

USAID's Strategies for Conflict Prevention, Procurement Reform, the Global Development Alliance, and HIV/AIDS

Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid

Meeting Agenda

ANNEX 1

Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid

Public Meeting
Wednesday, October 17, 2001
9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Marriott Hotel at Metro Center
775 12th Street, NW
(12th and G Streets)
Washington, D.C.

"USAID's Strategies for Conflict Prevention, Procurement Reform, the Global Development Alliance, and HIV/AIDS"

Agenda

- 8:30 a.m. **Registration, Ballroom Foyer** (*lower level*)
- 9:00 a.m. **Welcome and Introduction** *Salons A & B (lower level)*
William S. Reese, ACVFA Chair
- 9:05 a.m. **Opening Remarks** *Salons A & B*
"The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention" William Garvelink, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, USAID
- 9:15 a.m. **Panel Discussion: "Conflict Prevention and Developmental Relief"**
Salons A & B
Moderator: Charles MacCormack, ACVFA Member, President, Save the Children
Panelists:
- Dayton Maxwell, Senior Advisor, USAID
 - John Fawcett, Consultant
 - Shamil Idriss, Chief Operating Officer, Search for Common Ground
 - Rick Hill, Director, Office of Emergency and Transition Management, Cooperative Housing Foundation
- Topics:**
- "Defining the Issue: What is Conflict Prevention and Developmental Relief?"
 - "Integrating Conflict Prevention/Management into USAID and NGO Development Programs"
 - "Integrating Development Into Relief Activities"
 - "The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding"
- 10:15 a.m. **Questions and Answers/Audience Discussion** *Salons A & B*
- 10:45 a.m. **Break**
- 11:00 a.m. **Breakout Group Discussions:** To discuss the issues raised in the panel in more depth and to inform USAID's conflict prevention strategy.

Topic A: "Integrating Development and Relief"

Salon A & B Group 1 Charles MacCormack and Dayton Maxwell,
facilitators

Salon C Group 2 Rick Hill and Melissa Brown, facilitators

**Topic B: "Managing Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding" (including
"Resolving the Tension Between Humanitarian Assistance and
Politically-sensitive Conflict Prevention Activities")**

Salon D Group 3 John Fawcett and Ajit Joshi, facilitators

Salon E Group 4 Shamil Idriss and Gregory Gottlieb, facilitators

12:30 p.m.

Reports from Breakout Groups *Salons A & B*

Moderator: Charles MacCormack

1:00 p.m.

Lunch (participants on their own)

2:30 p.m.

Panel: "USAID's New Way of Doing Business" *Salons A & B*

Moderator: Peggy Curlin, ACVFA Vice Chair, President, CEDPA

- **Procurement Reforms**

Mark Ward, Director, Office of Procurement, USAID

Questions and Answers

3:15 p.m.

- **The Global Development Alliance (GDA)**

Holly Wise, GDA Coordinator, USAID

Questions and Answers

4:00 p.m.

**Panel: "USAID's Response to HIV/AIDS: Lessons Learned and
Future Initiatives"** *Salons A & B*

*USAID will distribute its new report "Leading the Way: USAID Responds to
HIV/AIDS."*

- **Overview of Current Issues**, Duff Gillespie, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Global Health Bureau
- **USAID progress and plans in monitoring, evaluating and reporting on HIV/AIDS**, Harriet Destler, Social Scientist, HIV/AIDS Division, Global Health Bureau
- **Budget/Legislative Update**, Felice Apter, Senior Technical Advisor, Population, Health and Nutrition, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination
- **CORE Values Initiative**, Warren (Buck) Buckingham, Senior Technical Advisor, Africa Bureau

4:45 p.m. **Questions and Answers/Audience Discussion** *Salons A & B*

5:30 p.m. **Adjournment**

USAID's Strategies for Conflict Prevention, Procurement Reform, the Global Development Alliance, and HIV/AIDS

Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid

Breakout Group Session Notes

ANNEX 2

Topic: Integrating Development and Relief

Facilitators: Charles McCormack and Dayton Maxwell

Rapporteur: Kathryn Wolford

Mr. McCormack: What are the implications of political impact on PVO work? Save the Children staff often discuss the political impact of various activities. The feeling is that one doesn't want to get more politically involved than necessary. Where is the appropriate point for involvement in each situation? If organizations are to do political evaluations, will political indicators be required?

