principal means of implementing the guidance.

Although many operating units throughout the Agency incorporate the Disability Policy in their strategic planning and activity development, more needs to be done to specify standards

for accessibility in USAID-funded construction contracts, grants and cooperative agreements.

Until these efforts result in more consistent inclusion in SOWs and PDs, the Office of Acquisition and Assistance is issuing this AAPD to bring the Agency policy guidance to the attention of our private sector implementing partners and ensure their compliance with the policy by including a provision to this effect in contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.

GUIDANCE: The clause and provision below are to be used in all RFPs and RFAs issued after the date of this AAPD.

The clause and provision set out the Agency's objectives regarding disability policy in terms of construction; require compliance with accessibility standards; how to comply in new construction and in alterations to existing structures, and construction related activities that are exempt from the requirements for compliance. In both the clause and provision under paragraph (e), Alterations, there is a requirement for the Contracting Officer's or Assistance Officer's approval where compliance with accessibility standards is technically infeasible or presents an undue burden. To issue this approval the Contracting or Assistance Officer must first obtain a waiver as required by the USAID Policy on Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-Financed Construction.

The request for a waiver must identify the specific requirements and procedures of the guidelines from which a waiver is sought and provide a detailed explanation, including appropriate information or documentation, as to why a waiver should be granted. A statement(s) that, where feasible, persons with disabilities will be accommodated and how such accommoda-

tions will allow access to all programs and services needed should accompany requests. The full text of the policy and guidance on the waiver process is available at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html.

1. Acquisition

For acquisitions (contracts) for construction or renovation using program funds, when issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP), the contracting officer must include the following provision in Section H of the RFP and resulting contract:

"STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID CONSTRUCTION

CONTRACTS (September 2004)

(a) One of the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy is to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities. As part of this policy USAID has established standards for any new or renovation construction project funded by USAID to allow access by people with disabilities (PWDs). The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html.

(b) USAID requires the contractor to comply with standards of accessibility for people with disabilities in all structures, buildings or facilities resulting from new or renovation construction or alterations of an existing structure.

(c) The contractor will comply with the host country or regional standards for accessibility in construction when such standards result in at least substantially equivalent accessibility and usability as the standard provided in the Ameri-

cans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Guidelines of July 2004. Where there are no host country or regional standards for universal access or where the host country or regional standards fail to meet the ADA/ABA threshold, the standard prescribed in the ADA and the ABA must be used.

(d) New Construction. All new construction will comply with the above standards for accessibility.

(e) Alterations. Changes to an existing structure that affect, or could affect, the usability of the structure will comply with the above standards for accessibility unless the contractor obtains the Contracting Officer's advance approval that compliance is technically infeasible or constitutes an undue burden or both. Compliance is technically infeasible where structural conditions would require removing or altering a load-bearing member that is an essential part of the structural frame or because other existing physical or site constraints prohibit modification or addition of elements, spaces, or features that are in full and strict compliance with the minimum requirements of the standard. Compliance is an undue burden where it entails either a significant difficulty or expense or both.

(f) Exceptions. The following construction related activities are excepted from the requirements of paragraphs (a) through (d) above: (1) Normal maintenance, re-roofing, painting or wall-papering, or changes to mechanical or electrical systems are not alterations and the above standards do not apply unless they affect the accessibility of the building or facility; and (2) emergency construction (which may entail the provision of plastic sheeting or tents, minor repair and upgrading of existing

structures, rebuilding of part of existing structures, or provision of temporary structures) intended to be temporary in nature. A portion of emergency construction assistance may be provided to people with disabilities as part of the process of identifying disaster- and crisis-affected people as “most vulnerable.”

2. Assistance

For assistance awards (grants and cooperative agreements), when issuing a Request for Applications (RFA), the agreement officer must include the following provision in the RFA and ensure its inclusion as a Special Provision in the schedule of the award itself:

“STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS

INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (September 2004)

(a) One of the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy is to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities. As part of this policy USAID has established standards for any new or renovation construction project funded by USAID to allow access by people with disabilities (PWDs). The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html.

(b) USAID requires the recipient to comply with standards of accessibility for people with disabilities in all structures, buildings or facilities resulting from new or renovation construction or alterations of an existing structure.

