



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FOURTH REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF USAID DISABILITY POLICY



November 2005

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

A family spends some leisure time by an area lake (courtesy of Motivation/Sri Lanka).

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CONTENTS

Introduction	v
Executive Summary	vii
Laying the Cornerstone of Success: Highlights of Washington-Based Initiatives	1
Building a Culture of Inclusion Around the World: Global Highlights from USAID Missions and Offices	3
Pursuing the Way Forward: Recommendations for Future Success	9
Appendices	
Appendix A: USAID Disability Policy	13
Appendix B: Disability Plan of Action	17
Appendix C: AAPD 05-07 on Supporting USAID's Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements	19
Appendix D: AAPD 04-17 on Supporting USAID's Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements.	23
Appendix E: Letter to Missions and Offices Requesting Information on Implementation of Agency Disability Policy	25
Appendix F: Summary Highlights of Mission and Office Responses to Inquiry on Disability Policy	27
Abbreviations and Acronyms.	49

INTRODUCTION

“WE KNOW THAT EQUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL ABILITY HAS NEVER EXISTED AND NEVER WILL, BUT WE DO INSIST THAT EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY STILL MUST BE SOUGHT.”

—FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was the landmark legislation signed into law in 1990, marshaled in a new era for the tens of thousands of Americans with disabilities. The ADA provided the means for ensuring equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. The social and economic benefits to the United States of including people with disabilities have been well documented and astounding.

The promotion of democracy, responsible governance, and strong civil societies is a hallmark of American society. The ADA is a clear example of those attributes at their best. And although much of the world has recognized the values that the ADA reflects, tens of millions of people with disabilities around the world still struggle to overcome the physical, social, and economic barriers that still exist in such societies.

As the principal U.S. agency responsible for extending humanitarian and development assistance abroad, the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID) has long been a champion of equitable growth and opportunity. In September 1997, USAID adopted a policy that advanced a clear vision and framework for the Agency’s efforts in the area of disability. The policy states that USAID will not discriminate against persons with disabilities and will work to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) in USAID-funded programs and activities. The policy also calls on USAID missions to reach out to partners, host country counterparts, and other donors to lead a collaborative effort to end discrimination against—and to promote equal opportunity for—persons with disabilities.

The policy’s corresponding plan of action calls on the Agency to produce regular reports on efforts to implement the policy. The first three of those biannual reports reflected a growing awareness within USAID and its partners and counterparts about disability issues and about an increasing number of activities that addressed the needs of people with disabilities taking place in the field. The reports also revealed that challenges still existed in the efforts to meet the objectives laid out in our disability policy. Although this fourth

report similarly brings to light the fact that much work remains to be done, it also clearly demonstrates that many advances and successes have been made since the last report in 2003.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This, the fourth report on the implementation of USAID's disability policy, describes an exciting surge in progress in disability-related efforts over the past two years. It also shows that although we are better, we are not yet as good as we should be.

On the one hand, both USAID/Washington and the field reports highlight an inspiring increase in the level of awareness of the issues facing people with disabilities in our development programs. They also reveal an increase in the scope and breadth of activities being implemented both with and on behalf of people with disabilities. On the other hand, much work remains for the Agency in seeking meaningful input from people with disabilities, hiring people with disabilities, and systematically including people with disabilities in our development efforts.

At the Washington level, several key achievements were attained over the past two years and merit recognition. First, strong congressional leadership in the area of disability was demonstrated in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 (H.R. 4818), when Congress appropriated \$2.5 million to address the needs and to protect the rights of people with disabilities in developing countries. Second, USAID issued two new policy directives (AAPD 05-07 and AAPD 04-17). Those directives mandate the use of accessibility standards in all USAID-financed construction or reconstruc-

tion efforts. They also require contracting 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, respectively. Third, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios relocated the point of contact for disability-related activities within the technical and programmatic office of the Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) Bureau, appointing Lloyd Feinberg as disability coordinator. Fourth, on June 24, 2004, Administrator Natsios joined with then-Secretary of State Colin Powell to create a new Advisory Committee on Persons with Disabilities. Finally, Administrator Natsios directed the Agency's Office of Human Resources (HR) to develop a comprehensive e-learning disability training module for USAID personnel. That module is now available online to Agency staff.

While those achievements lay the foundation for the implementation of the disability policy, the most important measure of success will ultimately be the way in which USAID missions and offices in the field—and their partners—incorporate the spirit and objectives of the policy into their plans, activities, and operating procedures. The path has been paved. It is now time to travel down that path.

Indeed, in response to the disability coordinator's inquiries for this report,

USAID missions and offices detail inclusion of persons with disabilities in significantly more projects and programs than in previous years, and their accounts reflect diverse involvement in disability-related issues and PWD-inclusive programming. Many missions and offices have funded activities that were specifically designed to benefit persons with disabilities. Some took strides to ensure that people with disabilities—or the concerns of people with disabilities—were included in the regular humanitarian and development activities that they supported. A number of missions have funded initiatives aimed at building the capacity of disabled people's organizations (DPOs), and many missions sent people with disabilities or people working on disability issues to key conferences on disability around the world. A few missions reported that they had found ways to involve people with disabilities, DPOs, or both in the planning and assessment of their programs.

The reports indicate that nearly all reporting missions have at least partially accessible offices, but the degree of accessibility varies from one location to another. Some missions acknowledged that adaptations would need to be made should a staff member who is disabled be hired, while others have attained a level of accessibility beyond what is often found in the United States. Although many missions stated that there are no barriers to persons with disabili-

ties being employed in their offices, more work is needed on the part of most missions to recruit people with disabilities or to investigate what might prevent people with disabilities from applying for jobs. Finally, most missions do not have a disability plan (which was a recommendation of previous disability reports), but many of those that do not have a plan are, nonetheless, doing significant work to ensure the participation of people with disabilities in their programming.

As this fourth report demonstrates, the past two years have witnessed a particularly exciting surge in progress in the Agency's disability-related efforts. Key achievements at the Washington level have helped lay a critical foundation for future successes in implementing the policy. At the same time, missions, offices, and implementing partners in the field have continued to demonstrate creativity and initiative in finding ways to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in USAID-supported efforts. The body of this report lays out in more detail the accomplishments at the Washington and field levels, as well as the recommendations from the third report and the actions taken since that report. The report concludes with recommendations that we hope will move the Agency and its programs toward more systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities in our programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To foster the replication and systematization of the many successes that have occurred over the past two years, the fourth disability report makes the following recommendations, which are described in detail at the end of this report, for advancing efforts to implement USAID's disability policy:

- 1. Increase the focus on and technical assistance to missions, offices, and disabled people's organizations.*
- 2. Establish mechanisms for identifying, documenting, and sharing best practices.*
- 3. Increase the recruitment and level of people with disabilities working within the Agency.*
- 4. Increase the level of activity and effectiveness of the agency disability team.*

LAYING THE CORNERSTONE OF SUCCESS: HIGHLIGHTS OF WASHINGTON-BASED INITIATIVES

LEGISLATIVE ACTION IN SUPPORT OF USAID DISABILITY PROGRAMMING

In Section 579 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 (H.R. 4818), Congress appropriated \$2.5 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) for programs and activities to address the needs and to protect the rights of people with disabilities in developing countries. Those funds are to be administered jointly by USAID and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). Among other provisions, this legislation called for USAID and DOS each to designate a coordinator on disability issues, and it stipulated that USAID should implement procedures to require prospective grantees to specify how their proposed activities would address the needs of persons with disabilities. Section 688 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations measure for FY2004 directed USAID to ensure that all activities implemented by USAID in Iraq and Afghanistan comply with USAID's disability policy. It also called on USAID to submit reports on the ways in which the needs of persons with disabilities had been addressed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it directed USAID to develop and implement appropriate accessibility standards for persons with disabilities on construction projects funded by the Agency.

As noted in more detail in this report, all of the actions stipulated in both the

FY2004 and FY2005 legislative bills have been fulfilled, many ahead of the schedule that was outlined by Congress. Furthermore, DOS and USAID have developed concrete procedures for the programming of the \$2.5 million ESF, and an allocation memo has been forwarded to the deputy secretary of state for approval.

ADOPTION OF ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

One of the most tangible actions taken in the past two years to realize USAID's disability policy was developing guidance on accessibility standards in USAID-financed construction. Together with stakeholders, a USAID inter-bureau committee developed the guidance, which pertains to any new construction or renovation project fully or partially funded by USAID. A corresponding Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive (AAPD), AAPD 05-07, which outlines the means of implementing the guidance, was issued on June 16, 2005.

The AAPD stipulates that all contracting officers (COs) and agreement officers (AOs) must include a provision in all solicitations and in the resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements that involve construction or renovation of structures, facilities, or buildings, requiring parties to comply with the intent of USAID's policy on Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-

Financed Construction. More specifically, the AAPD states that contractors and grantees will comply with host country or regional standards for accessibility in construction when those standards result in at least substantially equivalent accessibility and usability as the standard provided in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and in the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Guidelines of July 2004. If no host country or regional standards exist, or if the standards fail to meet the ADA/ABA threshold, then the standard set by the ADA/ABA must be used. The AAPD also defines exceptions to the standards. To see the complete AAPD on accessibility standards, see Appendix C.

ADDITION OF DISABILITY CLAUSE TO AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

The Office of Acquisition and Assistance also issued a policy directive in December 2004, AAPD 04-17 (see Appendix D), which requires COs and AOs to include a provision supporting USAID's disability policy in all solicitations and in the resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. The purpose of the AAPD is to bring the Agency's policy to the attention of USAID's private sector implementing partners and to encourage their compliance with the policy. The

provision stipulates that the contractor or recipient will not discriminate against persons with disabilities and that the contractor or recipient must demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women, and children with disabilities.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW DISABILITY COORDINATOR

In 2004, Administrator Natsios decided to locate the point of contact for disability-related activities within USAID in the Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) Bureau. In doing so, Administrator Natsios chose to place responsibility for coordinating those activities in a pillar bureau that has programmatic experience and that can provide technical support in incorporating disability-related concerns into Agency programs. In accordance with this decision, Lloyd Feinberg, who is manager of the Patrick Leahy War Victims Fund, the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, and the Victims of Torture Fund within DCHA, became the primary point of contact within the Agency for disability coordination. Janet Allem, management analyst in the Agency's Office of Management and Budget, continues to play a vital role as a key team member on the Agency's disability team.

CREATION OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

An Advisory Committee on Persons with Disabilities has been established under the general authority of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and USAID Administrator Natsios. The

committee comprises three ex-officio members (the secretary, the administrator, and the executive director) and eight members from outside government who will serve for two years. This committee will advise USAID and the U.S. Department of State on the interests of persons with disabilities as those interests pertain to the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance programs. The committee will offer recommendations on issues agreed to by the committee. The committee signals the vital importance of people with disabilities to U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance efforts and their effect on global, social, economic, and political stability and development. The first meeting was held on August 15, 2005.

USAID STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Also in 2004, Administrator Natsios directed the Agency's Office of Human Resources (HR) to develop a disability training module for USAID personnel. In response, HR has developed a comprehensive e-learning course that will target all USAID employees, especially managers, supervisors, and program team leaders. The training course will provide USAID employees with basic information, understanding, resources, tools, and skills to enable them to promote and to increase the participation of people with disabilities in Agency programs and operations worldwide. Course topics include but are not limited to (a) inclusive development practices, (b) creation of a mission disability plan, (c) barriers to inclusion, (d) lessons learned from several successful mission programs, and (e) special emphasis on women and children with disabilities. The course is available online to Agency staff.

INNOVATIVE NGO DISABILITIES CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

With principal funding from Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade/Women in Development (EGAT/WID) and with continuing funding from the DCHA Bureau, Mobility International USA (MIUSA) has implemented an activity titled *Building an Inclusive Development Community: Gender Appropriate Technical Assistance to InterAction Member Agencies on Inclusion of People with Disabilities*. Through this innovative initiative, MIUSA has been training five nongovernmental organization (NGO) partner organizations (Mercy Corps, Trickle Up Program, American Friends Service Committee, Church World Service, and Holt International Children's Service) to help them make their existing programs and institutional structures more inclusive of people with disabilities. This initiative could serve as a model, not only for other private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and NGOs, but also—potentially—for USAID missions or offices. In addition, MIUSA has produced a comprehensive disability-in-development instruction manual that not only has been distributed to all missions, but also is serving as the foundation for an e-learning course developed by HR.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION AROUND THE WORLD: GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM USAID MISSIONS AND OFFICES

Although the achievements described earlier help create a critical framework for USAID’s work in the area of disability, the most important measure of success will ultimately be the way in which USAID missions and offices—and their partners—incorporate the spirit and objectives of the policy into their plans, activities, and operating procedures.

To learn more about how the policy is being implemented at the field level, the assistant administrators for each region surveyed their respective missions and offices (see Appendix E). The survey asked respondents to describe their successes and challenges in implementing the disability policy over the past two years, as measured by four key indicators of inclusion. Although this survey was sent as an independent request, the indicators were carefully crafted so that in future years those indicators can simply be incorporated into USAID’s annual report questionnaire, thus obviating the need for field staff members to respond to additional requests for information.

A total of 43 missions (13 from Africa, 15 from Asia and the Near East, 11 from Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States, and 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean) and three offices responded to the survey. Information on three other missions and offices was gleaned from relevant reports

or memos. The reports from the field reflected widely varying degrees of involvement in disability-related issues and PWD-inclusive programming. The following summary provides an overall sense of how missions or offices described their activities in terms of the four key indicators, and at the same time the summary highlights numerous examples of success. It is impossible to capture here all of the many exciting and positive initiatives that are being undertaken throughout the world by USAID and its partners. For a more detailed summary of highlights broken down by mission or office, please see Appendix F.

Indicator 1: People with disabilities included in programs or initiatives funded by USAID.

Of the missions or offices that responded to the request for information for this report, most were supporting programs that included persons with disabilities or that took into account the needs and concerns of people with disabilities. However, the responses described manifold types and degrees of inclusion. Most of the activities can generally be assigned to one of two categories: (a) regular humanitarian or development programming that includes people with disabilities or that incorporates the needs of people with disabilities and (b) programming that directly focuses on providing some form

of service or assistance to people with disabilities.

INCLUSION IN REGULAR DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

A number of missions reported that all of their programs benefit people with disabilities. However, in some cases, respondents may have assumed that people with disabilities were benefiting from programs simply because the programs served communities in which people with disabilities lived.

- A number of construction projects were adapted to take persons with disabilities into account. For example, as part of its disaster assistance program, the Bangladesh mission provided accessible latrines. In Bosnia, as part of its “Sustainable Minority Returns” strategic objective, USAID/Bosnia-Herzegovina put approximately \$25 million into reconstruction from 2003 to 2004. The mission reports that in all reconstruction projects that involved vertical structures, such as schools and health centers, USAID ensured access for people with disabilities.
- Many missions mentioned including persons with disabilities in income generation or employment activi-

ties. In Mali, the Trickle Up Program managed to more than double the number of disabled entrepreneurs participating in its micro-enterprise program, and it inspired numerous civil society organizations to develop relationships with DPOs and people with disabilities. In Brazil, the USAID-supported At-Risk Youth Program set a goal of ensuring that 5 percent of the projected 4,000 young people to receive employment training and assistance would be people with disabilities.