Mr. Maxwell: In host countries that have potential for conflict there is a tremendous hesitance on the part of the government officials to talk about the potential for conflict. It is difficult for NGOs to bring it up and discuss it if the local government doesn't want to talk about it. The challenge is to find ways to make it easier for host country officials to talk about the root causes of conflict and about the issues that could lead to conflict.

In the 1960's and 1970's, USAID programs were standard programs like health and agriculture. They didn't touch policy at all. It was determined in the late 1970's that policy reform was necessary for these countries to advance themselves. At first there was a big reaction from host countries that this was infringing on their sovereignty. Governments are now more accepting and open to it. There is a parallel with that issue and conflict prevention. There is a need to find a way for host governments to talk about conflict prevention and to have open dialogue about issues such as human rights and rule of law.

Participant: All development programs take place in a political context. Organizations are often dealing with situations of failed nation states or nations that were never states. One is going to look at integrating relief and development in different ways depending on how the government of that country is viewed.

Mr. Maxwell: One of the problems has been that in the past the U.S. government has been looking at the immediate framework of situations, and has not adequately considered the longer term impact of decisions made in the short-term. Government needs to do a better job of taking into account the long-term impact of decisions. Better use of management information system tools would help. The military uses simulations. The civilian sector doesn't think of using simulations because they are out there working in the real world, but sometimes the wrong decisions are made because those involved on a daily basis are not projecting into the future. There are ways of developing simulations to be run in a real time manner for decision-makers, but nobody is doing it yet. The use of simulations will enable better decision-making.

Participant: Sometimes political reasons cause people not to look at all of the options. Political decisions that are made, for example, to maintain political boundaries, can have a great impact on development programs.

Mr. MacCormack: The future one envisages influences our decisions and actions. Development groups tend to think more about the long-term democracy and community impacts than foreign policy or geopolitical impacts. Most development organizations would carry out similar programs, regardless of the political boundaries.

Participant: In the context of conflict prevention, is USAID going to look at how it does business? Contractors don't get money to go in and assess the situation. They get money to do a project - to do what USAID has decided needs to be done.

Mr. Maxwell: The engineering community tries to look at the problems that need to be solved. There is an example of a broken barrel. If the barrel has 70-80 staves, but some are broken, one could fix the staves on the top, which are easy to see. However, unless the staves underneath (that are difficult to see) are fixed the barrel won't hold water. In the analysis, it is essential that USAID find the broken staves at the bottom of the barrel and fix them, even if they are the most difficult to find and fix. That is the kind of thing that USAID needs to do in putting a conflict prevention lens on USAID programs. USAID has found that democracy and governance programs that promote elections sometimes evoke violence around the elections. How can these programs be reoriented so that violence is not an outcome of democracy and elections?

Participant: How can other sectors, such as health and education, become a bridge to peace? As a part of long-term target for peace and democracy will USAID invest in these sectors?

Mr. Maxwell: There needs to be effective analysis in these areas. One of the fundamental breeding grounds for conflict is poverty. The international financial institutions have been promoting poverty reduction. The Japanese put forth conflict prevention as an issue at the G-8 meeting a couple of years ago. The other members said that poverty reduction is the way they are going to address it. USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios has made health and agriculture priorities in his administration in recognition that they contribute to conflict prevention.