(c) The recipient will comply with the host country or regional standards for

accessibility in construction when such standards result in at least substantially equivalent accessibility and usability as the standard provided in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Guidelines of July 2004. Where there are no host country or regional standards for universal access or where the host country or regional standards fail to meet the ADA/ABA threshold, the standard prescribed in the ADA and the ABA will be used.

(d) New Construction. All new construction will comply with the above standards for accessibility.

(e) Alterations. Changes to an existing structure that affect, or could affect, the usability of the structure will comply with the above standards for accessibility unless the recipient obtains the Agreement Officer’s advance approval that compliance is technically infeasible or constitutes an undue burden or both. Compliance is technically infeasible where structural conditions would require removing or altering a load-bearing member that is an essential part of the structural frame or because other existing physical or site constraints prohibit modification or addition of elements, spaces, or features that are in full and strict compliance with the minimum requirements of the standard. Compliance is an undue burden where it entails either a significant difficulty or expense or both.

(f) Exceptions. The following construction related activities are excepted from the requirements of paragraphs (a) through (d) above: (1) Normal maintenance, re-roofing, painting or wall-papering, or changes to mechanical or electrical systems are not alterations and the above standards do not apply unless they affect the accessibility of the building or facility; and (2) emergency

construction (which may entail the provision of plastic sheeting or tents, minor repair and upgrading of existing structures, rebuilding of part of existing structures, or provision of temporary structures) intended to be temporary in nature. A portion of emergency construction assistance may be provided to people with disabilities as part of the process of identifying disaster- and crisis-affected people as “most vulnerable.”

POINT OF CONTACT: Direct questions about this AAPD to Michael Gushue, M/OAA/PE, at 202-712-5831. Direct questions about USAID’s Disability Policy to Joan Atherton, PPC/P at 202-712-4955, or the Agency Disability Coordinator, Lloyd Feinberg, DCHA/DG, (202) 712-5725.

ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVE

FROM THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE ISSUED: DECEMBER 17, 2004

AAPD 04-17

SUPPORTING USAID'S DISABILITY POLICY IN CONTRACTS, GRANTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

PURPOSE: The purpose of this AAPD is to require contracting officers (COs) and agreement officers (AOs) to include a provision supporting USAID's Disability Policy in all solicitations and resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. The provision is an affirmative statement that the contractor or recipient will comply, to the extent practicable and within the scope of the award, with the intent of USAID's Policy Paper on Disability, dated September 12, 1997.

BACKGROUND: In September 1997, the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination (PPC) issued a USAID General Policy Notice stating USAID's Disability Policy. This Policy Paper "articulates the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) commitment to pursue advocacy for, outreach to, and inclusion of people with physical and mental disabilities, to the maximum extent feasible, in the design and implementation of USAID programming, and provides guidance for making that

commitment operational." The policy applies to the use of Agency program funds only and complements USAID's personnel and staffing disability policies.

To summarize, USAID's policy on disability is to

- Avoid discrimination against people with disabilities in programs which USAID funds;
- Stimulate an engagement of host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in promoting a climate of nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for people with disabilities; and
- Promote the inclusion of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries where USAID has programs.

PPC includes the Policy Paper as a Mandatory Internal Reference to ADS 200

"Introduction to Programming Policy" (see ADS 200.4.2 Internal Mandatory References, under the category "Other Issues" at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html). Various efforts are underway to more fully incorporate the Disability Policy into USAID's program planning so that inclusion of persons with physical and mental disabilities is a standard component of the program and activity design/development process. In fact, many operating units throughout the Agency already do incorporate the Disability Policy in their strategic planning and activity development.

The Office of Acquisition and Assistance is issuing this AAPD in order to bring the Agency policy to the attention of our private sector implementing partners and encourage their compliance with the policy, by including a provision to this effect in contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.

GUIDANCE:

1. Acquisition

For acquisitions (contracts) using program funds, when issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) after the effective date of this AAPD, the contracting officer must include the following provision in Section H of the RFP and resulting contract, and modify existing contracts to include it, with the contractor's agreement, whenever practicable.

“USAID Disability Policy - Acquisition (December 2004)

(a) The objectives of the USAID Disability Policy are (1) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (2) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (3) to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and (4) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities. The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html.