- A number of capacity-building initiatives for local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) included disabled people's organizations. For example, in South Africa, Pact implemented a USAID-funded training project for 45 community-based organizations, including six that focused on the needs of people with disabilities.

Many missions also reported implementing programs to prevent diseases that typically lead to disability or to address the needs and rights of individuals with stigmatized illnesses, such as HIV/AIDS. Such programs play a critically important role, both in reducing the incidence of disability and in reducing physical, emotional, and social suffering among people with life-changing diseases. Indeed, people living with HIV/AIDS are, as many mission reports pointed out, effectively disabled in many instances.

ACTIVITIES TARGETING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

To ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are observed and that their needs are met, missions and offices often find it necessary to implement

activities specifically designed to level the playing field. Many USAID missions and offices reported having done just that.

- In 1989, congressional legislation established the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF), a program managed by USAID to provide physical rehabilitation to civilian victims of war and civil strife. In the ensuing years, the parameters of the funds' assistance have expanded to include social and economic rehabilitative efforts, as well as to address the broader sector of people with disabilities. Current funding from the LWVF supports programs in 26 countries. Examples of programs addressing the physical rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities include USAID/Sri Lanka's Disability Support Program (DSP). The DSP has built up the capacity of four local rehabilitation centers, thus more than doubling the country output of rehabilitation devices. It has funded the professional training of technical staff members, both within and outside the country. Additionally, USAID provides ongoing support to international prosthetics schools in Cambodia, El Salvador, Pakistan, Tanzania, Togo, and Vietnam. In Cambodia, USAID also supports a network of rehabilitation centers run by Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA) and is now working with VVAFA to establish a congressionally approved endowment to ensure the continued functioning of the centers.

- Many USAID missions reported supporting activities that aimed to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in political processes and elections. In Ghana, for example, USAID supported a "Tactile Bal-

loting" effort, through which a new ballot was designed for people with visual impairments. In the 2004 national elections, 18,000 visually impaired people were trained to use the new ballot without assistance. This training marked the first time that people with visual impairments were able to vote independently in Ghana. In Guinea, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems implemented a civic education campaign with 10 local organizations. The campaign trained people with disabilities on issues such as citizenship, nationality, and equal participation.

- A third area in which many USAID missions have played a key role in supporting people with disabilities is in promoting inclusive education. In Vietnam, Catholic Relief Services partners with national ministries to promote inclusive education in pre-schools and primary schools. Simultaneously, Save the Children runs an integrated health and education project focused on children with disabilities in two provinces. USAID/Tanzania supported a project in Zanzibar that brought educators and community members together to learn about and find ways to promote inclusion. In Bangladesh, Plan International and Helen Keller International introduced the notion of children with disabilities having "school buddies" to encourage their participation at school.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, USAID's Regional Economic Development Services Office (REDSO) and the LWVF joined to support an innovative effort called the Omega Initiative, which works to bring about the end of social and economic exclusion of people with disabilities in Africa. Omega's key goal is to chan-

nel targeted resources in support of the implementation, extension, and strengthening of existing or proposed rehabilitation services for civilian victims of war and for other people with disabilities in Africa. Omega has also provided significant on-site technical support to recipient organizations, which include both national and international NGOs. In addition to traditional rehabilitation programs, Omega has funded programs that take a broader view of rehabilitation by implementing income generation, job training, sports, institutional capacity building, or other programs for people with disabilities and DPOs. REDSO and Economic and Social Affairs's key partner in the Omega Initiative is Pact, which manages the umbrella grant program.

- Under the Omega Initiative, USAID/Uganda has been a leader in incorporating people with disabilities into existing programs. Mission management, in partnership with the local office of procurement and implementing partners, invited all groups receiving funding to an orientation on USAID's new disability policies. Local DPOs were invited to learn about USAID strategic objectives and to address the challenges and opportunities they experience in those specific areas. Strategic objective team leaders and existing USAID partners were then asked to consider ways to reduce the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing USAID-supported programs. All teams were able to develop concrete ideas. Only five of the resulting 21 suggested programmatic revisions, requesting funding for these initiatives. This represents a major breakthrough in the approach to inclusion. The implementation

of these suggestions is now being reviewed.

Indicator 2: Disabled people's organizations have increased capacity to provide assistance to people with disabilities and to advocate successfully for the rights of people with disabilities.

For people with disabilities to become integrated into their communities and societies, the persons with disabilities themselves must demand change and must have the capacity to see it through. At the same time, public education plus policy and legal reform can create an environment that is more conducive to the integration of people with disabilities.

- Numerous missions reported efforts to build the capacity of people with disabilities through scholarships or other educational assistance. For example, the Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS) program implemented by Georgetown University provides scholarships to young people who are from developing countries and who show leadership potential so that they can obtain higher education in the United States. CASS works to ensure that people with disabilities are among its students. According to CASS, 95 percent of its alumni with disabilities are now employed in their home countries.
- Many missions also sponsored persons with disabilities and people working on disability issues to travel to international conferences, such as the 8th International Congress on Including Children with Disabilities in the Community (held in Stavanger, Norway, in June 2004), the World Bank's Disability and Inclusive Development Conference in

2004, and the Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability organized by Mobility International USA.

- Many missions and partner organizations supported initiatives aimed at building the capacity of local disabled people's organizations. In Iraq, for example, the Office of Transition Initiatives awarded 38 grants benefiting persons with disabilities, including many grants that aimed to train and empower DPOs. Those DPOs, in turn, played an active part in grant design.
- In addition to helping individual DPOs, USAID has often been instrumental in supporting the coordination and the networking among agencies working on disability. In Afghanistan, for instance, USAID sponsored the first meeting of national DPOs, which then unified and called for the government to reactivate the National Disability Commission. In Kenya, USAID helped fund a national conference on disability with key stakeholders, which resulted in the creation of a national disability plan. In Cambodia, USAID supports the Disability Action Council; in Vietnam, USAID supports the Disability Forum. Both of those local organizations provide technical leadership, as well as mentoring to disability groups, government officials, and international organizations working on disability issues.
- An impressive number of missions have supported their partners in successful efforts to pass comprehensive disability laws or to bring about other legal and policy reforms. In Albania, USAID funds the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, which plays a central role in policy work. In particular, the foundation pushed forward the establishment of a new national dis-

ability policy, which was approved by the government in January 2005.

- In Vietnam, USAID has been the lead donor supporting disability rights and reforms for more than 10 years. Over the past two years, USAID funding supported the establishment of the National Coordinating Committee on Disability. Representatives from 15 line ministries, as well as people with disabilities, sit on this committee that makes recommendations to policymakers and other government officials. Moreover, USAID support in Vietnam has led to the recent passage of national construction standards for accessibility, and the mission has worked very closely with other donors, such as the World Bank, to ensure newly planned mass transportation systems will be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- USAID has supported efforts around the world to use media and communications strategies to raise public awareness of disability rights and of the experiences of people with disabilities. A monthly radio program in Afghanistan targeting people with disabilities is said to have one million listeners. In both Egypt and Bangladesh, USAID supports local versions of *Sesame Street*, which incorporates messages about tolerance for persons with disabilities into the programs.
- Under the Omega Initiative, USAID/Uganda has laid the groundwork for some innovative work with disabled people's organizations. Recognizing that the capacity of DPOs is often weak, the Omega Initiative named a full-time rehabilitation and disability specialist, who is now in Gulu, Northern Uganda, which is home to some of the most urgent needs in the country. This person is

working to strengthen the local government offices that are responsible for people with disabilities to build the capacity of local DPOs, and to offer small grants. This integrated approach offers great promise as it builds on lessons learned from previous endeavors.

Indicator 3: People with disabilities have access to—and are included in—the staff and activities of each USAID mission.

In addition to finding ways to promote inclusion within programs funded by USAID, missions are called on to examine their own facilities, operations, and attitudes so they can consider what barriers might prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in the activities of USAID.

- Physical accessibility is a particularly obvious and important aspect of making missions friendly to people with disabilities. Most missions reported having at least partially accessible offices, but the degree of accessibility varies significantly from one location to another. While some missions acknowledged that adaptations would need to be made should a staff member who is disabled be hired, others have attained a level of accessibility beyond what is typical in the United States. USAID/India has signs marked in Braille and maintains unobstructed hallways.
- Although most missions stated that there are no barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities in the offices, missions may need to actively recruit people with disabilities or to encourage them to apply for positions. In Bangladesh, however, a local disabled people's organization serves as a resource for the mission on issues related to employing people

with disabilities. This DPO serves as a conduit for information about position vacancies. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities are still not gaining access to employment opportunities, despite the information provided and potential remedies. USAID is working closely with this DPO to improve access.

- In some cases, missions have adopted internal policies that reinforce or supplement the USAID global disability policy. USAID/Jordan and USAID/Egypt have policies requiring all offices to support the disability policy and to integrate, whenever possible, opportunities for advancing the Agency's disability concerns.
- A few missions have taken extra steps to encourage their implementing partners to include persons with disabilities. USAID/Rwanda incorporated a section on including persons with disabilities into the handbook that it provides to implementing organizations. USAID/Indonesia raises the issue of inclusion in post-award briefing discussions with recipients of funds.

Indicator 4: USAID missions implement activities in accordance with their own disability plans of action.

Although only a handful of missions or offices reported having in place a mission-specific disability plan of action, the lack of a formal plan did not necessarily translate into lack of activities focused on inclusion of persons with disabilities. However, the fact that a mission has adopted a disability plan does not necessarily mean that the plan is being implemented. A planning process can serve as an extremely useful energizing force and as an opportunity for staff members to learn about disability

and inclusion. Likewise, the plan itself often provides concrete objectives and guidance that help drive forward the disability initiatives.

- For example, USAID/Russia reported that it has instituted and followed a disability action plan, thus resulting in greater focus on disability issues and leading to a significant portion of the USAID/Russia portfolio being dedicated to persons with disabilities concerns and programs. Since the completion of the disability action plan in 2003, the mission has included a “disability analysis” in the design stage of program activities. And because staff members’ awareness of disability issues has been raised, they have found that they are more likely to consider the needs of people with disabilities as staff members plan programs. The effect of this increased awareness on the mission’s broad program portfolio was not reported.
- USAID/Ecuador and USAID/South Africa report ongoing development of a mission-specific plan.

PURSuing THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

EARLIER RECOMMENDATIONS

The third report on disability made four recommendations. In the two years since that report was issued, much work has been done in an effort to address the recommended challenges. Those recommendations and the Agency's response are noted below:

1. *“Program planning documents and, hence, as applicable, contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants should include language that stipulates that people with disabilities are part of the target development community and that activities should be designed to accommodate their inclusion.”*

USAID has issued two new policy documents that mandate increased inclusion of people with disabilities in Agency programs. AAPD 05-07 directs all USAID-funded construction and reconstruction be made physically accessible to people with disabilities. AAPD 04-17 requires that all solicitations and their resulting awards carry a provision stipulating the nondiscrimination of people with disabilities, and it obliges contractors and assistance recipients to demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including people with disabilities in their programs. Moreover, the Office of Human Resources is working closely with the newly designated disability coordinator in an effort to increase

the number of people with disabilities employed in the Agency, both domestically and overseas.

2. *“A Contract Information System should be developed and made public that lets organizations and small businesses know, ... what prime contracts exist, and what they cover, and what subcontracting opportunities are available in them....”*

Although USAID does not currently have a system as recommended above, the Agency does publish a forecast on the USAID Web site. The forecast suggests areas where new contracts will be sought in the coming year. These data should assist entities seeking subcontracting work. Additionally, the information contained in the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization's Small Business Resource Database (also accessible on USAID's Web site), which registers small businesses seeking to obtain work with USAID, is published in an extract format that large prime contractors can access so they can locate potential subcontractors.

3. *“Funding should be provided to make disability training and materials available to USAID missions.”*

Through support provided by the Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade Office and the Women in Development office, Mobility Inter-

national USA (MIUSA) published *Building an Inclusive Development Community: A Manual on Including People with Disabilities in International Development Programs*. This manual provides practical guidance on including people with disabilities in all aspects of development and has been distributed to each field mission and within USAID/Washington. Additionally, MIUSA is editing *Success Stories*, which uses the Millennium Development Goals as a framework to help organizations that have little experience with disability issues so they understand how inclusion of people with disabilities is relevant to their work. MIUSA's video titled *Loud, Proud, and Passionate* is used as a training tool in a variety of settings and a new video titled *Loud, Proud, and Prosperous* has been made available in other languages with USAID support. The MIUSA agreement was recently extended and expanded to allow MIUSA to provide technical assistance directly to missions and to DPOs, as requested.

The agency's new e-learning training program on inclusive development also demonstrates a strong commitment to getting materials and training to program development staff members. The comprehensive training is designed to increase skills and awareness and to put tools into the hands of USAID staff members and personnel.

4. *“Missions and offices should be required to develop contacts with local organizations of people with disabilities.”*

In response to this year’s inquiry, 34 missions (74 percent of those reporting) have reported working with disabled people’s organizations. This figure is up substantially from the 2003 report in which only 25 missions (or 52 percent of those reporting) reported such collaboration. Moreover, the reported relationships and associations with DPOs demonstrate meaningful partnerships and investments in these frequently nascent organizations.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

To foster the replication and systematization of the many great successes that have occurred over the past two years, this fourth report makes the following recommendations:

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

Most missions and offices recognize that barriers do exist to meaningful participation by people with disabilities. However, very few have the technical expertise or know-how to work on removing those barriers. USAID’s new e-learning training program will begin to address this knowledge void but will be insufficient on its own. The training program should be coupled with more hands-on, experiential learning, as well as with local DPO capacity-building efforts. Those efforts can be managed locally, as well as through targeted partnerships and through partnering with strong U.S. disability organizations. Moreover, small amounts of funding should be provided, where necessary, to mission strategic objective (SO) teams to design and imple-

ment inclusive programs. In addition, training modules for cognizant technical officers and new entry professionals should contain focused segments on disability in development, as well as the Agency’s disability policy and policy directives.

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

As this report demonstrates, a number of missions and offices are achieving strong results and a significant effect through their creative and concentrated efforts. For the most part, however, others have not meaningfully benefited from those experiences. Moreover, organizations and entities outside of USAID have also developed initiatives that are successfully reducing the barriers to full participation of people with disabilities. Lessons learned from both within and outside USAID represent potentially powerful tools and, thus, should be gathered and widely dispersed. The Agency can—and should—do a more effective job of telling its story. The Agency’s disability Web site is one avenue for the dissemination of information and tools. This Web site should be updated regularly with relevant information and linkages to other Web sites that have pertinent and useful content.