Mr. MacCormack: The real challenge is how to mix the programs practically. Everyone recognizes that all of these programs - those that are crosscutting and those that are central pillars - have to get done. The challenge for USAID is not to overwhelm programs with so many mandates that they fall apart.

Participant: There is a lack of a locus of learning, an interaction between various entities involved in development and conflict prevention, those involved in research on conflict, and the practitioners on the ground. USAID is a prime place to begin discussions of collective learning. There should be more frequent meetings such as this one.

Mr. MacCormack: The committees of InterAction are one forum for this sort of discussion.

Mr. Maxwell: The advice given earlier by a participant was to practice effective listening. When the effort is put into producing documents designed to share information (such as InterAction's document on developmental relief) are these documents used effectively? There is a need to have practitioner-based dissemination, frequent gatherings of those involved, and active research. Researchers and practitioners should work as a team on problems in the field.

Participant: Researchers write books that practitioners don't always read. There needs to be a place where people can get together on a regular basis to discuss issues and share information.

Mr. MacCormack: There are whole academic institutions around these issues, but practitioners don't always take advantage of them. Finding a structured way of benefiting from the experiences and knowledge of each other is difficult.

Mr. Reese: A lot more is known about the world today than was known thirty or forty years ago. There is a wealth of information out there, but how can it be brought together and shared in an effective way? The business community uses simulations and could provide some lessons for this community. The discussion has focused on the relief to development continuum, but what about development to relief continuum? Sometimes countries that were doing well have conflicts embedded in their system or there is a natural disaster. There is conflict potentially brewing in many countries.

Mr. Maxwell: USAID is looking at how to orient development assistance in areas with potential conflict. Is more community policing needed? In today's world where democracy has taken hold in many places, one must take care of all parts of the democracy. Once there are law and judicial systems in place, the probability of conflict is reduced. Development programs can help build these institutions. Then there is the question of what action to take in places like Zimbabwe. Many issues must be addressed outside of USAID in the diplomatic community.

Mr. MacCormack: There is a need to be careful about poverty alleviation as prevention for conflict. There are some countries with low poverty levels that are involved in conflicts. Poverty alleviation is not the solution to all terrorism and conflict; sometimes rising expectations lead to conflict. Colombia, Zimbabwe and Indonesia were past graduates of aid programs, based on economic and institutional development, but that didn't prevent the conflict situations in those countries.

Participant: The development community needs to be creative and think of existing meetings and resources to bring people together and share. USAID and PVOs need to come up with ways of engaging with powerful political leaders in other countries. Typically this has not been done. For example, some NGOs met with the Ambassador from Eritrea and engaged in very helpful discussions with him. In Washington, D.C., there is an opportunity for these linkages to be created, particularly with ambassadors. Ambassadors could be invited more often to InterAction meetings as a "safe space" to

Breakout Discussion: Group 1

engage them in discussions and open dialogs that might affect work on the ground in those countries.

Participant: There is a need for a forum to look at some of these issues from the host country point of view. It is worth making a distinction between political officials and bureaucrats in these countries. The government workers need training to develop a strong and independent bureaucracy.

Mr. Maxwell: There is a need to experiment more with conflict vulnerability assessment and participatory approaches. Instead of having a team go in and interview the host country people, it might be more effective to have the host country officials involved in developing the conclusions and the recommendations. Then they are involved in determining what has to be done, instead of having outsiders telling them what should be done.

Participant: Louis Berger was involved for many years in Mindanao (Philippines). They demobilized about ten thousand MNLF fighters, and are in the process of demobilizing thousands of other rebels. He praised USAID for seeing the possibilities and seeing this as a dot.com as well as a dot.org responsibility. There is a need to find common areas of interest between PVOs and dot.coms. USAID's policy in this area enriches the way USAID can respond.

Participant: Learning that something else is possible is an important part of conflict prevention and resolution. Learning has to occur right down the line, including in-country listening to the local people. One way for USAID to do this is to encourage participatory evaluations of all programming. These processes would emerge with the outcome that people have worked together for change.

