



QUARTERLY UPDATE

December 2011

USAID/East Africa Celebrates USAID's 50th Anniversary with Partners

USAID/EA celebrated 50 years of improved global health during a ceremony in Kampala, Uganda in October. USAID turned 50 in November, a milestone recognized by USAID staff and partners around the world as they reflect on achievements and next steps. The USAID/EA Mission Director, Larry Meserve, spoke before officials representing Makerere University, the Regional Center for Quality of Health Care (RCQHC), the East, Central, Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA), USAID's implementing partners, USAID staff, and the media. USAID/EA's regional partners also presented a selection of best regional health achievements.

USAID's 50th was celebrated in conjunction with an Africa consultative workshop sponsored by the U.S. Government at the request of ECSA Ministers to develop regional harmonized Quality Improvement for Health standards. More than 130 doctors and nurses, deans of medical schools, nursing instructors, and representatives of national Ministries of Health from 12 African countries met in Uganda in October to work together on this critical health issue. This event followed one held at U.S. Mission Uganda in September that celebrated the anniversaries of both USAID and U.S. Peace Corps hosted by Ambassador Jerry P. Lanier.



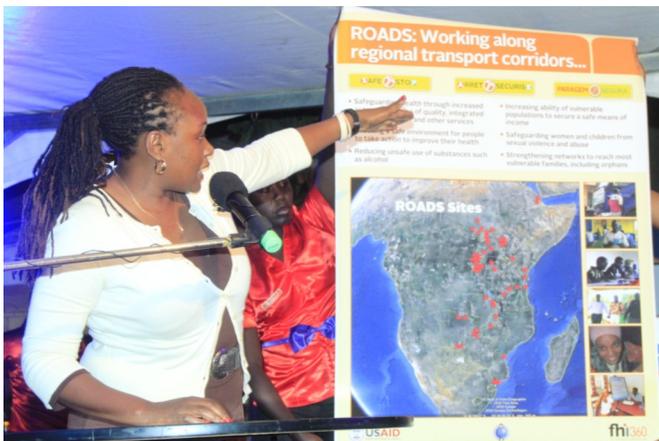
Left to right: Dr. Josephine Kibaru-Mbae, Director General of the ECSA, Jim Heiby from USAID's Global Health Bureau in Washington, DC, Larry Meserve, USAID/EA Regional Mission Director, Shirley Erves, Master of Ceremonies and Julia Henn, USAID/EA Regional Health Office Director cut ceremonial USAID 50th Anniversary cake. Photo: Kintu B. Zirimu

Regarding progress in the East Africa Region, Meserve referred to the Obama Administration's Global Health Initiative, which focuses on health outcomes especially for women, newborns and children. The focus of the initiative is on patients, not diseases. He praised two model policies passed by ECSA Health Ministers in 2010 with USAID/East Africa's support, on gender based violence and fistula, scheduled to be adopted by the 10 ECSA member states. USAID/EA has increased family planning and reproductive health services to vulnerable women and girls in conflict and post-conflict areas in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. USAID/EA's technical assistance to the Uganda National Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory in Kampala has resulted in a nomination to join the TB Supranational Reference Lab Network of the World Health Organization as a candidate Supranational Reference Lab. When the lab gains full status, it will become one of only two supranational reference labs in Africa for diagnosing drug resistant tuberculosis.

Meserve spoke of USAID's ambitious reform effort, 'USAID FORWARD,' that emphasizes new partnerships with local organizations, science, technology and innovation, with a relentless focus on results. Related to these reforms, the Quality Improvement for Health meeting was cited as an example of USAID's 'whole of government' approach. USAID convened multiple U.S. Government agencies to support this African led consultation, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, the U.S. National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Calling for greater access to quality health care for all in the East Africa region, Meserve said, "Everyone knows when they do or don't receive quality health care, from the minute one walks into a small health clinic or an imposing hospital. Let's strive to make quality health care for all, the norm, not the exception."

Finally, he thanked his colleagues and USAID's partners for helping to bring about positive change throughout the East Africa region, and urged those assembled to capitalize on the health innovations that are developed and put in place every day by African-led and managed organizations.