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

Leadership in advocating for and on behalf of people with disabilities is successful when personal and organizational attributes such as beliefs, values, ethics, and character are applied consistently and equitably. USAID can more effectively model inclusion of people with disabilities by becoming more inclusive in its own organizational hiring

practices. Those hiring practices can and should be applied domestically, as well as internationally and with both U.S. Direct Hire and Foreign Service Nationals. Increased hiring of people with disabilities should be coupled with the designation of a mission or office contact person who is charged with ensuring that disability issues are integrated into programming and operations. Moreover, so USAID may more fully comply with the directive outlined in AAPD 04-17, it is recommended that all technical evaluation committees have as a member at least one person who has completed the Agency’s e-learning training course on inclusive development.

4. *Increase the level of activity and effectiveness of the Agency’s disability team.*

To date, the Agency disability team has comprised persons who have a personal or professional interest in the subject of disability. The team has not been formalized nor has it been mandated that all—or even specific—offices or bureaus would field a member on this team. While having those who want to serve actually serve on the team has led to a very dedicated membership, it has not provided for a sufficiently diverse or representative team. Moreover, as team members have moved on to other time-limiting assignments or overseas postings, the disability team has shrunk—and at a time when the workload is increasing. Therefore, this report recommends that the Agency constitute an active and effective disability team. It is further recommended that membership of this team represent the core Agency function teams (Budget, Acquisition and Assistance, Policy and Program Coordination, Human Resource Development, and the core technical bureau of Democracy, Governance, and Humanitarian Assistance),

as well as other technical and regional bureaus and offices.

CONCLUSION

USAID has made great strides, both domestically and internationally, in its efforts to implement its disability policy. Missions and offices around the world are implementing innovative and exciting programs, with ever greater support from Washington. However, more work must be done. By adopting the recommendations stated earlier, USAID will further expand and institutionalize its successful work on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its humanitarian and development programs and in communities and nations where we work.

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 impairments. 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 democra-

cies 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 deter-

mine 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 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

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.

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 interests 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.

USAID DISABILITY PLAN OF ACTION “MANDATORY REFERENCE” AUGUST 1997

This Plan of Action is designed to direct the implementation of USAID’s Disability Policy. It does so by outlining ways to promote the inclusion of services with and for persons with disabilities in programs throughout the Agency. The Plan of Action is applicable to Agency program activities only, and is consistent with chapters in Series 200 of the Agency’s Automated Directive System that deal with personnel and staffing issues (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads>). The Plan of Action does not require additional personnel, financial reporting, or other elaborate reporting systems. It is designed to be used within existing level of resources, and to complement reengineering guidelines.

- In order to finalize the establishment of Agency policy on persons with disabilities, the following process will be pursued:
- The draft policy shall be reviewed by field missions, development partners, and other donors. (Action: Policy and Program Coordination Bureau (PPC), completed)
- The policy shall be revised and submitted for the approval of the Administrator. (Action: PPC, summer ’97)

2. In order to encourage interagency donor collaboration on the issues of inclusion of disability issues in international programming, USAID will participate actively in relevant interagency and inter-donor meetings.

- USAID participated in the first interagency donor meeting on disabilities held at the World Bank. Also in attendance were representatives from the United Nations’ Office of Disabled Persons, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations’ Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Inter-American Development Bank, the Danish International Development Assistance organization (DANIDA), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Center for Educational Research and Innovation, the African Development Foundation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Academy for Educational Development and several international disabilities NGOs. (Action: Global Bureau, completed)*
- USAID will participate in quarterly meetings of this interagency working group, and will chair the second interagency meeting. USAID will contribute to setting the mission statement, objectives and activities of this group. (Action: Global Bureau, pending appointment of the Team Coordinator; see 4 below)
- USAID will explore the development of an international working group with other federal agencies that have programs serving persons with disabilities,

e.g. Department of State, U.S. Information Agency, the National Council on Disability, Department of Treasury, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services including the National Institutes of Health, the President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Social Security Administration, Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, the Access Board, etc. (Action: Team Coordinator, Oct 1, ’97)

3. In order to ensure Agency-wide coordination and responsiveness, and to assist and facilitate consideration of disability issues in field and Washington planning, an Agency Team for Disability Programming (ATDP) will be established. Membership will be by invitation of the Administrator, and may include external representatives. No budgetary resources will be required.

- The ATDP will meet quarterly under the leadership of PPC. (Action: The Administrator and USAID/PPC, beginning Sept 30, ’97)
- The ATDP will consult annually with various international disabilities organizations, the PVO community through USAID’s Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Assistance (ACVFA), the higher education community through the Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation

* Author’s note: Lloyd Feinberg, DCHA/DG, has been appointed Disability Coordinator and has been actively involved in interagency cooperation.

in Development (ALO), and with other organizations and donors through the quarterly interagency donor collaboration meetings (mentioned above). (Action: Team Coordinator, '97)

- The ATDP will foster Agency awareness (e.g., Agency newsletters, USAID Focus, USAID/PPC's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) publications, ExoNet, Agency home page, etc.) regarding the importance of including persons with disabilities in USAID programs; promote Agency commitment and responsiveness; and ensure bureau, mission and center review processes occur. (see number 5 below). (Action: ATDP, CDIE, and Public Affairs Bureau, continuous)
- The ATDP will review [or develop] activity reports, identify "lessons learned", and assess the Agency's training program (see point 6 below). A summary annual [or periodic] review will be presented to the Administrator. (Action: ATDP, quarterly)
- The ATDP may establish short-term special working groups, when needed. (Action: ATDP, as needed)
- The ATDP may consider and recommend the establishment of special Agency-wide activities focused on policy and services for persons with disabilities. (Action: ATDP, as needed)
- The ATDP will provide senior staff with an annual briefing on all disability-related activities. (Action: ATDP, each January)
- An Annual Disabilities Recognition Award will be established to recognize USAID staff and/or partners who have promoted integration of disabilities awareness and activities into USAID programs. The ATDP will make information about the

Award widely available, identify potential recipients, and provide the Administrator with recommendations for candidates. (Action: ATDP, each June 30)

4. In order to ensure that a central team leader and contact point for activities regarding persons with disabilities exists within the Agency, the Administrator will designate a Disability Team Coordinator.

- This Team Coordinator will provide support to the ATDP upon request, provide technical assistance to all bureaus, missions and centers as they assess their programs for opportunities to include persons with disabilities, maintain the flow of information on disabilities activities, respond to external enquiries, represent USAID at conferences and meetings on disability or ensure proper representation for technical matters, alert NGOs, institutions of higher education and other organizations about "windows of opportunity" in USAID programs, attend and brief participants at regional bureau conferences and other large-scale Agency meetings, and liaise with disabilities organizations, ACVFA, ALO and key U.S. PVO/NGOs involved with disabilities programming. (Action: USAID Administrator, Oct 1, '97)

5. In order to address appropriately and fully the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Agency programs, the Agency will track progress by compiling an annual [or periodic] summary report.

- USAID/Washington will periodically compile a report that assesses the extent and quality of USAID disability activities, and identifies lessons learned, new models, opportunities and challenges for future programming. Relevant field programs may be visited. The first summary report will be sent to the Administrator with, as

needed, recommendations for ensuring Agency momentum and progress on disabilities issues. (Action: ATDP, first report to be completed July 1998.)

6. In order to promote inclusion and build commitment and capacity to address issues regarding persons with disabilities, the Agency will conduct staff development activities.

- Appropriate training materials for Agency staff members, contractors and other partners will be designed or adapted, field tested and produced, including items such as: a video with practical examples of programs that work; handouts for reflection and action; discussion frameworks for group activities; and suggestions regarding policy implementation. (Action: Team Coordinator and Training Office, for use beginning March 30, 1998)
- Preliminary staff training will be provided within new employee orientation, diversity training, other relevant on-going staff training sessions and special technical training, as feasible. Operating units will be encouraged to engage in follow-on self-training through the use of the training materials. (Action: Training Office and operating units, beginning as soon as feasible)
- A letter with abbreviated training materials will be distributed to all Agency contractors, grantees and cooperative agreement partners to encourage them to engage in staff training regarding programming for persons with disabilities. Such organizations will also be encouraged to share their relevant training materials with USAID for review and possible use in our training activities. (Action: Training and Procurement Offices, beginning October 1, 1997)

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).

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 plan-

ning 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 Contract-

ing 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 accommodations 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 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 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 dis-

abilities 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.

LETTER TO MISSIONS AND OFFICES REQUESTING INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENCY DISABILITY POLICY

Dear Mission Director/Operating unit manager:

The past two years have witnessed a particularly exciting surge in progress in USAID's efforts to implement its landmark disability policy, (http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/policies.html). Under Administrator Natsios' leadership, several key achievements have helped lay a critical foundation for the Agency's efforts to include people with disabilities (PWDs) in development and humanitarian assistance programs in all sectors and regions of the world. Among these achievements are

- the creation of the USAID Policy on Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-Financed Construction;
- the creation of USAID policy requiring contracting and agreement officers to include a provision supporting USAID's Disability Policy in all solicitations and resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements;
- the formation of a joint STATE-USAID advisory committee co-chaired by Secretary Rice and Administrator Natsios on people with disabilities;

- placing the responsibility for coordinating USAID disability-related activities in DCHA/DG because of its programmatic experience and ability to provide technical support; and
- the development of a disability e-learning training module for USAID personnel.

In keeping with the Action Plan for the Disability Policy, the Agency has produced three biennial reports on the impact of its efforts to meet these objectives. The last report was published in 2003 (http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/pubs.html). These reports are closely read by the disability community and have influenced congressional interest and legislation. It is now time to compile the next report on the Agency's efforts to implement its Disability Policy. I ask for your help in gathering information for the fourth report. In the future we will incorporate the data call for the Disability Reports into the Agency's Annual Report application. For the 2005 report, however, I would appreciate your cooperation in describing the successes and challenges faced by your mission/unit in implementing the disability policy, as measured by the following indicators. Your answers should focus on activities and accomplishments in 2003-2004.

Indicator 1: People with disabilities (PWDs) included in programs or initiatives funded by USAID.

While some activities may have PWDs as their primary focus, USAID's ultimate objective is to ensure that development and humanitarian programs across all sectors consider the needs and concerns of PWDs and include PWDs in planning, implementation, and evaluation. Please briefly describe program activities that have included PWDs, categorizing them by Mission strategic objective.

Indicator 2: Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) have increased capacity to provide assistance to PWDs and to advocate successfully for the rights of PWDs.

For PWDs to become integrated into their communities and societies, PWDs themselves must demand change and have the capacity to see it through. At the same time, public education and policy/legal reform can create an environment that is more conducive to the integration of PWDs. Please identify any activities funded or organized by your mission/office that have supported the capacity-building of indigenous DPOs, provided organizational or advocacy skills to DPOs and/or affected

policy change/legal reform for people with disabilities.

Indicator 3: PWDs have access to, and are included in, the staff and activities of each USAID mission/office.

Please describe the ways in which your mission/office has removed barriers to the participation of PWDs in its work and how PWDs have been included in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of USAID-supported programs. This may include construction or rehabilitation of facilities to ensure universal accessibility, recruitment and hiring of PWDs, training for staff on disability issues, involvement of DPOs in developing program strategies and reviewing proposals, or other similar initiatives.

Indicator 4: USAID missions/offices implement activities in accordance with their own disability plans of action.

If your mission/office has developed a disability plan of action (a recommendation of the first report on the Disability Policy), please identify successes and/or challenges to its implementation.

Please email your responses to Lloyd Feinberg, lfeinberg@usaid.gov, by April 25, 2005.

Thank you very much for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

[Assistant Administrator]

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS OF MISSION AND OFFICE RESPONSES TO INQUIRY ON DISABILITY POLICY

The following summaries (organized by region) represent only a portion of the information provided by each mission or office. Please visit www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability to view an unabridged version of the mission and office responses.

AFRICA

ERITREA

USAID/Eritrea funded a 3-year program through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to build the capacity of the National Commission for the Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (NCDRP) to demobilize and reintegrate up to 200,000 soldiers. The main objective of this activity was to facilitate the efficient implementation and management of NCDRP's social and economic reintegration interventions through strategic planning, operational advice, and capacity-building of staff members and implementing partners. As a result of this assistance, the NCDRP will be well prepared to provide skills training and services to demobilized soldiers.

Included in the population of soldiers being demobilized were a significant number of people with disabilities. In 2004, for example, 85,000 soldiers were demobilized, 38 percent (32,400) of whom were identified as having a war-related disability (including 48 percent of all 57,000 males and 18

percent of all 28,000 females who had been demobilized).

GHANA

Under its Basic Education Strategic Objective, USAID/Ghana supports the Special Education Needs program, which assists the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ghana Education Service to develop and implement special education needs policies and programs that foster an inclusive educational environment in the public school system. Under its Democracy and Governance Strategic Objective (DGSO), USAID funded a program to allow people with visual impairments to participate fully and unassisted for the first time in the December 2004 national elections. Through the Tactile Balloting effort, a new ballot was designed and 18,000 visually impaired people were trained to use it without assistance.

USAID also sponsored Eric MacDawutey, a Ghanaian with a disability, to participate in the 2004 International Conference on the Disabled. Since then, the mission has been talking with Eric about ways to support people with disabilities, particularly youth. Eric has made an appeal to the organizers of the annual international conference on the disabled to hold the event in Accra next year.

Additionally, under DGSO, the DGSO team is assisting the parliament with planning for rapid movement of a new

disabilities bill through that body. This effort is ongoing.

USAID/Ghana has a couple of people with disabilities on staff, and the mission is examining ways to make the existing office building more accessible until the mission moves to the new embassy compound, which will not take place until 2007 or 2008.

GUINEA

(Note: Information is based on a brief memo rather than on a response to the inquiry.)

In April 2005, with support from USAID, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) launched a civic education campaign in partnership with 10 Guinean civil society organizations. The initiative targets persons with disabilities, as well as associations of people living with HIV/AIDS. The IFES training module includes units on citizenship, nationality, and equal participation.

KENYA

USAID/Kenya maintains a policy of mainstreaming people with disabilities within its existing portfolio of programs. However, USAID also supported a process initiated by the government of Kenya to develop a national disability plan of action by co-funding a national disability conference. The conference had four main objectives: (a) to take stock

of achievements in the disability field, (b) to review the Kenyan government's position and commitment toward the African Decade of Persons with Disability, (c) to develop an action plan and a monitoring system for tracking progress on disability issues, and (d) to map out an implementation strategy in relation to the new Kenyan constitution and disability bill. The conference participants included persons with disabilities, disabled people's organizations, civil society representatives, development partners, and government officials. USAID/Kenya funded more than 50 percent of the costs associated with this process and covered the costs of publishing the action plan that was distributed throughout the country.

USAID/Kenya also sponsored Caroline Agwanda, a Kenyan with a disability, so she could attend the Disabled Peoples' International World Summit in 2004 in Canada. Upon returning to Kenya, Ms. Agwanda shared knowledge gained from the summit with other disabled persons in Kenya.