Participant: There is an example of an infrastructure development program started in Lebanon, and now replicated in Serbia. The program brings together various sectors, NGOs, PVOs, and government groups. These are long-term, multi-sectoral, multi-ethnic community development efforts. There are some programs on the ground that could be looked at for lessons learned in conflict and in forming strategic partnerships.

Participant: USAID has an image in the field that it works with existing established entities that are part of the problem. USAID needs to make more effort not to work only with the established government and groups, but to encourage new people to be involved in the process and to give them a voice and participation.

Participant: How can USAID develop long-term programs in the light of the political reality that it must answer to the interests of Congress, changing administrations, and many other stakeholders?

Mr. MacCormack: Programs like child survival have been going on for a long time and continue regardless of the current administration. There are issues that USAID does deal with in a long-term strategic manner. The long-term programs probably exist because there is a strong constituency behind them from the NGO community to get it to happen in a sustained manner.

Participant: Please comment on how the human element is incorporated into simulation models.

Mr. Maxwell: Simulation must have human interaction as a major component. In a simulation in Bosnia the older and younger generations worked together because of the computers. This was an added benefit from the simulation.

Participant: Organizations need to find a way (perhaps through InterAction) to develop a strategy for educating Congress about the need to have long-term, effective programs.

Mr. Maxwell: There is a unique and perhaps unprecedented moment because of September 11. Congress is now more open to seeing that U.S. security interests are related to global security. This has changed the way people look at things.

Mr. MacCormack: In addition to the openness in Congress, there is more openness on the part of the general public. It is a time for organizations to talk with their constituents about issues such as interdependence, poverty alleviation, and global engagement. Congress listens to their constituents in the home districts.

Participant: It is often overlooked that education about development needs to take place in the United States. She encouraged the groups involved in this meeting to do a higher quality of education about development, so that citizens understand the issues more deeply and know why they are writing to their elected representatives.

Mr. Maxwell: Recently on a radio talk show in the Midwest (200,000 to 300,000 listeners) about food aid for Afghanistan, the first caller said the U.S. ought to “shut that country down.” As the program went on and the issues were explained in more depth, the callers got more positive. The last caller was actually giving the party line back to Mr. Maxwell.

Participant: What happened to the development education program at USAID?

Mr. MacCormack: It has gotten smaller and smaller. It is now extremely difficult to find the funding to do development education. The Congress is not going to pay for this. Trying to convince foundations to fund it is very difficult. Donors think they already have the answers. It is a big challenge to find the funding.

Participant: The PVO community as a whole can and ought to do this. If there were a minimum commitment from each organization to do development education it would benefit everyone.

Breakout Discussion: Group 1

Participant: Most of the larger PVOs have infrastructure in place that could be used now for development education with little outside resources. She recommended that PVOs get together and talk about how this can be accomplished with little or no cost.

Mary McClymont, ACVFA member, President of InterAction: There is a Development Education Working Group that has been meeting at InterAction. Contact InterAction for more information. InterAction is going to be very involved in a campaign to educate both the public and Congress on these issues.

Topic: "Integrating Development and Relief"

Facilitators: Rick Hill (CHF) and Melissa Brown (USAID)

Rapporteur: Elise Smith

Open for comments/questions from main panel discussion:

- Expressed concern that the panel experts could not come up with any "diagnostic tools" to predict conflict (other than staff in country).
- Key is finding good people and institutions, protect them and enhance their abilities to use democratic mechanisms to build ability to access resources, affect decision-makers and decisions. Spread the word of democracy, justice, peace etc. Need the ability to talk about touchy issues like racism. It's risky for these people, but as NGOs, we can help these leaders.
- It is very complex to address the problems in conflict/relief situations when there are so much political, economic and security issues that blend together. Sometimes the issues of justice are so basic (e.g., Rwanda), they must be addressed before it is reasonable to expect people to think about peace instead of revenge. Does anyone have any experience to share about this?
- Bigger issue: we need clear definitions and terminology. "Conflict" can be internal, historical, imposed on a society, so many different scenarios. Example: Serbia/Kosovo conflict. Some locals who were interviewed were saying that the root of the problem today was a battle that happened before Columbus discovered America. How can we meld development and relief with such different conflicts? We need common terms.
- Besides "conflict prevention" are there other terms that need to be clarified?
- Yes, "relief work," "reconstruction," and "transitional development." We need to be able to discuss these with same terms.
- NGO example: UMCOR was trying to do some internal strategy and had a difficult time placing themselves in categories that donors recognize. They looked at their work, and started using three general categories to describe projects: restoring social stability, reconstruction of community structures, and revitalization.
- Semantics can stall our work, and we shouldn't get hung up on it. Each organization will find its own language and way to deal with the development/relief dynamic. It is more useful to share experiences and ideas and models for successful programs.
- In the broad category of "relief" you are doing something very specific, like providing basic needs (food, housing), and this is mostly just given to people (even though we don't like to do "hand-outs" in our work.

We have to ask: what do we still do that disables society and what do we do to enable? Why can't we do better "development" with relief? What can we do to avoid "disabling" a society?

- We have problems with relief methodologies, using more local resources, appropriate technologies, etc.
- We need to better educate ourselves (as NGO field staff) before we go to a place and impose our ideas and methodologies. We need to build on local resources.

Why don't we do this? Why don't we learn more about these countries beforehand?

- We are a fast-paced culture, and we aren't taking the time to understand the different technological methods of others. Also, funding is for very short time periods, so we can't think ahead and do things more slowly. You've got to get to the table with a proposal, and not spend time learning.
- There is also the issue of local adaptation. We need to make sure the local conditions are right for what we are trying to do.
- The U.S. government trains overseas servants with language, culture skills, etc. NGOs don't often have the resources; they work more on quick response to problems, "knee-jerk", go where the money is.
- Don't think we can realistically change this system of short-term contracts, etc. Two-to-three years is about as long as you can have programmatic consistency, with the way our political administrations change.
- Food and emergency relief in the agricultural sector needs more donor coordination. For example, in Kosovo: we had this notion of giving food rations, and then the concept of "help them feed themselves," by giving seed and garden packets (failure in Kosovo), next step is to work with local farmer to increase income, only AFTER we brought tons of wheat into the economy, and then some other country decides to ship over tons of flour....time frame for these efforts need more coordination. We need earlier economic discussions among large donors.
- In USAID's Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, we are looking for donor coordinator experts, to at least share plans. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund approaches have been a great concern of USAID, in Macedonia for example. While we seek to increase the number of Albanians in government civil service, the IMF is asking them to reduce the civil service workforce.

We need to look at political dimensions and impact of a crisis. Can we get feedback from this group?

- Most relief NGO staff don't have a political sense or experience. Are we asking people without the proper background to get into these things? For example, most relief groups are good at logistics of delivery, etc., but are not equipped for political work.
- NGOs don't want to be seen as biased, partial or political in any way.
- The reason why many organizations are still in certain countries, and haven't been thrown out is because they stay out of politics. Most things are political in the end - power, resources, etc. Need more technical staff training for political perspective. Doesn't have to undermine the NGO's mission.
- It's a two-pronged issue: in the field, NGOs are deliberately neutral because they work with groups on all sides, but they need to stay informed. There should be an institutional commitment to do this so that field staff know of any indirect consequences of their actions.

Ending conflict takes a political solution. Does anyone have an example of failures in conflict situations?

- Liberia: donors won't give funding to programs that support the government in any way, in order to pressure the government to be more democratic. But NGOs see that this is causing greater discontent, because people aren't getting the services they need from the government. So we are predicting another civil war there.
- Somalia and Afghanistan: are there lessons to be learned in food distribution? Will food be used similarly as a weapon and tool of power?