(b) USAID therefore requires that the contractor not discriminate against people with disabilities in the implementation of USAID programs and that it make every effort to comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy in performing this contract. To that end and within the scope of the contract, the contractor's actions must demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities.”

2. Assistance

For assistance awards (grants and cooperative agreements), when issuing a Request for Applications (RFA), the agreement officer must include the following provision in the RFA and ensure its inclusion as a Special Provision in the schedule of the award itself. AOs are to amend existing grants and cooperative agreements to include the provision, with the recipient's agreement, whenever practicable.

“USAID Disability Policy - Assistance (December 2004)

(a) The objectives of the USAID Disability Policy are (1) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (2) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (3) to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and (4) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities. The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html.

(b) USAID therefore requires that the recipient not discriminate against people with disabilities in the implementation of USAID funded programs and that it make every effort to comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy in performing the program under this grant or cooperative agreement. To that end and to the extent it can accomplish this goal within the scope of the program objectives, the recipient should

demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities.”

POINT OF CONTACT: Direct questions about this AAPD to Diane Howard, M/OAA/P, at 202-712-0206. Direct questions about USAID's Disability Policy to Lloyd Feinberg, DCHA/DG, 202-712-5725.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAPD	Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive
ACOGIPRI	Cooperative Association of the Integral Pro-Rehabilitation Independent Group
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADISA	Association of Parents and Friends of People with Disabilities
ADS	Automated Directives System
AIR	American Institute for Research
ANE	Bureau for Asia Near East
ARD	Applying Global Experience for People-Oriented Results
ASCATED	Association for Training and Technical Assistance on Education and Disability
BIDC	Building an Inclusive Development Community
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CAR	Central Asian Republics
CEOSS	Coptie Evangelical Organization for Social Services
CEPPS	Consortium for Elections and Political Process
CMM	Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
COPDIGUA	Coordinating Association of Organizations of People with Disabilities of Guatemala
COs	contracting officers
CRDA	Community Revitalization through Democratic Action
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DAC	Disability Action Council

DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DCOF	Disabled Children and Orphans Fund
DFID	Department for International Development
DG	Office of Democracy and Governance
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DPO	disabled persons organizations
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
E&E	Bureau of Europe and Eurasia
EGAT	Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade
ENGAGE	Engaging with Disabled Persons Organizations in Development Cooperation
EOE	equal opportunity employment
EQUIP	Educational Quality Improvement Program
FENASCOL	National Federation of the Deaf in Colombia
FENEDIF	Federation of Ecuadorians with Physical Disabilities
FFP	Office of Food for Peace
FY	fiscal year
ICONTEC	Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certifications
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republic Institute
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	information technology
IWID	Investing in Women in Development
JO	junior program officer
JONAPWD	Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities
LAC	Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
LWVF	Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund
MCT	Motivational Charitable Trust
MIDAS	Más Inversión Desarrollo Alternativo Sostenible
MIUSA	Mobility International USA
NACCCW	National Association of Childcare Workers

NADPO	National Alliance of Disabled People's Organization
NASCOH	National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped
NEP	new entry professional
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Building Operations
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
OVC	Opportunities for Vulnerable Children
PC/LA Perkins	Partnership for Children/Latin America
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PVC-ASHA	Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation--American Schools and Hospitals
PVO	private voluntary organization
RDMA	Regional Development Mission Asia
RFA	request for application
RFP	request for proposal
RISE	Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education
SEED	Support to Eastern European Democracy
SEOPD	Supporting Equal Opportunity for People with Disabilities
SHEM	Division of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management
SO	Strategic Objective
SPANS	Special Program to Address the Needs of Survivors
TEMA	Targeted Election Management Assistance
TIES	Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships
UEDC	United Energy Distribution Company
UN	United Nations
UNIC	United Nations Information Center
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development (can also use "U.S.")
UWI	University of West Indies

VI-C	Veterans International–Cambodia
VTF	Victims of Torture Fund
WARP	West Africa Regional Program
WID	Office for Women in Development

U.S. Agency for International Development

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent federal agency that receives overall foreign guidance from the Secretary of State. For more than 40 years, USAID has been the principal U.S. agency to extend assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms.

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