MALI

As part of its Communications for Development Special Objective, USAID/Mali has been working with radio stations throughout the country to ensure development messages for the visually impaired. Under the banner of its work on democratic governance, USAID/Mali is developing messages for women with disabilities who are in rural areas. The messages will be used on radio and by implementing organizations in Mali. USAID/Mali is also integrating the concerns of persons with disabilities into its education program. The 1,700 community schools supported by USAID in Mali will increase access by 14 percent of children with (and without) disabilities. Building and continuing to support community-based schools helps reduce

the distances traveled by children with disabilities, thereby allowing them to attend school.

A particularly exciting development in Mali involved the Trickle Up Program, which has been participating in an innovative USAID-funded program implemented by Mobility International USA (MIUSA). (See Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade and Women in Development (EGAT/WID elsewhere). With assistance from MIUSA, Trickle Up set goals for increasing inclusion of people with disabilities within its programs. In Mali, Trickle Up's focused attention on disability issues started to bear fruit very quickly. Within 6 months of Trickle Up's participation in a workshop on inclusion, the number of entrepreneurs with disabilities involved in Trickle Up's micro-enterprise program had more than doubled (from 1.62 to 4.36 percent). Local partners who had not previously included people with disabilities in their micro-enterprise programs began providing business start-up services to people with disabilities. Some local civil society organizations took the initiative to learn about people with disabilities in their areas of work and to understand the people with disabilities' needs and the services that were available to those people. They also reached out to disabled people's organizations and established partnerships and dialogue, not only on disability issues but also on a broader range of development issues.

NAMIBIA

Under its second strategic objective, "Improved delivery of quality primary education to Namibian learners in the most disadvantaged schools," USAID/Namibia provided a small grant to the International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH) to develop a Namibian sign language book for beginners. IFESH partnered with the Eluwa

Special School in Ongwediva, which hired a 21-year-old deaf man and graduate of Eluwa to draw the many signs for the book. The Namibian sign language book will be placed on the National Institute for Educational Development's Web page to be used by teachers and teacher educators.

Also under the banner of its education Strategic Objectives (SO), USAID/Namibia provided a used vehicle and funding to the Namibian chapter of Special Olympics so that it could provide sports training and competition for children and adults with learning disabilities, thus enabling them to participate and compete in national, regional, and international Special Olympics events in 2003. As a result of the increased capacity, Special Olympics Namibia also hosted a regional Special Olympics soccer event and continues to conduct training and coaching events in the Namibian regions.

USAID/Namibia's fourth SO is to increase the accountability of parliament to all Namibian citizens. As part of this effort, USAID/Namibia supported a project launched by the electoral commission of Namibia, the Namibia Institute for Democracy, the office of the prime minister, and the Federation for the Visually Impaired. The project aimed to enable people with visual impairments to participate in the November 2004 elections. As part of this initiative, the Service Center for the Visually Impaired produced a comprehensive range of civic and voter education materials in Braille using a printer donated by the Embassy of the United States and then distributed the material to Disability Resource Centers and schools for the visually impaired.

REDSO/OMEGA

In 2002, the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) and the Regional Economic

Development Services Office (REDSO) launched a joint initiative called the Omega Initiative, which works to bring about the end of social and economic exclusion of people with disabilities in Africa. Omega's key goal is to channel targeted resources in support of the implementation, extension and strengthening of existing or proposed rehabilitation services for civilian victims of war and other people with disabilities in Africa. The key partner of REDSO and Economic and Social Affairs's (ESA) in the Omega Initiative is Pact, which manages the umbrella grant program.

Omega has funded a wide range of international and national organizations and projects in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Omega has provided significant funding to traditional physical rehabilitation programs, thereby supporting the capacity-building of local and national rehabilitation centers.

At the same time, Omega has aided programs that take a broader view toward rehabilitation and reintegration by sponsoring institutional capacity-building for disabled people's organizations, by improving access to sports, by funding increased distribution of mobility aids, and by ensuring the availability of emotional and psychological support to survivors of trauma. Omega has also supported micro-credit and economic reintegration, advocacy, and legal aid programs serving people with disabilities.

The interim USAID office complex in Nairobi, which houses REDSO and ESA, USAID/Kenya, and the Africa Regional Office of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, is largely accessible for people with mobility disabilities. An access ramp goes from the parking lot into the building, plus an elevator. Approximately half of the restrooms in

the building are accessible for people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. REDSO and ESA expect to move into a new USAID building in 2006 that should be fully accessible for people with physical disabilities because the design process has given careful attention to accessibility issues. REDSO and ESA form a center for regional and continent-wide training and support; therefore, an accessible office complex is of prime importance to USAID staff members and partners.

REDSO and ESA have no current disability plan for their regional program or the limited-presence country programs that they manage (i.e., Burundi, Central African Republic, Somalia). However, a working group—composed of the disability officer (the REDSO deputy director), the representatives from each strategic objective team, the limited-presence country office, and the USAID/Kenya executive office—will develop a plan by March 2006.

RWANDA

USAID/Rwanda has a well-developed Partners' Handbook, which is given to all new USAID implementing partners. The handbook includes useful information on registering partners with the local government, taxation, customs, and so forth. In 2005, USAID/Rwanda added an introductory section to the handbook, thus informing all partners of USAID's policy with regard to people with disabilities and asking them to abide by the policy's guidance and spirit. In this way, the mission has institutionalized its commitment to USAID's policy and adoption of the policy by partners.

USAID/Rwanda also supports an extensive range of programs and services benefiting the people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), who are also those

considered persons with disabilities. The programs support everything from community-based care and improved therapy at health facilities to media, awareness-raising, and community-mobilization activities to reduce stigmatization of and discrimination against PLWHAs.

USAID/Rwanda, through the Communities Responding to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Initiative, also provided support for PLWHA associations and strengthened community-based support for PLWHA and stigma reduction. With support from USAID, Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care helped build the capacity of Rwandan organizations representing PLWHA. Likewise, the USAID-funded Call to Action Project strengthened local organizations and promoted community engagement for ensuring the improved access to and quality of services for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV infections.

For locally employed staff members, USAID/Rwanda has an active HIV/AIDS workplace policy, which specifically prohibits HIV/AIDS testing as a pre-employment measure. It also allows for exceptions to locally prevailing compensation practices to expand medical coverage to include more HIV/AIDS related expenses. In addition, the mission has a draft mission order, which is currently in circulation for final approval, on USAID/Rwanda's disability policy that specifically prohibits discrimination based on disabilities within the workplace and in hiring practices.

Representatives of disabled people's organizations are included in planning sessions for HIV/AIDS activities and in their implementation. The effectiveness of programs for people living with HIV/AIDS is an integral part of evaluation of HIV/AIDS programs, and PLWHA

associations are included in evaluation efforts. The mission's budget (whether OE or program funds) does not permit significant renovations to accommodate persons with disabilities. Even with that very significant constraint, when USAID/Rwanda renovated its newly acquired building, all facilities were included on one floor, with no steps, thus enhancing accessibility. USAID/Rwanda has an open hiring process and has several people with disabilities on its staff.

SENEGAL

USAID/Senegal states that its general approach is to integrate people with disabilities into its development programs where staff members think they are best served. However, USAID/Senegal also recognizes that special efforts are sometimes necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are participating in their development activities. Thus, the mission works through disability partners, as appropriate, to deliver development assistance to this group.

Under the Casamance conflict resolution program, USAID/Senegal works through Handicap International and Catholic Relief Services to facilitate social and economic insertion of people with disabilities and to build capacity of local organizations targeting them. Among the activities included in this work are rehabilitation of physical infrastructure to improve accessibility, to support the physical rehabilitation for people with disabilities, to assist in reconstruction of housing for people with disabilities, and to help in integrating children with disabilities into schools.

As part of its Strategic Objective focused on creating sustainable increases in private sector income-generating activities, USAID/Senegal seeks to involve persons with disabilities in training and lending schemes. Some associations of people

with disabilities receive training in silk screening and managerial techniques. A dozen disabled aspiring entrepreneurs have also received training and assistance in setting up their own businesses, such as cyber-cafes.

Under its basic education Strategic Objective, USAID/Senegal has developed PWD-sensitive plans and approaches in constructing middle schools using designs that consider the needs of disabled children. Also, children with disabilities and children of disabled parents are given priority for receiving scholarships provided by USAID. Of the beneficiaries, 5 percent fall into that category.

USAID/Senegal also helps to prevent future disabilities through work done under its health SO by supporting programs that aim to improve nutrition and antenatal care, to prevent and treat tuberculosis, and to eradicate polio.

SOUTH AFRICA

As part of its work on HIV/AIDS and health, in October 2003 USAID/South Africa (SA)—through the POLICY project and in partnership with the National Department of Health—provided technical assistance and facilitation at the National Workshop on HIV/AIDS and the Disability Sector. USAID/SA subsequently provided technical assistance in developing a report from the workshop held on the disability sector, again through the POLICY project. The report was shared widely with South African government agencies and various NGOs working with people with disabilities for use as a training tool.

USAID/SA has also worked to include people with disabilities in its economic growth initiatives. The new South African Department of Trade and Industry headquarters, which was built with USAID/SA assistance as a public-private

partnership, ensures access to disabled staff members and public citizens using the building. Also, a USAID/SA-funded biotechnology research group is using people with disabilities in the planting of *selectium tortuosum*, a natural medicinal plant, at one of their field trial sites in Calvinia, which is located in an arid province in South Africa. An NGO known as the Thabo Mbeki Trust for the Disabled is working to strengthen the capacity of people with disabilities in this community. Furthermore, 22 percent of the mission-funded small and medium enterprise (SME) development program targets clients with disabilities. The program is designed to assist and grow SMEs owned or partially owned by target groups that are designated as historically disadvantaged, such as black individuals, women, and persons with disabilities.

Under the banner of its local government services Strategic Objective, USAID/SA supported Isandla Partners in Development in the Eastern Cape Province, which helped a municipality draft a policy on providing low-cost housing to persons with disabilities. This policy includes technical housing specifications to use when supplying a house to people with disabilities, and it requires a 10 percent allocation of all new low-cost housing to people with disabilities within the municipality. This achievement may influence policy in other South African provinces.

As part of a USAID-funded, capacity-building initiative implemented by Pact, 6 out of 45 community-based organizations (CBOs) focus on the needs of the disabled, including those with mental disabilities. The overall objective of the Pact grant program is to strengthen those CBOs so that they can participate effectively with their local councils in joint planning and problem solving for improved service delivery. The CBOs are also trained in effective organiza-

tional management, leadership, and fundraising skills to enable them to get government grants. Apart from providing skills development training for people with disabilities, the six CBOs also advocate for the PWD's human rights (e.g., accessible local government buildings).

The USAID-funded U.S. Ambassador's Small Grants Initiative in Lesotho supported the POLICY project in conducting a three-day training session for Lesotho National Federation of Organizations of the Disabled on enhancing HIV/AIDS advocacy skills for development NGOs. As a result of the workshop, participants gained advocacy skills and have an opportunity to work on their own advocacy campaigns.

Internally, USAID/SA's staff selection procedures and facilities provide for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. USAID/SA reviews its programs twice a year, and programs for people with disabilities are noted and reported. Also, USAID/SA's Web site is PWD-friendly.

USAID/SA is in the process of preparing a disability plan of action, but disability is already treated as a crosscutting theme in all relevant procedures and activities. In the future, USAID/SA will require that all outgoing solicitation documents include a description of the extent to which applicants plan to address the special conditions of disadvantaged groups, and it considers factors such as disability in proposed activities.

TANZANIA

During FY2005, USAID/Tanzania's Democracy and Governance Program supported two organizations of people with disabilities. USAID's implementing partners built the capacity of two organizations for the disabled, Dis-

abled Organization for Legal Affairs and Social Economic Development (DOLASED) and SHIVYAWA, to manage their institutions and to carry out advocacy work. Both organizations have been extremely active and have lobbied the parliament and various committees on various amendments to disability and education legislation that affect people with disabilities. DOLASED also received a grant to help with its campaign. Although the amendments have yet to pass, the process is now participatory, and the views of those organizations are being taken into consideration.

USAID also funds the Mradi wa Kundeza Elinu Zanzibar (MKEZA) initiative in Zanzibar, which promotes inclusive education and sponsors public forums to increase awareness of the educational needs and rights of children with disabilities. As a result of those workshops, teachers and community members have returned home and have begun finding ways to ensure that disabled children in their communities are able to attend school.

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAM

The West Africa Regional Program (WARP) works primarily with regional intergovernmental organizations to address issues and challenges to the development of West Africa at a macro level. Because WARP believes that disability issues are best dealt with at the bilateral level, rather than the regional level on which WARP works, the strategic objectives of this office do not systematically address the concerns and needs of people with disabilities. For similar reasons, WARP is not involved in the capacity-building of DPOs, does not include people with disabilities in its planning and evaluation, and has not developed a disability plan.

However, under one of WARP's strategic objectives, which aims to improve the enabling conditions for peace and stability in West Africa, USAID implements two projects that happen to have beneficiaries who are victims of torture and war, some of whom are physically disabled. The projects are located in the north of Sierra Leone and in the Casamance border region of Senegal and Guinea Bissau. Neither of the projects specifically targets or tracks people with disabilities.

The Sierra Leone initiative provides trauma counseling services to victims (male and female) of the subregional war that engulfed Sierra Leone and Liberia; reintegration of those counseled into community life through referral to other community, district, and national services; and sensitization of gender-based violence. The project in the Casamance region aims to build peace by providing alternatives to mercenary activity for youth through the establishment of small businesses; by engaging community members, both residents, internally displaced people, and refugees in community development and income-generating activities; and by engaging in cross-border peace building activities.

According to the WARP response, no barriers to the recruitment of people with disabilities exist in this office, but the report also acknowledges that the current building would have to be modified to be accessible if employees who are disabled were hired. The response also notes that the lack of suitable services and facilities in Accra may be a disincentive for people who have children with disabilities from applying for a job with WARP.

ZAMBIA

USAID/Zambia considers all of its programs to be disability-related, in that they are working in support of people living with HIV/AIDS. The mission

also notes that most Zambians live in rural areas where multi-story dwellings are uncommon. As a result, the Zambia report concludes that people with disabilities in Zambia face fewer barriers than people with disabilities in more urbanized countries and that the need for a comprehensive plan to assist people with non-HIV/AIDS disabilities is a low priority compared to the assistance that USAID/Zambia is providing to mitigate the problems that people face as a result of HIV/AIDS.

The USAID/Zambia office is on one level and is equipped with ramps. A new multi-story annex will include an elevator.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

AFGHANISTAN

(Note: This response is based on a Report to Congress titled Disability Access and Inclusion in USAID Programs, Projects, and Activities in Afghanistan in FY2004.)

USAID-supported programs in democracy and governance, health, and education have had the most notable effect on disabled Afghans, although programs across all sectors are benefiting people with disabilities. As part of its democracy and governance work, USAID, its implementing partners, and the Joint Electoral Management Body—the principle organization responsible for the conduct of the 2004 presidential election—worked hard to ensure that persons with disabilities could vote. Numerous steps were taken to remove barriers to participation and to educate and encourage disabled voters to take part in the process.