Comments on what the "Search for Common Ground" Director said in Main Plenary about "soap operas"?

- We need ways to communicate our culture; we have lots of stories to portray our successes and values. "Heroism in the service of pluralism."
- In Somalia, they have improved over the last 10 years because we left. They have figured out on their own (with NGO help) how to achieve their own stability.
- In volatile nations (Indonesia), where they are on the verge of civil conflict, media is very important in which way the populace goes.
- "Soap operas" and media affect "attitude building." What we tend to do more of is "institution building". Without the public participation and attitude to support the institutions, then there is no ownership, no success for these institutions.

Breakout Discussion: Group 2

- Successful example in Chile: demonstrated how a non-partisan organization can operate (country had 23 parties). They organized 100,000 people, helped stop a counter-coup, etc.

Topic: Managing Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding (Resolving the Tension Between Humanitarian Assistance and Political Iy-sensitive Conflict Prevention Activities)

Facilitators: John Fawcett and Ajit Joshi
Rapporteur: Jane Pratt

Introduction:

Mr. Joshi: The spirit of the meeting is information sharing. USAID is trying to get a better sense of PVO interests and consult them on these issues. In USAID there are a variety of approaches – some programs involve relief and development, some view conflict as a discrete sector, others view it across sectors, and others have conflict vulnerability analysis that is integrated across the work that USAID does.

Areas identified by the audience to address:

1. The Role of Indigenous Organizations in Conflict Prevention

The partnership between U.S. organizations and indigenous NGOs is important. There are groups operating today inside Afghanistan. There are dissident groups in Afghanistan that know the situation in the country and talk about it. International women's groups have gone into Afghanistan (illegally). However, nobody has mentioned the existence of civil society organizations in Afghanistan, let alone Pakistan, which is rife with civil society organizations. Not tapping or recognizing these groups is throwing away a key asset.

2. The Politics of Peacebuilding, especially as it pertains to democratization work in these societies.

3. The Contract Model and Conflict Prevention

A suggested model is the stability pacts in Bosnia where plans are based on consensus among stakeholders established during public meetings. This is then used to inform donors and possible funding.

4. Funding and Partnership

For some NGOs, partnering is the kiss of death of the mission. Neutrality is very important. There is a concern about the partnership formula that the administration is promoting. Partnering on the ground may destroy the neutrality mission of organizations operating in the country.

5. Approach to Conflict Management

Is it a sector? There is no question that it needs to be integrated into traditional development sectors, but what is a good way for a flexible program supporting NGOs to start to filter through development policies that pick up on these new challenges?

6. Political Assessments

John Fawcett mentioned his concern that the funding of projects has reached the point where NGOs are responding to donors and not their natural constituents in the field. One way to evolve out of this is to have political assessments in project design. This is a critical issue.

7. NGO Capacity to do Conflict Management

People handle conflict everyday, as anyone who has been a parent knows. Conflict management is part of the definition of being human. At the same time, to suggest that U.S. NGOs have the capacity to lessen, dampen or eradicate political, ethnic or religious violence in the world is stepping into a ballgame in which NGOs have no expertise. The Cooperative Housing Foundation, the Futures Group and PACT have had major projects that have averted conflict, but only on a very local scale. Congress and the Administration have acted as a unilateral force in the world dropping out of every treaty and convention. This has been interpreted as the U.S. running the world. In the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan, to think that NGOs can stop Tajiks and Pashtuns from shooting each other in the near or long term is a hard pill to swallow. The whole business of conflict resolution has to start at the top – at the top of Congress and at the top of the Administration. Turning NGOs into conflict managers must be viewed with pessimism.