Alice Onsarigo, Senior Program Officer with FHI 360, points out HIV prevention, care and support service sites in 44 transport corridor communities across 11 countries in the region under the USAID/EA & bilaterally supported Roads to a Healthy Future Project. Photo: Kintu B. Zirimu

Highlighting selected global health achievements over the last 50 years, Meserve said that USAID supported much of the research behind high-impact interventions such as oral rehydration therapy and zinc treatment for child diarrheal illness. Through sustained investments in 30 countries and ongoing technical leadership, USAID has made substantial contributions to the overall global reduction of child mortality, from an estimated 10.8 million child deaths in 2000, to 7.6 million in 2010, a decrease of nearly 30 percent. Moreover, thousands of women survive childbirth today, thanks to increased numbers of skilled birth attendants, and maternal deaths have been averted through USAID-supported family planning programs that have decreased the average number of pregnancies per woman. Underscoring that diseases do not respect borders, Meserve said that USAID-supported immunization programs alone save more than three million lives every year.

Mitigating Conflict through Religious Mediation Councils at the Somalia-Kenya Border

The Mediation Council, Ultimate Solution

For the last two decades, the Sheikhal and Makabul conflict has persisted causing loss of lives as well as properties. The Sheikhal are from the Hawiye clan while the Makabul belong to the Ogaden clan of the Somali community. Both of these clans live in Hosingo Amuma and Waldena on the Kenya-Somalia border.

Peace II, a USAID-supported project implemented on the Kenya-Somalia border, used trauma healing and social reconciliation sessions to help these communities to engage in dialogue on clan conflicts. The two clans would engage in arguments that led to physical confrontation. The conflict mainly impacts women and children, who are often the immediate victims and violated in periods of vengeance, with many raped and brutally killed.

After the trauma meetings, a mediation council of religious leaders was established at Hagadere refugee camp in Kenya (Amuma). Through the program, the warring clans got a medium for dialogue as the Mediation Council took responsibility for uniting them. After several road side peace rallies aimed at advocating to the people the importance of Islamic brotherhood over ethnic priorities, the two clans agreed to engage in dialogue through the facilitation of the Mediation Council. An agreement was signed in July 2011 and the parties agreed to end their differences.



Mandera Mediation Council of elders at one of their meetings in Mandera, Northern Kenya. Photo: Pact

Today the Sheikhal and Makabul clans live peacefully and share resources. On a recent visit to Amuma, Sheikh Ibrahim Suudi, one of the renowned Islamic Imams from Dadaab commented: “We have been shown a light that has enabled us to love each other regardless of ethnic background. After two decades of searching for unity, I am pleased that this is the ultimate solution.” The signed agreement serves approximately 100,000 members of the two clans in Northern Kenya.

PEACE II program uses peace mediation councils selected by communities and other stakeholders to mitigate conflict between cross-border communities in the Horn of Africa. Mandera Mediation Council is one of them.

Women’s Empowerment through Learning in Djibouti



Oumalkaire Omar Djama driving a heavy weight truck at her work place Al Gamil, the largest construction company in Djibouti. Photo: USAID/Djibouti

Oumalkaire Omar Djama is a dynamic and passionate 22 year old young woman from the district of Arta in the Republic of Djibouti who has made a miraculous journey from a hopeless out-of-school youth to become a truck driver and supervisor at one of Djibouti’s largest private construction companies.

During her early years Oumalkaire lost her father and had to drop out of school because her mother could not cope with the family expenses. Oumalkaire was growing up unskilled and she felt idle and helpless. She was desperately seeking a job to assist her family. Her break came when the chief of Arta District informed the community that USAID was selecting out-of-school youth for a training program in Djibouti-ville. Oumalkaire was one of the lucky individuals who completed the four-month driving program last year, supported under USAID/Djibouti’s Assistance to Education program implemented in conjunction

with the Ministry of Education and a private sector driving school called Zaki. The goal of the program is to assist out-of-school youth acquire skills that are in demand in the job market. Oumalkaire passed all her courses and obtained a driver’s license for heavy equipment vehicles, a field traditionally dominated by men.

Immediately after completing the training, Oumalkaire was hired as a heavy weight truck driver for a road construction company and subsequently was hired by Al Gamil, the largest construction company in Djibouti. Despite the fact that she is working in a male dominated field, Oumalkaire does not feel discriminated against in the work place and has been entrusted with additional tasks due to her excellent performance. She now supervises 37 men on the construction site and is very proud of her achievements.