USAID also supported institutional and policy reform, sponsoring the first meet-

ing of representatives of disabled people's organizations in Afghanistan and backing those groups in their call for the reactivation of the National Disability Commission. USAID has also provided significant support to an Afghan government initiative called the National Vulnerability Program, which focuses on the needs of people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. In addition, USAID provided support and training to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Martyrs and the Disabled. USAID assisted the Commission on Laws for the Disabled, which completed a survey of existing disability-related legislation. This survey will form the basis for future legal reforms affecting people with disabilities.

USAID funding enabled three disabled Afghans to participate in a 3-week journalism training program for the InterNews Agency. USAID has also provided funding that is for a radio program for and about people with disabilities, is broadcast twice monthly, and has an estimated nationwide audience of about one million people. A survey on attitudes toward people with disabilities, the first of its kind in Afghanistan, will form the basis for a communications strategy on disability in Afghanistan.

In the health sector, USAID's principle program has been the program titled Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-based Healthcare (REACH). This initiative has allowed 3.5 million Afghans, including people with disabilities, to obtain basic and primary health services. Among the other benefits of this program is the reduction of birth defects and disabilities resulting from preventable or treatable diseases.

USAID/Afghanistan's education programs have directly benefited children with disabilities. USAID has supported special education classrooms that serve

128 children. USAID also supports two community centers for people with disabilities in Kabul. All schools and clinics built with USAID funding are accessible. Furthermore, USAID support enabled four people with disabilities to receive leadership training in Japan and helped Afghan physical therapists, who work with people with disabilities, to upgrade their professional skills.

BANGLADESH

Under its health and population Strategic Objective (SO), USAID/Bangladesh provides a subgrant to a local NGO that helps support people living with HIV/AIDS. As part of its work on food security and disaster assistance, USAID targets the most vulnerable members of Bangladeshi society, including people with disabilities. As part of this program, USAID also provides accessible latrines.

Under its education Strategic Objective, USAID/Bangladesh supported a preschool and primary school education activity implemented by Plan International, which partnered with Helen Keller International in FY2003 and FY2004 to improve primary school accessibility for disabled children using "school buddies" and other low tech or no cost approaches. Additionally, to complete the analytical underpinnings for this new SO, a study titled "Assessment of Educational Needs of Disabled Children in Bangladesh" was funded in FY2004 and was conducted by Creative Associates in early 2005. The results of the study will further inform program design for all USAID preschool and primary education activities. The study was shared with other donors who were working in the education sector in Bangladesh to improve needs awareness.

USAID also provides funding to "Simpur" (Bangladesh's Sesame Street),

which has featured children with disabilities to raise awareness and visibility. Planning is under way for a corresponding outreach program and curriculum materials that will specifically target children with disabilities.

The USAID/Bangladesh program office maintains a strong relationship with an important local disabled people's organization (DPO) involved nationally in both services and advocacy. This relationship has been mutually beneficial. For USAID (and now the U.S. mission), the DPO has played an important advisory role on matters pertaining to employment accessibility. The DPO serves as a conduit for information about position vacancies. A recent follow-up meeting helped to identify the reasons that people with disabilities were not gaining access despite the information provided and potential remedies. As a kind of informal staff training, the DPO provides periodic speakers who discuss subjects related to disability in Bangladesh and who help inform (and remind) USAID staff members about ways to improve and adapt USAID programming and activities to improve access and inclusion.

CAMBODIA

USAID/Cambodia, together with the LWVF, provides significant support for rehabilitation services and training. In addition to its regular support for clinics run by the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAf, known in Cambodia as Veterans International [VI]), the prosthetics training school operated by the Cambodian Trust in Phnom Penh, and the Disability Action Council, the organization responsible for coordination of all disability activities in the country, USAID has recently begun to support two new initiatives. First, USAID is overseeing the creation of a congressionally authorized endowment

that will ensure the continued functioning of the VVAf/VI program over the coming years as it works toward financial sustainability. Also, a new basic education program implemented by World Education includes as one of its primary areas of focus an initiative aimed at ensuring access to education for people with disabilities.

EGYPT

Under its economic growth Strategic Objective (SO), USAID/Egypt provided support to the audiology unit at Ain Shams University (one of Egypt's most important universities) to develop an Arabic multimedia software package, which will be used to help children with central auditory processing disorder. As part of the mission's Small and Micro-Enterprise Program, a partner micro-finance institution called the Assiut Business Association provided rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. Some of those people with disabilities also received assistance in setting up successful income-generating schemes.

USAID funded the clean-up of lead contamination in the heavily polluted area of Shoubra El Kheima. This effort is expected to reduce the incidence of lead-related illnesses and disabilities. Disability prevention is also the focus of the polio eradication project carried out by the Egyptian government with the support of USAID as part of its "healthier planned families" strategic objective. To date, more than 11 million children—99 percent of those targeted—have been immunized, and no new cases had been reported as of spring 2005.

As part of its SO that focuses on improving access to quality education, USAID supports Alam Simsim, Egyptian Sesame Street, which celebrates diversity and teaches acceptance of people with disabilities.

USAID/Egypt's SO 21 calls for strengthening Egyptian initiatives in governance and participation. Under this SO, USAID has supported the NGO Service Project, which works to build the capacity of local NGOs. The project has funded 14 NGO-led initiatives for people with disabilities, with a total value of \$605,058, representing 7.5 percent of the total grants funded. Approximately 95 percent of those funds were programmed in 2003–04. Activities included advocacy campaigns (a) raising awareness regarding needs of people with disabilities, (b) creating employment for people with disabilities, (c) advocating to broaden the concept of disabilities and to apply existing laws related to people with disabilities, (d) advocating for the health and social rights of people with disabilities, and (e) building capacity of groups dealing with issues of people with disabilities. USAID also provided small grants to local NGOs to train and support people with disabilities and to build local capacity as part of its "Self-Help Program."

The USAID office in Egypt is built in accordance with U.S. standards for universal accessibility. USAID has several American and Egyptian staff members who have disabilities, and it has been careful to provide accommodations where needed. USAID/Egypt incorporates the new policy language supporting USAID's disability policy in all solicitations and the resulting awards for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.

INDIA

Under its strategic objective aimed at improving health and reducing fertility in targeted areas of India, USAID funds programs that focus on polio eradication, micro-nutrient vitamin A, child survival, HIV/AIDS, and infectious diseases, thereby both directly and indirectly working toward preventing disabilities.

Under the Public Law 480 Title II program, the USAID/India mission supports the humanitarian assistance activities of Catholic Relief Services, which aids the poorest of the poor—people living with HIV/AIDS, children affected by AIDS, leprosy patients undergoing rehabilitation, physically and mentally disabled, and people who would otherwise be unable to access humanitarian support from the government or other donors.

As part of its program's development and learning SO, USAID/India sponsored the participation of six Indians, including one disabled person, in the 8th International Congress on Including Children with Disabilities in the Community (held in Stavanger, Norway, in June 2004). In FY2003, USAID/India provided financial support to a physically challenged woman to visit Eugene, Oregon, to participate in Mobility International's Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability.

The mission is collocated with the Department of State on the embassy compound and is fully accessible, not only to people in wheelchairs, but also to people with visual impairments. USAID offices and public areas are equipped with signs marked in Braille, and the wide and unobstructed hallways are maintained to accommodate people with disabilities.

USAID/India's disability plan includes the objective of ensuring that the mission's employment opportunities are open to people with disabilities. The mission accordingly considers hiring of persons with disabilities, where appropriate. In 2004, one Foreign Service National person with a disability was hired.

INDONESIA

USAID/Indonesia's office of procurement has been including the new re-

quired provision on disability in all new modified contracts and grants. The mission also discusses this provision as part of the post-award briefing with contractors and grantees.

Through a grant to the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information, USAID/Indonesia provided support to a local organization in Yogyakarta called CIQAL (Center for Improving Qualified Activity in Life of People with Disabilities) to conduct voter education. As part of this effort, CIQAL disseminated a manual explaining how to vote and leaflets about the rights of people with disabilities to vote and participate in politics. CIQAL also conducted a simulated election in collaboration with provincial and regional assemblies at the provincial level, thus introducing an accessible voting booth design, a template for the blind, and small cards that would identify people's disabilities for the election commission. USAID support also helped a local organization to produce a voter guide for people with visual impairments.

USAID/Indonesia has an ongoing cooperative agreement with Helen Keller International, funded with Asia and the Near East USAID Regional Business Bureau "disabilities" resources, aimed at improving access to inclusive public education for blind and visually impaired children.

Through a cooperative agreement with Consortium for Elections and Political Process, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems provided technical assistance to a national disability group to advocate for the political rights of DPOs. The group promoted easy access for the disabled in the voting booth, the adoption of a template for the visually impaired, and a guarantee of secrecy in voting for people with disabilities (particularly the blind).

JORDAN

Some disabled Jordanians benefit from USAID's microfinance and business development services programs. For example, a woman with a hearing impairment in Wadi Mousa, a town near Petra, obtained a microfinance loan to start a handicrafts business. Another woman received training and technical assistance from USAID/Jordan's Women's Access to Entrepreneurship Development and Training program to help her improve her special education center for people with speech difficulties.

USAID/Jordan's work in the health sector is aimed at renovating all public health care centers throughout Jordan and at improving all primary health care services. This work includes preventing disabilities and dealing with them within the capacity of primary health care services. The majority of renovated centers are wheelchair accessible.

USAID/Jordan has a policy requiring all offices to support the disability policy and to integrate, whenever possible, opportunities for advancing the Agency's disability concerns. In general, however, disability issues have not been viewed as major impediments to social and economic development in Jordan. Therefore, substantial support has not been provided in this regard. The Jordanian government has already made strides to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. Schools, public transport and walkways, and training facilities have been rehabilitated to make them fully accessible to people with disabilities. Sports olympics for people with disabilities are held every year. Nonetheless, USAID/Jordan recognizes that more work is needed toward further developing and implementing policies that call for improved accessibility and integration of people with disabilities into society. In addition, in view of the prevailing "shame culture" among families of the disabled, USAID

sees the need for a program that promotes cultural and behavioral change.

LAOS

In 2004, the medical component of the War Victims Assistance Project implemented by Consortium came to an end after 9 years, and responsibility for its activities was handed over to the ministry of health. The initiative provided medical treatment and assistance with social reintegration to survivors of unexploded ordnance and it ultimately benefited other patients by improving the facilities and quality of medical services available in the targeted provinces.

Progress by USAID's implementing partners on other disability-related activities has been slowed by challenges encountered during the process of getting necessary government authorizations. This problem has particularly affected a planned Catholic Relief Services project that will promote inclusive education. Handicap International–Belgium has also had to hold off on some of its plans, but it has, nonetheless, been able to conduct a nationwide baseline study on community-based rehabilitation. It has also begun laying the foundation for a community-based rehabilitation network by identifying workers and supervisors, conducting initial training, making contact with village leaders, and preparing for the set-up of CBR resource rooms.

MONGOLIA

Of its two strategic objectives, the first focuses on private sector-led economic growth. Under it, USAID/Mongolia has two business development support projects. Both provide assistance to client businesses that hire persons with physical disabilities. USAID/Mongolia has not undertaken any activities that directly support DPOs.

USAID/Mongolia is co-located with the U.S. embassy in Mongolia and using joint funds has worked to improve accessibility by building ramps to improve wheelchair access. Additional accessibility measures are under consideration as part of planning for 2008 reconstruction of the compound.

MOROCCO

USAID/Morocco reports that people with disabilities and DPOs have not been included in any programs or initiatives funded by USAID. USAID/Morocco does not currently have any staff members with disabilities, but the report notes that adjustments would be made in the event that a person with a disability should apply for work and be hired by USAID.

NEPAL

USAID/Nepal has \$700,000 from the LWVF that it intends to use to assist people disabled by conflict. However, the mission has thus far been unable to award the funds to an appropriate organization or project. Thus, the annual program statement remains open and the mission hopes to program those funds as soon as possible.

Although existing mission activities do not target people with disabilities or disabled people's organizations, people with disabilities are included across all USAID/Nepal programs as members of beneficiary communities (e.g., as members of community forest user groups or recipients of twice-yearly vitamin A distribution campaigns).

PHILIPPINES

Under the Strategic Objective titled "Conflict Resolution in Mindanao and Other Areas," USAID (with money from the LWVF) awarded Handicap

International a 4-year grant in June 2004 for the Wheelchairs for Mindanao (Wheelchairs) project.

The Wheelchairs project provides for the first customized wheelchair production facility in Mindanao and the establishment of distribution and maintenance centers in strategic locations throughout Mindanao. The grant provides technical assistance for developing local capacities for service provision to facilitate the integration of people with disabilities in the socioeconomic life of their communities. Wheelchair production, distribution, maintenance, training, and other support facilities will be developed in partnership with five local organizations. USAID funds provide for the initial working capital requirements of the wheelchair production and distribution facilities, technical assistance, public advocacy, and information dissemination.

The Special Tertiary Education Program (STEP) for People with Disabilities project is a 1-year grant to the Living Witness of Hope Foundation of Western Mindanao State University, a program that started in June 2004. The STEP for people with disabilities program provides opportunities to qualified students with disabilities to pursue higher educational training and to acquire professional competence beyond limited vocational and technical training. The program is an educational initiative that adopts the concept of inclusive (mainstream) education where special learners are not always segregated from other learners and where maximum inclusion is facilitated with full consideration of special learning needs.

Under its education Strategic Objective, USAID/Philippines has been funding the Kapit-Tinig (Reach for Your Voice) program implemented by the Link Center for the Deaf. This 3-year program,

which started in October 2002, builds partnerships among public and private schools to develop academic and support services for deaf students in public schools.

USAID/Philippines reports that the government of the Philippines is fully committed to addressing the issues and concerns of people with disabilities. It has a National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP) <http://www.ncwdp.gov.ph/>, which is mandated to formulate policies; coordinate the activities of all agencies, whether public or private, concerning disability issues and concerns; develop programs for persons with disabilities; and deliver services to this sector. The NCWDP is tasked with monitoring the implementation of several laws to ensure the protection of people with disabilities' civil and political rights. NCWDP has also been assigned to coordinate activities and to monitor the observance of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993–2002) in the Philippines. And a proclamation issued in 1993 enjoins both government and private entities to organize projects that are based on the NCWDP agenda for action for people with disabilities. To further demonstrate the government's commitment to people with disabilities, the country will host the 3rd ASEAN Para Games, a multi-sports event for people with disabilities, in December 2005.

The USAID/Philippines' offices moved to a new location in 2001 and ensured that the space was fully accessible. The mission's new Web site has also been developed to meet disability standards under Section 508 of the amended rehabilitation act.