Three clusters of questions to be addressed during the breakout session:

1. The role of indigenous civil society organizations and the political context, the cross-fertilization between U.S. NGO working in the U.S. and internationally, and the role of conflict resolution as a discrete area of work or as part of a cross-cutting approach.
2. Contract mechanisms
3. Issue of neutrality

Mr. Fawcett: One issue that has come up is the role of NGOs and partnering. There are two opposing points of view:

Partnering with a local NGO is a valuable tool for understanding the country, its politics, society and culture.

Partnering pulls NGOs down the path of being partisan, which is a route they do not want to take.

Comments from participants:

1. Understanding the country is critical. The question is over the partnering, which USAID insists on. USAID funding is a small, but important, portion of some NGO funding. The participant shared an example from his/her own work. The signature program is to bring Palestinian and Israeli children together. It is allowed to operate because neither side sees the program as compromising their neutrality. The organizations work with grassroots organizations all the time, but would never partner with them in the way described by USAID.
2. If one doesn't partner with local NGOs and work toward their sustainability, how can one take a long-term approach? How can this be done without partnering? Can anyone really be neutral?
3. There are different kinds of partnerships. Partnerships based on mutual agreement and a mutual mission are the best kind. For example, the Safe Motherhood Alliance that began in Nepal is now an international alliance. Partnerships have to be political – development addresses how resources are distributed. In some countries advocacy on the part of NGOs is changing the way policies are implemented and the way resources are allocated. One should remember the politics with a small 'p', at the local level where it affects people's lives more directly. For example, working with local chiefs and local councils to get the needs of the constituents met is a good thing. To be neutral when one works locally is incorrect and impossible.
4. This is an important issue – whether PVOs and NGOs should explicitly address the political environment as part of their grants. The Mountain Institute works in conflict prone areas all the time and does political assessment work as part of its ongoing work. This is necessary. NGOs that work in conflict areas are always dealing with conflict prevention and resolution. Is this a common experience? It has never occurred to Mountain Institute to report this to donors. What would come out of reporting this to donors and how would this build towards conflict resolution?
5. Catholic Relief Services works on justice issues and peacebuilding. CRS' approach is to have both an overarching framework and also some specific activities. CRS has learned that very strict guidelines and principles for programs are needed. For example, CRS will make a long-term, ten-year commitment to peacebuilding, whether or not a project is funded for ten years. CRS cannot solve the conflict, but can play an important accompanying role and help the process along by working with partners and making a long-term commitment. One dilemma is what if the organizational approach is different from U.S. foreign policy or the approach of donors. CRS is committed to not be driven by funding, but a big dilemma is how to deal with inflexible funding and policy guidelines.
6. On the issues of political assessments – NGOs are already doing political assessments before, during and after programs. In the post-assessment phase where does all that information go? The issues lie more with the donors and how they think about conflict and how donor policy will be developed.

7. One must be careful about the role of NGOs and conflict. The role of U.S. NGOs is more visible and important in post-conflict situations and economic disasters. From the point of view of ACDI/VOCA, NGOs have ignored the political sense of conflict. They try to work outside political and ethnic-religious considerations and try to address the issues of the day, like putting bread on the table. This approach is successful in identifying small-scale needs. For example, among internally displaced peoples in Azerbaijan who live in tents or very bad conditions, ACDI/VOCA tries to see what it is these people have the capacity to do and how they can help jump start businesses to start feeding families. They came up with supporting canneries. In the past, women have canned goods at home. ACDI/VOCA introduced a market chain approach – identifying all the agents involved in the chain and helping to strengthen their capacities. ACDI/VOCA has done similar work in Kosovo and Serbia. There is great importance in focusing on economic interests as a way of mitigating conflict between political, ethnic, and religious groups. Pure economic interests may have an impact on how adversaries view each other across the border.
8. There are thousands of examples where small-scale changes have taken place, but looking at the bigger picture, USAID resources are miniscule. USAID doesn't see an interconnected world. Congress will not see the world as interconnected, even in the wake of recent events. There are two books that may be helpful in looking at the foreign assistance delivery mechanism. The first is Robert Kaplan's *The Ends of the Earth*. If anyone in Congress had read this they would have had a clear hint of what was coming. The second is Michael Edward's *Future Positive*. It argues that the whole framework for the delivery of assistance in this interconnected world needs to be changed. That is what real conflict resolution – long-term and on a big scale -- requires.
9. What are the dilemmas that occur when these two are merged – economic incentives with political neutrality? What are the problems when one tries to merge these in a context that is political in nature?
10. One of the problems is funding – if one is viewed as not being neutral, one could be turned down for funding. The more creative projects won't get funding by donors. For example, one organization took kids from Bosnia and brought them to the U.S. for two weeks. They were to use what they had learned about for conflict resolution. The large foundations would not have funded this project. Another question is, how does one measure the impact of economic development-related projects on reducing conflict?