With Djibouti’s 60% unemployment rate, Oumalkaire is grateful for the job and how it has transformed her life, saying, “This is not easy work for a woman, but I will keep doing it as long as I can make a living out of it. Women’s empowerment depends on our financial independence and through this job I no longer live in a precarious situation. I have regained hope and can now assist my family.” She is thankful to USAID for the opportunity and encourages young girls who drop out of school to undertake training programs when the opportunity is offered.

Over the past eight years, USAID has trained approximately 370 out-of-school youth, including 216 girls/women. More than 100 of these trainees have jobs as a result of this program.

Political Commitment towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections among Children in Burundi



Left to right: United Nations Resident Coordinator Rosine Cori Coulibaly, UNAIDS Regional Director for West and Central Africa Meskerem Grunitzky-Bekele, Burundi's Minister of Health and Fight against HIV/AIDS, Dr. Sabine Ntakarutimana, 2nd Vice President, Gervais Rufyikiri, and U.S. Ambassador to Burundi, Pamela Slutz.

Photo: UNAIDS

Burundi is a small densely populated country located in Sub-Saharan Africa with an HIV prevalence of 2.97% among the general population. It is also one of 22 countries worldwide that has contributed to the development of and signed up to implement the Global Plan towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections among Children by 2015 and Keeping their Mothers Alive.

In an effort to inform and mobilize the general population about the possibility of a new Burundian generation free of HIV, the Government of Burundi spearheaded a national launch of the Global Plan at the end of October.

Classified as a low-income country, Burundi's economy has been highly affected by a long period of civil war, which has had a significant impact on sanitation, infrastructure and human development. In this context, preventing new HIV infections among children has been one of the country's main challenges, with coverage of HIV services reaching only 30% of pregnant women at the end of 2010. To respond effectively to this challenge, Burundi has developed a national plan for the period of 2011-2015 in accordance with the Global Health Initiative.

"Every man should accompany his wife to prenatal consultation and—jointly with her—request an HIV test," stated His Excellency the 2nd Vice President Gervais Rufyikiri during the launch. "Engagement of men is key to the success of this initiative," he added.

The U.S. Ambassador to Burundi, Pamela Slutz, emphasized that in order to help the Burundian government eliminate new HIV infections among children, the U.S. Government, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), had dedicated US\$ 10 million exclusively for the implementation of such programs in the country.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister of Health and Fight against HIV/AIDS, Dr. Sabine Ntakarutimana said that activities like family planning reproductive health and HIV will be harmonized and articulated in the health system to promote efficient results.

UNAIDS Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Dr. Meskerem Grunitzky-Bekele represented the UNAIDS Executive Director at the launch, highlighted that Burundi understood the need to act now. "The price to be paid for the country's inaction will be too high for future generations," she said.

News from Somalia

USAID Helps in Preventing the Spread of Water-borne Diseases in Somaliland and Puntland with Basic Water Testing

USAID, through its integrated education, water, and health portfolio, distributed water testing kits and manuals, and provided training across three primary school communities in the Gebiley Region in Somaliland, and is planning to do the same in three secondary school communities in the Nugal, Mudug, and Karkaar Regions in Puntland. This activity is a USAID collaborative effort with World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD), who provided the water testing kits. Somali communities in targeted schools were engaged in hands-on basic water testing to ensure safe drinking water and to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases.



Somaliland youth learn about the water testing kits. Photo: USAID/EA



Mrs. Muhamed, right receives a framed image of her "I love reading" campaign billboard. Photo: USAID/EA

USAID Education Partners Meet with Somaliland First Lady

In commemoration of Mrs. Muhamed's support for the USAID "I Love Reading" campaign, USAID Education partners met with First Lady Mrs. Amina Sheikh Muhamed. The team shared current USAID activities on education access for marginalized Somaliland children, ongoing development of Somali language/Somali culturally-based reading materials, and presented her with a framed picture of her campaign billboard. Mrs. Muhamed thanked USAID for work in Somaliland and said "What you are doing is visible and tangible in the country, and for your efforts we thank you. I worked in radio education with the BBC where we prepared education programs and I believe radio is a good tool for our society which are most illiterate but learn by listening."