The mission envisions no further efforts on disability assistance under the current FY2004–09 strategy because the government of the Republic of the Philip-

pines is relatively advanced in addressing disability concerns, as described above. Thus, USAID/Philippines sees no further need to fund policy-building on disability in the country. However, the mission does plan to bring the Agency's disability policy to the attention of its partners and to encourage them to seek opportunities to involve people with disabilities in their program thrust.

SRI LANKA

USAID/Sri Lanka's Strategic Objective (SO) 7 promotes improved social and economic integration of disadvantaged groups, which include people with disabilities, children affected by armed conflict and societal violence, torture survivors and their families, and those affected by and living with HIV/AIDS. One of the core initiatives under this SO is the Disability Support Program (DSP), a 5-year effort to develop and improve rehabilitative services for people with disabilities. This program is being implemented through a cooperative agreement with Motivation Charitable Trust, a UK-based international NGO.

Through the DSP, USAID has supported the capacity building of four local rehabilitation centers, all of which are now producing polypropylene prosthetics and orthotics. All of the centers have also now added physical therapy as a regular component of their rehabilitative services. Support to the centers includes upgrading their facilities, material support, and technical training and assistance. Furthermore, Motivation Charitable Trust has completed four training modules with each of the centers that enhance the capacity of the local partners to plan and manage their operations.

USAID's support has also enabled several Sri Lankans to obtain advanced international training in prosthetics, orthotics, and physical therapy in Cambo-

dia, India, and Vietnam. Some of these students have recently returned home and are applying their skills and training in the Sri Lankan centers.

USAID and Motivation Charitable Trust also began the Wheelchair Distribution Program, which has provided local manufacturers with guidance in how to design and build appropriate wheelchairs that meet international standards of quality; established a national distribution network to improve access to wheelchairs; and trained local technicians in assessment, prescription, and fitting. In addition to wheelchairs, Motivation and its partners conducted a comprehensive study to identify appropriate handpowered wheelchair designs and then designed a prototype tricycle based on the results. They also began producing a motorized tricycle for those who need it.

In addition to support for rehabilitation services, USAID and Motivation provided training to 57 people with disabilities on how to find a job. USAID also supported a job fair where employers were encouraged to meet people with disabilities. As a result of this fair, 29 people with disabilities received job offers. Furthermore, Motivation and local disability organizations drafted and worked for passage of a disability rights bill and advocated for government standards for wheelchairs.

USAID/Sri Lanka reports that it has sought the participation of people with disabilities in program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, particularly in the DSP. As a result of historical preservation laws governing the USAID office, only part of the building is wheelchair accessible.

VIETNAM

While persons with disabilities are not incorporated into its general program-

ming, USAID/Vietnam is supporting numerous programs that provide assistance to persons with disabilities, that build the capacity of disabled people's organizations, or that foster changes in policies affecting persons with disabilities.

Catholic Relief Services implements a project in partnership with the Vietnam Ministry of Education; the National Institute of Education, Strategy, and Curriculum Development; and the Center for Special Education/National Institute for Social Sciences that promotes inclusive education in preschools and primary schools and that builds awareness and support for children with disabilities at the community level.

Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO) implements a rehabilitation program in cooperation with the Vietnam Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA); the Ministry of Health (MOH); and the Vietnam Training Center for Orthopedic Technologists. This project aims to support the MOH in providing volunteer technical training on disability. HVO also helps a national organization called the Disability Forum, which serves as a hub for disability-related activities and organizations and which works to raise awareness of the concerns of people with disabilities.

The Vietnam Veterans of American Foundation (VVAf) runs a rehabilitation project in cooperation with the Vietnam MOH, the Bach Mai Hospital, the National Institute of Pediatrics, and the rehabilitation departments in Nam Dinh and Ha Giang provinces. The project is designed to expand delivery of thermoplastic orthotics to people with disabilities in Hanoi and in surrounding provinces and to improve services. The project supports two rehabilitation workshops in Hanoi and two satellite workshops in Nam Dinh and Ha Giang,

thereby providing thermoplastic braces for people with mobility impairments. The project also provides outreach services through mobile outreach trucks to patients who cannot afford to come to the national workshops. Furthermore, VVAf supports self-help groups for persons with disabilities and for parents of children with disabilities.

Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) runs a rehabilitation program and supports the development, implementation, and enforcement of national disability policy. VNAH works in cooperation with the MOLISA; the National Coordination Council on Disabilities; the Committee of Social Affairs (National Assembly); and the Ministries of Construction, Transportation, and Home Affairs.

World Concern Development Organization is implementing a vocational training and job placement project for adolescents with disabilities in cooperation with the local Department of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (DOLISA) and the Vietnam Red Cross.

Save the Children U.S., in cooperation with provincial departments of education, is implementing an integrated health and education project. Activities include training to raise community awareness on disability, training for teachers on inclusive education, parent education, disability prevention training, maternal health education, and inclusion of children with disabilities in schools in Hue and Quang Ngai provinces.

Pearl S. Buck International, in cooperation with the provincial Departments of Education, Health, and Social Affairs in Kon Tum province, is implementing a project that provides health checks and disability screening, community awareness-raising, and teacher

training on inclusive education for hearing-impaired children in a minority community in Vietnam.

In cooperation with the Vietnam Prosthetics Outreach Center and Ba Vi Orthopedic Technology Center, the Prosthetics Outreach Foundation is working to strengthen the capacity of Vietnamese partners to manufacture high-quality components for orthotic devices in Vietnam.

Finally, the Hesperian Foundation developed a handbook for families and communities of children with hearing impairments for use in Vietnam and other developing countries.

Internally, USAID brokered discussions with the U.S. embassy on creating a more accessible environment for persons with disabilities, and it provided training for staff members on equal opportunities. As a result, the embassy now posts all job postings on the Disability Forum distribution list.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

ALBANIA

Since September 2003, USAID has funded the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) to implement the project: "Support services for persons with disabilities requiring wheelchairs in Albania." The primary focus of the project is to address the need for wheelchairs, crutches, and other mobility aids. The project also provides life-skills and advocacy training to persons with disabilities and their families and caregivers, and it promotes PWD's right to employment (including by providing jobs for some persons with disabilities at the wheelchair production workshop). According to a survey and a feasibility study conducted by ADRF in 12 regional offices in Alba-

nia, around 7,000 people need mobility assistance.

ADRF has also played a leading role in advocacy, networking, and awareness-raising. This role has been crucial in efforts to change government policy, especially on issues such as creating a barrier-free environment, inclusive education, and PWD participation in the election process. ADRF also played a lead role in stimulating and coordinating the process of establishing a national disability policy, which was written and approved by the Albanian government in January 2005. Also as a result of the continuous lobbying of ADRF, the Albanian government finally created a limited fund in 2004 to enhance mobility for people with disabilities.

The USAID/Albania offices have no barriers to wheelchair access. The USAID staff has at least one member with a disability.

ARMENIA

Under its Improved Social Protection Strategic Objective, USAID/Armenia funded two key projects to support people with disabilities. First, a comprehensive renovation and reconstruction of the Kapan Psychiatric Hospital was undertaken. This mental health facility is the only one in the southern region of Armenia and has more than 75 permanent patients. The renovated hospital has improved the quality of psychiatric treatment in the Marz, thereby affording thousands of people access to a modern facility dedicated to providing high-quality mental health care for patients, their families, and the larger community.

Second, USAID/Armenia is funding a 4-year program to improve conditions within children's institutions, to support child welfare, and to protect

child rights. The participating facilities are the Vardashen Special Institution, the Nubarashen Boarding School, and the Kanakert/Zeytun Special Orphanage. The project is helping the staff in these children's institutions to identify special needs, to learn how to better care for child residents, and to work with extremely poor families at risk of abandoning children. The program is also promoting the integration of children from institutions into mainstream schools, as well as into Armenian society. The activities will be expanded to include home visits, counseling, emergency aid for extremely poor children, and income-generating activities for families at risk.

To further develop synergies in the social protection environment, USAID assisted the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to create two Integrated Social Service Centers. In addition to providing other social services, the centers assisted citizens with disabilities in obtaining the government benefits for which they were eligible.

USAID/Armenia's Cross-Cutting Initiatives also included a number of programs that benefited people with disabilities. One such program—implemented by the HAVAT Public Organization of Hard of Hearing Children's Mothers—provided training to deaf children and their parents to enable the children to enroll in public schools and to help them obtain further education or employment after high school. Another project run by the same organization promoted the socioeconomic integration of disabled children into mainstream society by providing sign language courses, computer literacy classes, and local-crafts training to hearing-impaired children.

Another USAID-sponsored project is monitoring the physical accessibil-

ity of public places in order to provide support for a draft law on accessibility. The project is also developing an action plan for implementing the law once it is passed.

As part of its strategic objective of promoting improved democratic governance, the Armenian Legislative Strengthening Program is working with Coordinating Council Constituency Groups to provide feedback to the National Assembly (parliament) on disabled citizen access issues and information dissemination.

Since August 2001, USAID/Armenia has been supporting Armenian NGOs that are working with people with disabilities through a grants program. Many recipient organizations have lobbied for laws that provide people with disabilities with equal access to employment and education, as well as to promote social integration generally.

Bridge of Hope and Armenia's Ministry of Education and Science signed an agreement on integrated education in five schools. This project was part of the broader work of NGOs through which the Republic of Armenia adopted the law titled On Social Protection of Disabled Persons. Additionally, the Lusatgh Social Benevolent Union worked with the Handicapped Issues Committee in the National Assembly. Members of the committee include 15 NGOs (5 of whom have received USAID grant support) that advocate for the disabled, as well as the speaker of the National Assembly and a National Assembly deputy. The committee has worked on legislation related to the full participation of people with disabilities in public life.

The 2004 Freedom House Index report titled "Nations in Transit" notes a positive demonstration of civil society's capacity to influence policymaking in

Armenia. The report mentions USAID/Armenia's work with World Learning to support a group of Armenian NGOs in successfully lobbying the government for the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in urban planning and construction.

The mission also supported the participation of numerous individuals in conferences, forums, and seminars around the world, including sending a head of department from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to the Vision 2005 Conference in London and the Third World Blind Women's Forum titled "Leading The Way," and the World Blind Union Sixth General Assembly in Capetown in 2004. USAID sponsored four women working on disability issues to attend the 8th International Congress on Including Children with Disabilities in the Community (held in Stavanger, Norway, in June 2004). And numerous disability-focused national NGOs participated in the 2004 NGO conference and exhibition in Yerevan, Armenia.

As USAID/Armenia prepares to move to a new embassy compound in May 2005, the new building's construction plans included accessibility for people with mobility impairments and universal accessibility. Additionally, Janet Allem visited the mission in 2003 to train staff members about disability issues. At this stage, the mission does not have a disability plan in place.

BELARUS

USAID/Belarus funded numerous organizations and programs focused on people with disabilities in 2003 and 2004. Supported projects included the creation of public clubs and self-help groups for people with disabilities, of an advocacy initiative, and of social and sports activities such as a computer club and a therapeutic horseback riding association.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

As part of its Sustainable Minority Returns strategic objective (SO), USAID/Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) put approximately \$25 million into reconstruction in Bosnia from 2003 to 2004. In all reconstruction projects that involved vertical structures, such as schools and health centers, USAID ensured access for people with disabilities. Toilets for people with disabilities were also included. In large schools, elevators for people with disabilities were also installed.

Under its cross-cutting SO, as part of USAID/BiH's Participant Training Program for FY2004, the mission funded the participation of three BiH representatives at the 8th International Congress in Stavanger, Norway.

USAID/BiH has also provided direct support to enhance the capacity of national DPOs and NGOs working on disability issues. Since 2003, USAID/BiH has been funding a local NGO—the Centers for Civic Initiatives (CCI)—to conduct a statewide public campaign titled "We Are All Equal" to assist people with disabilities by advocating for a series of legislative adjustments in accordance with the UN Charter for Disabilities.

The campaign is divided into three phases, and CCI has just entered the third and final phase of the implementation. In the first phase, in response to CCI's initiative, the state government ratified the UN Charter and consequently agreed to adjust all relevant legislation to respect equal rights and opportunities of people with disabilities. Furthermore, a coalition of all local DPOs was formed to conduct a nationwide analysis on the number and variety of disabilities existing in the country. The second phase included the creation of independent expert committees that drafted a comparative analysis

that recommended areas where change was needed, including in employment, health care and health insurance, education, social care, and registration of NGOs with disabilities. The comparative analysis became the foundation for the work of special working groups that also included members from respective state or entity ministries.

As a result, in the last phase, the Republic of Srpska National Assembly adopted the law on professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, and both houses of the BiH parliament adopted the relevant amendments to the law. In addition, working groups produced written materials suggesting further changes that are awaiting parliamentary action. Those changes include amendments to the sets of entity laws on associations and foundations and the laws on organizations for invalids; laws on employment of persons with disabilities; laws on health care and on health insurance; laws on social care; and a manual on schooling children with disabilities. The material was to be delivered to the respective ministries by the end of May 2005.

USAID/BiH's building is accessible for people with disabilities; the Web site is accessible as well. All purchase orders incorporate reference clause 52.222-36, Affirmative Action for Workers with Disabilities. Two short-term employees with disabilities worked for USAID.

CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

Under a strategic objective (SO) to increase democratic culture among citizens and target institutions, USAID/Central Asian Republics (CAR) has funded the Civil Society Support Initiative Program. Implemented by Counterpart International in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, and by the International Research and Exchanges

Board (IREX) in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the program provided leading NGOs—including organizations representing people with disabilities—with institutional grants, equipment, and training. Under the same SO and program, the Civic Advocacy Project has provided institutional capacity-building to membership-based organizations and special interest groups, including DPOs, which enable them to implement nationwide advocacy campaigns.

Under the banner of its primary health care SO, USAID/CAR supported several projects that benefited people with disabilities. Through a project implemented by the American International Health Alliance, a medical center was formed in Astana City, and activities clubs were set up for the elderly and people with disabilities. The clubs were run by volunteers.

In Kazakhstan, USAID provided assistance to several DPOs, including the Akbota League, which built a swimming pool for children with disabilities; the Association of Disabled Women; an organization called Mentally Disabled Children and Invalids, which provides treatment to improve children's coordination; and the Organization of Disabled People, which provides therapy to children with cerebral spastic paralysis.

In Kyrgyzstan, USAID supports the NGO Zhanie, which identifies existing health care needs for children with disabilities and which provides training for parents on how to best care for the children. Results include notable improvement in children's health with better sleep, improved physical conditions, and reduction of medicine.

In Turkmenistan, the NGO Lukman-Hekim provides training for teachers in the city of Ashgabat on how to properly care for children with disabilities in

public schools. The NGO also develops public awareness campaigns. Since project inception, kindergarten staff members have noted a reduction of convulsion incidents among children and a lower number of children with respiratory disease and dysentery.

In Tajikistan, the public foundation Ansory (a) improves the capacity of public health care workers to diagnose genetic pathologies at early stages and (b) works to increase public awareness of genetic pathologies and their causes, such as intermarriage, teenage pregnancy, and risky behavior.

In Uzbekistan, the NGO Opa-singillar provides training for women with disabilities.

Throughout the CAR countries, the Civic Advocacy Project and Counterpart have provided training and support to build the capacity of numerous DPOs. Capacity-building activities have included training in financial and office management, membership development, advocacy, legal and rights issues, participatory community assessment and planning, project design and management, and participatory monitoring and evaluation. USAID has also provided equipment and sponsored exchanges and travel.

USAID/CAR does not currently have a disability plan of action.

CAUCASUS

Under the strategic objective focused on increasing the use of social and health services and on changing behavior, USAID funded a wealth of activities in Georgia. Many of the projects were initiated by the Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative (GCMi). Through the GCMi effort, local NGOs worked to include children with disabilities in mainstream education and in society more

broadly. A subgrant mechanism enabled local NGOs to implement a number of social service projects for people with disabilities. Some of the groups began implementing income-generation projects (such as a poultry farm and Internet cafes) in order to make their work self-supporting and sustainable. GCMi also directly funded schools to help them improve accessibility and inclusion.

GCMi subgrantees were also actively involved in working with the government to develop a policy around disabled children's issues. Eight NGO representatives attended the 8th International Congress in Norway, along with government and UNICEF representatives.

New legislation developed through the efforts of the GCMi's social policy unit was proposed to parliament in 2003 and adopted on February 12, 2004. This new legislation will be a part of all new programming for children with disabilities in Georgia. Also, the social policy unit combined with an NGO working group to advocate for changes in the country's education law.

The Eurasia Foundation also supported several organizations implementing programs to benefit persons with disabilities. The Eurasian Foundation gave a grant to the Union of Disabled to conduct a public awareness campaign that encouraged the participation of persons with disabilities in the 2004 parliamentary elections. Another grant went to set up the Adaptive Equipment Workshop, which will produce adaptive equipment for children. The Eurasian Foundation also awarded a grant to the Child and Environment Association to promote the reform of childcare institutions in Georgia, including those that house children with disabilities.

As part of its cross-cutting programs, USAID sponsored four people to par-

ticipate in the World Bank's Disability and Inclusive Development International Conference in 2004. The USAID mission in Tbilisi also scheduled post-conference meetings in Washington with USAID/Washington and other U.S. government agencies for the Georgian participants. As a result of this event, three participants submitted a joint request for funding activities related to inclusive education and community support for children with disabilities.

In June 2004, USAID sponsored a group of seven to attend the 8th International Congress in Stavanger, Norway. The participants included disabled youth, parents of disabled children, NGOs serving disabled persons, and representatives of the ministry of health and social affairs.

The mission's executive officer/HR office recruits staff members according to the Equal Employment Opportunity requirements, but people with disabilities have not participated yet.

Although USAID/Caucasus does not have a disability plan, the mission is promoting the Agency disability policy of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities in programs funded by USAID. USAID/Caucasus programs benefit blind, deaf, wheelchair-bound, and mentally-disabled adults and children. USAID implementing partners report on support to individuals with disabilities benefiting from their activities in the larger context of their work, but not as a specific reporting requirement.

MACEDONIA

Under its strategic objective (SO) of promoting more legitimate democratic institutions, one of the projects supported by USAID/Macedonia worked to build the capacity of local NGOs that

help with marginalized groups, including NGOs working with people who have mental and physical disabilities. One USAID-supported project provided technical assistance, training, and financial support to an NGO that provides full-time care and treatment for people with intellectual disorders. The NGO set up a day care center, provided training to parents, organized lectures on diagnosis and treatment, and conducted advocacy and awareness-raising activities. That NGO is one of only five pilot programs that—under the new law on social protection—will be able to receive money from the local government to provide services. This fact means that the NGO will no longer depend exclusively on donor funds.

In 2003–04, this NGO partnered with other disabled people's organizations to organize media and advocacy activities. Their efforts brought about changes in Macedonia's labor laws affecting employment of persons with disabilities, including an increase in government subsidies for employees with disabilities and other incentives for employers to hire persons with disabilities.

RUSSIA

USAID/Russia has instituted and followed a disability action plan, resulting in greater focus on disability issues and a significant portion of the USAID/Russia portfolio being dedicated to disability concerns and programs. Under its democracy SO of creating a more open, participatory society, USAID/Russia funded the Russian Far East Civic Initiatives program. As part of this initiative, resource centers around the country have actively assisted local NGOs serving clients with disabilities to increase their institutional capacity, to provide more effective services, and to better represent the interests of the disabled at the local and regional levels.

In FY2004, the resource centers provided more than 40 local NGOs with more than \$50,000 in small grant funding to provide social services to disabled children, adults, and families. Most prevalent among the grants issued were those (a) dealing with education and vocational training; (b) educating the families; (c) increasing legal awareness; and (d) integrating disabled people in society through festivals, artistic events, and other joint activities. Noteworthy were the efforts by which local residents and people with disabilities tried to improve the communities they shared as they built common sports facilities or playgrounds or by which young people volunteered their time to provide home services; donated books, music, and toys; or built a ramp to the public library. A few grants were aimed at creating work places for people with disabilities.

Under its Legal Systems Strengthened SO, USAID/Russia has funded a program that strengthens disability NGOs' capacity to use legal advocacy to enforce and defend the human and legal rights of adults and children with disabilities so they obtain an equal education. Program activities increase the public's awareness of—and support for—those rights. Community coalitions are used to enforce laws supporting access to equal education.

In keeping with its SO of increasing use of improved health and child welfare practices, USAID/Russia has initiated and supports a \$9.61 million activity implemented by IREX in partnership with the Russian National Foundation for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Assistance to Russian Orphans (ARO) is the first large nongovernmental program and the biggest donor effort in Russia to start and build up child abandonment prevention initiatives, to promote child welfare reform, and to improve

child welfare policies. Since 1999, ARO has served more than 45,000 of Russia's most vulnerable children, including more than 20,000 children with disabilities, in the ARO priority regions of Tomsk, Khabarovsk, and Magadan, and in other regions of Russia. More than 100 grants have been awarded to support innovative services to children with severe developmental disorders such as Down syndrome, Ausher syndrome, autism, cleft palate, cerebral palsy, and serious hearing and visual impairments.

USAID/Russia has also provided support to Special Olympics, which promotes the social integration of children and adults with mental disabilities through sports and sports-related community involvement, advocacy, and public awareness programs. Special Olympics Inc. works in partnership with Special Olympics/Russia and local Special Olympics committees in eight regions.

In the area of capacity building and policy change, USAID/Russia supports a project implemented by a Russian NGO, Perspektiva, in partnership with the World Institute on Disability that works to protect the human and legal rights of people with disabilities. This project has established a network of legal advocates who work on disability rights and laws. It has supported the capacity building of Disabled Youth Activists who effectively advocate for PWD rights and inclusive education. In addition, the project has worked with local NGOs to strengthen their ability to serve as advocates on disability issues and has helped the organizations to network with one another. Furthermore, the project has organized workshops and has conducted training for community members and government representatives.

Internally, USAID/Russia has worked to ensure that its practices are consis-

tent with the disability policy and the mission's plan of action, including making its facilities—and those of its implementing partners—accessible. Since the completion of the Disability Action Plan in 2003, the mission has included a disability analysis in the design stage of program activities. Also, creation of the Disability Action Plan helped to focus the attention of the mission staff members on disability issues and to potentially include people with disabilities when implementing future projects. Consequently, the USAID/Russia mission has sought other sources of funding—including the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and the Leahy War Victims Fund—for projects in the North Caucasus.

SERBIA

Under its Strategic Objective (SO) titled Increased, Better-Informed Citizens' Participation in Political and Economic Decision-Making and under the Community Revitalization through Democratic Action Program (an initiative run by five American NGOs), USAID provided funding for 29 projects targeting people with disabilities in FY2003–04. The initiatives included barrier-free city projects; construction, equipping, or both, of day care centers for people with special needs; improved access to municipal services for hearing and visually impaired people; sponsorship of sporting events; and job-creation projects. In addition, the Serbia Local Government Reform Program is requiring that all 15 municipalities that it is assisting to develop citizens information centers ensure that those facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Community Revitalization Through Democratic Action Program co-funded 11 projects in 10 municipalities in FY2003–04 to provide material support for local NGOs advocating on

behalf of people with disabilities. Projects included purchasing office equipment needed by people with disabilities and implementing public awareness campaigns about disability issues.

USAID WEST/NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

In the Ukraine, USAID support for the Center for Ukrainian Reform Education enabled the center to produce and broadcast three programs on disability-related issues. USAID has also funded the Ukrainian Civic Action Network (UCAN), which was implemented by the Institute of Sustainable Communities and which has counted numerous organizations working on disability projects among its grantees. Examples of successful activities implemented by organizations receiving UCAN grants are a parents council that provides support to parents of children with cerebral palsy, a project that trained 45 people to sew, an innovative rehabilitation program for people with spinal cord injuries (created by a disabled sportsmen's association), an integrated summer camp, and an art gallery built on the grounds of a psychiatric institution.

Also under the UCAN program, the All-Ukrainian Coalition for People with Intellectual Disability developed and submitted to the ministry of labor a draft provision on licensing of social services for the newly adopted law on social services. The draft provision was created using the results of public discussion. The coalition also proposed some changes to the law titled "On Licensing of Some Economic Activities" and submitted the changes to the ministry of labor. Both documents (the draft provision and the proposed changes to the law) are being considered by the ministries and by the cabinet of ministers of Ukraine.

The American Bar Association worked with local partners to promote the legal rights of people with disabilities and to educate parents and the public about legal issues related to disability. The Eurasia Foundation also provided assistance to people with disabilities, particularly in mainstreaming and employment.

In Moldova, USAID has no specific activities that have persons with disabilities as their primary focus. USAID/Moldova does, however, have programs that include persons with disabilities among their beneficiaries. The Eurasia Foundation awarded a \$20,000 grant to the Moldovan NGO SOMATO to implement a project that addresses the problem of social inclusion of people with mental disabilities by mobilizing local communities. The American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Legal Initiative provides grants and training to NGOs that give pro bono legal assistance under its Traveling Lawyer and Legal Clinic activities, as part of the Rule of Law program. Disabled individuals are among the beneficiary groups of this assistance. Legal aid for disabled persons is primarily about social protection, particularly helping people to obtain their disability benefits from the government. Finally, Counterpart International also implemented a program that benefited persons with disabilities—the Communities and Humanitarian Assistance program. It provided training and material assistance to social service organizations providing support to people with disabilities.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

BRAZIL

As part of its At-Risk-Youth program, USAID/Brazil supports an effort to create opportunities for 14- to 21-year-olds

to participate fully in Brazil's economic development. This program has established a goal of ensuring that 5 percent of the projected 4,000 participants are youth with disabilities. Thus, by the end of the project, 200 youth with disabilities will have received training and employment support. As of the submission of Brazil's report, 15 persons with disabilities had taken part in the program, which was still in its early stages.

ECUADOR

USAID/Ecuador is completing a disability plan to explicitly include people with disabilities in its programs. The plan will be formally unveiled and presented internally and to partners outside USAID. Meanwhile, under the Special Development Assistance Activities program, which finances small-scale activities up to between \$5,000 and \$7,000, USAID/Ecuador has supported disabled people's organizations to create or improve projects that provide sources of income and job opportunities for people with disabilities. Those micro-enterprises increase both employment and standards of living among persons with disabilities and also help to strengthen the disabled people's organizations.

In keeping with USAID/Ecuador's strategic objective on poverty reduction, two small grants were approved to benefit persons with disabilities. The Foundation for Mentally Disabled Children received a grant of \$5,000 to equip a retail outlet to sell its bread and bakery products. The Association of Disabled Persons received \$5,000 to acquire materials to make wheelchairs and metallic furniture at its own small factory. USAID also provided \$5,000 grants to the Association of Disabled Persons in Manta/Montecristi to equip a sewing workshop and to the Association of Disabled Persons in El Jobo to establish a micro-enterprise involving peanut products.

Under the Northern Border Strategic Objective, the Association of Disabled Persons in Esmeraldas has received a grant of \$5,000 to buy 20 special wheelchairs that will be for its members and will enable them to engage in a broader range of income-generating activities. The Association of Disabled Persons in Carchi has received \$5,000 to establish a computer and document center.

USAID/Ecuador has supported capacity building of Ecuadorian DPOs and disability leaders. USAID sponsored the participation of the executive director of the Foundation of Mentally Disabled Children in the 8th International Congress on Including Children in the Community (held in Stavanger, Norway, in June 2004). USAID also supported two important seminars in Quito:

1. The Americas Regional Seminar and Workshop on Norms and Standards Related to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Development was held on April 9–11, 2003. Organized by El Programa de las Naciones Unidas (United National Development Program), the seminar provided for the exchange of information on promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and encouraged a dialogue on formulating a strategy for promoting rights-based development and capacity building.
2. The Jornadas Discapacidad y Desarrollo was held in Quito on July 22–24, 2004. This seminar aimed to increase the social consciousness on the American continent about the work of organizations of people with disabilities in the development processes.

The USAID/Ecuador mission's facility has been adapted for accessibility, and the evacuation procedures have been updated to accommodate people with

disabilities. The mission has one person with a disability on staff.

GUYANA

USAID/Guyana reports that it had no activities focusing on people with disabilities during the reporting period.

PERU

Across all strategic objectives, USAID/Peru's portfolio is focused on improving the lives of poor, marginalized people. In addition to national level programs in policy, USAID's geographic focus is in the seven regions where coca (for producing cocaine) is cultivated and poverty levels are high. All SO programs at the local level will target marginalized people in rural areas with a high percentage of indigenous peoples, women, and children. To the extent that disabled people are part of these populations, USAID provides support. For example, children with disabilities benefit from a basic education program using the active school methodology, which allows children to work with self-paced modules. Likewise, a program to improve the quality of life of citizens living along the Peru-Ecuador border benefits people with disabilities who are involved in business by supporting their small and medium businesses and by developing markets for local products.

A program to increase capacities of local governments to respond to citizen needs has supported participatory budgeting, citizen monitoring, and government oversight. As a result, people with disabilities and disabled people's organizations have greater access and voice with local government.

USAID/Peru supports health programs that contribute to preventing mental and physical disabilities. Furthermore, USAID support leads to an increased

capacity to provide local-level health interventions in remote rural health posts and communities. People with disabilities in those poor areas benefit from improved health services and increased awareness of community health issues through participatory health planning.

A solid waste program in Cusco specifically targeted hearing-impaired people to work in a waste-sorting facility. It provided livelihoods, as well as a safer, cleaner community for all citizens. A youth program, focused on preventing drug use, also includes people with disabilities.

USAID/Peru did not support capacity-building or advocacy-oriented initiatives for people with disabilities and DPOs during the reporting period. USAID/Peru is a fully accessible workplace and has a person with a disability on staff who fully participates in the activities of the office. USAID/Peru does not have a disability plan.

WASHINGTON-BASED OFFICES AND PROGRAMS

COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION OF STATES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Founded in 1985, the Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS) program is an international scholarship program administered by Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED) in Washington, D.C., and funded by USAID. CASS provides scholarships to socioeconomically disadvantaged young people from developing countries who have been identified as having strong leadership potential so that they can return home and can aid in the development of their countries.

The program offers 2-year scholarships in technical training to high school graduates and 1-year scholarships for professional training in U.S. academic institutions. Through their experience in the United States, CASS program students also learn about life, culture, and customs of the U.S. people.

Since the inception of the program, CIED has taken steps to ensure that potential leaders with disabilities are recruited for CASS scholarships. The CASS program has granted scholarships to persons with varying disabilities, including mobility impairments caused by polio and limb loss, as well as hearing and visual impairments. The most significant number of disability-related scholarships has been provided to persons who are deaf and to hearing persons wishing to become sign language interpreters.

The CASS program has provided scholarships to 129 deaf youth and sign language interpreters from Central America and the Caribbean. As of the beginning of 2005, 20 deaf CASS youth from the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico were studying computer science and business applications in the United States and are scheduled to return to their home countries in 2006.

CASS training and support has ensured that more than 95 percent of deaf CASS alumni are currently employed in their home countries. Those alumni have made many of their employers role models for other companies in integrating deaf workers into the workplace. Not only are they good employees, but also CASS deaf alumni are breaking down barriers in the workplace. They are teaching hearing co-workers sign language and are serving as role models for other deaf youth who aspire to gainful employment. Furthermore, CASS alumni are returning home to serve in

leadership roles within their communities and societies, with many of them leading their respective disability or deaf associations and speaking out for change on disability issues.

Despite the fact that most CASS deaf students do not have high school diplomas before receiving CASS scholarships, CASS deaf participants have excelled academically in the United States, achieving associate degrees in English within 2 years. Many alumni have continued their education in-country, and some have completed both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE AND WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

With ongoing support from Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade and Women in Development (EGAT/WID), Mobility International USA (MIUSA) continued implementation of a program titled *Building an Inclusive Development Community: Gender Appropriate Technical Assistance to InterAction Member Agencies on Inclusion of People with Disabilities*. The program aimed to increase participation by people with disabilities, especially women and girls, in InterAction member agencies as participants, staff members, administrators, and beneficiaries. MIUSA also sought to increase implementation of InterAction's disability standards for private voluntary organizations (PVOs) among InterAction's member agencies, particularly when including people with disabilities (especially women and girls), in organizational governance, management, and programs.

During 2003–04, MIUSA developed new and deepened collaborative partnerships, called Model Partner Organizations (MPOs), with five InterAction members. They serve as demonstration

models for (a) increasing gender-appropriate inclusion strategies; (b) designing and implementing new gender-appropriate training models; (c) providing gender-appropriate training, technical assistance, information, referral, and follow-up support; and (d) producing resource materials for InterAction member agencies. The MPOs are Mercy Corps, Trickle Up, American Friends Service Committee, Church World Service, and Holt International Children's Service.

With MIUSA's training, technical assistance, and resource materials, partner organizations implemented nine priority target strategies for inclusion of people with disabilities as defined in the disability amendments to the InterAction PVO standards. These strategies are (a) a written policy on inclusion, (b) an increased number of people with disabilities in senior decisionmaking, (c) a disability integrated into the organizational-diversity sensitization program, (d) a mechanism established to promote and monitor inclusion in programs, (e) a set of strategies for inclusion of people with disabilities into each stage of the program, (f) a collaboration on strategies with NGO partner organizations in the field, (g) a set of accessible programs and activities, (h) alternate format materials, and (i) financial planning.

The participating organizations have recorded significant successes as a result of the MIUSA-led initiative. For example, Trickle Up achieved its 2004 goal of ensuring that 10 percent of the micro-entrepreneurs it supported around the world were people with disabilities.

In addition to assisting the selected InterAction members, the activity aided USAID's efforts to implement its disability policy by producing specific tools, training curricula, and information resources and by making them

available to USAID operating units and partners.

Among many significant MIUSA activities that are worthy of note during this reporting period in 2003, MIUSA published *Building an Inclusive Development Community: A Manual on Including People with Disabilities in International Development Programs*. This manual provides practical guidance on including persons with disabilities in all aspects of development. It addresses the delivery of programs and services, development and disability issues, management practice and human resources development, and legal and policy issues. The manual contains useful information on specific disabilities, terminology, organizational resources, USAID disability policy, InterAction's PVO disability standards, and UN instruments. Of special note is its attention to gender issues, gender mainstreaming, and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities. In 2004, EGAT/WID distributed a copy of the manual to each field mission and within USAID/Washington.

MIUSA's video, *Loud, Proud, and Passionate*, which is a training tool used in a variety of settings, and a new video, *Loud, Proud, and Prosperous*, were made available with both Arabic subtitles and voiceovers. MIUSA also began work on producing versions in French and Spanish to make these unique training videos accessible to people with visual and hearing disabilities in French- and Spanish-speaking countries. The MIUSA staff is currently editing *Success Stories*, which uses the Millennium Development Goals as a framework to help organizations that have little experience with disability issues understand how including people with disabilities is relevant to their work.

Volume 3 of *Gender Advocacy in Afghanistan* includes a focus on men and

disability, people with disabilities and the Afghan government, rights of people with disabilities in the parliamentary elections, and references. The newsletter presents factual information, statistics, and references relevant to four different gender campaign issues in order to facilitate gender-based campaigns by Afghan journalists, government, and civil society organizations. The newsletter is produced by the United States Committee for the United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan under support from EGAT/WID and is distributed to more than 1,000 journalists, media training centers, associations, and institutions, as well as governments, NGOs, and UN agencies.

GLOBAL HEALTH

The USAID Bureau for Global Health provides support to programs that strive to prevent disability. When prevention efforts fail, programs are implemented that aim to improve lives of persons with a disability through effective treatment.

USAID, in partnership with UNICEF and Kiwanis, contributes to global reduction in iodine deficiency through funding support for salt iodization programs. Iodine deficiency results in the single most preventable form of mental retardation and also in stunted growth and goiters. Of the world's household salt, 70 percent is iodized, in large part as a result of USAID's commitment to country-level efforts to iodize salt.

Vitamin A deficiency is the cause of more than two-thirds of childhood blindness. USAID's leadership in vitamin A supplementation has led to establishing national programs for routine supplementation of young children and fortifying commonly consumed foods. The result has been a rapid reduction of the incidence of severe vitamin A defi-

ciency in developing countries. USAID continues to be the lead international donor for the programs, with vitamin A supplementation programs implemented in more than 30 countries worldwide.

Malaria has been shown to cause neurological problems in children and adults who have suffered from cerebral malaria, specifically. USAID's malaria programs support prevention and treatment interventions to combat malaria. Prevention efforts emphasize use of bed nets and intermittent presumptive treatment of malaria for pregnant women. Combination therapies are prescribed for treatment.

Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death and disability among women of reproductive age in developing countries. One of the most devastating is obstetric fistula, affecting an estimated 2 million women worldwide, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. USAID programs to prevent obstetric fistula focus on improving quality and access to emergency obstetric care, promoting attendance of skilled personnel at delivery, encouraging delay of first pregnancy, and enhancing advocacy to raise global awareness around this issue. USAID's fistula treatment interventions emphasize upgrading surgical centers for training in repair of fistula and quality of care for delivery.

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 support of national immunization days and through 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 peo-

ple—half the world's population—in 134 countries and territories now live in areas that are free of polio.

More than half of children suffering from childhood blindness die within 1–2 years of losing their sight, either from the primary causes of their blindness or from other deprivations associated with their blindness and care. USAID's response to this crisis is support for implementation of eye health programs in 30 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.

Delivery of care and treatment programs is one of the pillars of the president's emergency plan for HIV/AIDS, which has pledged to reach 10 million people through care and support services and two million for treatment over the next 5 years. Care and treatment programs for HIV/AIDS are an essential component of all USAID HIV/AIDS programs. Programs are meant to provide comprehensive, integrated, wraparound services, thus combining care and treatment with other services that address social, economic, nutrition and emotional needs.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES

In addition to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities indirectly as part of its overall programming in political participation and other transition areas, the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) conducted more than 40 activities during the reporting period. OTI specifically addressed the needs and rights of persons with disabilities through its grants totaling close to \$1 million. The activities were carried out

mainly in Iraq, with a small number in Venezuela and in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In Iraq, OTI's Iraq Transition Initiative (ITI) has 38 grants that benefit people with disabilities, are worth an estimated \$892,803, and reach 9,518 direct beneficiaries. A majority of direct and indirect beneficiaries are people with disabilities, and a minority of this total is staff members who run local DPOs. The disabled beneficiaries represent a diverse cross-section of the disabled population—from people with visual, hearing, and other physical disabilities to those who have challenges such as dwarfism. Some beneficiaries are victims of human threats such as the mines and chemical weapons used by Saddam Hussein. Programs have provided direct assistance through training and empowerment programs, and have raised awareness and increased chances of economic and social survival through outreach, literacy, and vocational programs. Many grants are not only top-down transfers of assistance, but also products of bottom-up participation by people with disabilities in grant design. ITI is proud to have marshaled direct engagement of people with disabilities and DPOs in conducting activities to support Iraq's peaceful transition to democracy, including but not limited to the joint USAID-Coalition Provisional Authority Civic Education campaign.

In Venezuela, OTI is collaborating with Hagamos Democracia, an organization working to strengthen democracy and human rights, to organize nine forums in nine different states (Anzoátegui, Aragua, Bolívar, Carabobo, Caracas, Lara, Miranda, Sucre, and Zulia). Those states are where candidates running for office meet with leaders of NGOs who are working on the rights of people with disabilities in order to allow the candidates to demonstrate how they will gov-

ern in a way that is inclusive and that meets the needs of people with disabilities. The objective of this grant is to increase good governance and to strengthen democracy through dialogue about how candidates will care for the most vulnerable Venezuelans.

Beyond direct assistance to people with disabilities through DPOs, OTI has also increased capacity of DPOs to address the needs of their members. In Iraq, OTI has supported a total of 30 separate DPOs throughout the country. In addition, OTI has supported DPOs in Venezuela and in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Venezuela, OTI provided \$24,986 to La Fundación del Niño Discapacitado del Estado, Anzoátegui (The Foundation of the Discapacitate Boy of the Anzoátegui State), a nonprofit organization with a mandate to address the changing needs of children with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and other physical disabilities in order to allow them to become active members of society. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, OTI gave a grant of \$2,455 to a local DPO to advocate for the passage of legislation to improve the rights of people with disabilities. The DPO organized three televised debates about a particular bill on disability rights and arranged for broader television, radio, and print media coverage of the bill and related issues.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE / THE OFFICE OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY COOPERATION—AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS ABROAD

In FY2004 Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance / The Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation—American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (DCHA/PVC-ASHA) supported more than 20 local NGO and cooperative capacity-building programs that provide

financial services to poor entrepreneurs. While the programs do not specifically target people with disabilities, many do provide services that are for disabled clients and that help raise their incomes, build their assets, and improve their lives. With DCHA/PVC-ASHA support, U.S. PVOs and cooperatives are strengthening their local partners' capability to provide services in fragile and post-conflict environments, such as Afghanistan, Burundi, and Nepal, where many micro-entrepreneurs are disabled survivors of civil conflict.

OTI also implements the Ocean Freight Reimbursement program, which allows recipients to ship a wide variety of goods overseas for use in privately funded development and humanitarian assistance programs. The program provides small competitive grants to approximately 50 U.S. PVOs each year. Funds are used to reimburse the PVOs' costs to transport donated commodities, such as medical supplies, agricultural equipment, educational supplies, disaster relief items, and building equipment to developing countries. Although no one grantee is focusing solely on helping those with disabilities, many of the grantees aid the disabled through health and medical programs, programs for the elderly, and aid to refugees and victims of natural disasters.

An example of such a grantee is Counterpart International's Community and Humanitarian Assistance Program. In 2004, Counterpart used some of its Ocean Freight Reimbursement award to fund the transportation of a wide variety of specialized wheelchairs and other walking aids, such as crutches, canes, and walkers. The PVO worked in partnership with Fundacion Vista Para Todas (FVPT), which is based in Quito, Ecuador, and Hope Haven Ministries International (HHMI), which is based in Iowa, to execute this shipment. Appropriate wheelchair parts were also

included in the donation so that any wheelchairs that might break could be fixed promptly. Although Counterpart handled the transportation logistics and expenses and was later reimbursed by USAID for the cost of the ocean freight, FVPT took responsibility for the receipt and distribution of the equipment. HHMI sent a team of technicians in November 2004 to custom-fit the wheelchairs to each individual recipient. Overall, more than 250 beneficiaries were spread throughout Quito, Santo Domingo De Los Colorados, and surrounding areas.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAPD	Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive
ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADRF	Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
AOs	agreement officers
APS	annual program statement
ARO	Assistance to Russian Orphans
ASHA	American Schools and Hospitals Abroad
CAR	Central Asian Republics
CASS	Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships
CBO	community-based organization
CBR	community-based rehabilitation
CCI	Centers for Civic Initiatives
CIED	Center for Intercultural Education and Development
CEPPS	Consortium for Elections and Political Process
CIQAL	Center for Improving Qualified Activity in Life of People with Disabilities
COs	contracting officers
CORE	Communities Responding to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic
DCHA	Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (Bureau)
DGSO	Democracy and Governance Strategic Objective
DOLASED	Disabled Organization for Legal Affairs and Social Economic Development
DOLISA	Department of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (Vietnam)
DOS	Department of State
DPO	disabled people's organizations

DPRD	provincial and regional assemblies (Indonesia)
DSP	Disability Support Program (Sri Lanka)
EGAT	Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade
ESA	Economic and Social Affairs
ESF	Economic Support Funds
FSN	Foreign Service National
FUNIDIS	La Fundación del Niño Discapacitado del Estado Anzoátegui (Venezuela)
FVPT	Fundacion Vista Para Todas (Ecuador)
HHMI	Hope Haven Ministries International
HVO	Health Volunteers Overseas
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IMPACT	Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board (Central Asian Republics)
ITI	Iraq Transition Initiative
LWVF	Leahy War Victims Fund
MIUSA	Mobility International USA
MKEZA	Mradi wa Kuendeleza Elinu Zanzibar (Improving the Quality of Learning in Zanzibar)
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (Vietnam)
MPO	Model Partner Organization
NCDRP	National Commission for the Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (Eritrea)
NCWPD	National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (Philippines)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OSDBU	Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PLWHA	people living with HIV/AIDS
PVC	The Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation
PVO	private voluntary organization
REACH	Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-based Healthcare
REDSO	Regional Economic Development Services Office

SME	small and medium enterprises
SO	Strategic Objective
STEP	Special Tertiary Education Program (Philippines)
UCAN	Ukrainian Civic Action Network
UNIFEM	The United Nations Committee for the United Development Fund for Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development (can also use "U.S.")
USAID/SA	USAID/South Africa
VI	Veterans International
VNAH	Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped
VVAF	Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation
WARP	West Africa Regional Program
WID	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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