Mr. Joshi: From what people are saying there is partnership and neutrality on two levels:

1. Between USAID and U.S. NGOs
2. Between U.S. NGOs and local NGOs

How does USAID see partnership? From classic development theory approaches, if one does one's work well, one will work oneself out of a job. As Colin Powell said, "the problems are on the ground." Whoever the stakeholders are, each will have their own interests. At the end of the day, it will be the people in developing countries that make these decisions. Working with local NGOs will, in part, facilitate that process.

There have been other questions about political assessments. In USAID, conflict assessment is integrated into the strategic planning process under 2-5-10 year planning cycles. Under these parameters, the potential for conflict can be assessed. The second part is building the capacity of people on the ground and developing their resilience and coping strategies. At the end of the day, there are very few Americans on the ground long-term. Funding is to help people identify their own priorities. That's where the value added is, in my personal view.

Response from participants:

1. Real civil society is a three-legged stool – the government, the private sector and civil society organizations. The question is how does one work with the private sector to build conflict resolution. The second is advocacy. PVOs are very well placed – they have a comparative advantage, which has not been capitalized on. There is a need to learn more about advocacy and how to drive it better, particularly with respect to civil society.
2. Advocacy is much better defined in the U.S. The question of advocacy in local countries is much more complicated and sensitive.

Adele Liskov, PVC/BHR/USAID: On the question of neutrality it is worth remembering those organizations working in Central America, who put political neutrality as a high priority and refused to accept US government funding. This is still an option. Some U.S. PVOs do have a grassroots base in the U.S., but many don't, and funding has become a political thing. In the end, USAID is looking for civil society development and capacity on the ground. One must work with NGO groups in those countries in order to have that capacity. Many PVOs are no longer "doing development" but they are now "facilitating development" and that is a critical success. USAID has a new pillar, Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. Within this, PVC is looking at new things, and advocacy is very much a part of our thinking. Another question is what do PVOs need to build their capacity to do better development when they find themselves in a situation of conflict? Organizations, such as Mercy Corps, mitigated conflict in Nicaragua and are being asked to join the government at the table to discuss the reconstruction program in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

Questions to USAID from participants:

Breakout Discussion: Group 3

1. There is now talk about humanitarian aid as bombs are dropping. This is unique and nice to hear. To what extent does USAID work with groups on the ground? To what extent was USAID consulted?
2. The U.S. government was the largest donor through the World Food Program to Afghanistan before the war. USAID was also trying to drum up greater support for humanitarian aid based on assessments conducted last fall. In any case, the motivation for providing aid was to signal to the Afghan people that the U.S. was not attacking them, but rather the political leadership.
3. Would it be possible for USAID to provide a list of NGOs working on the ground?

Ms. Liskov: USAID has a website with a list of all registered PVOs. InterAction also has a website with detailed information on NGOs.

4. If an NGO decided to coordinate with different NGOs, is this comparable with the USAID definition of partnerships?

Ms. Liskov: It is important to undertake dialogue and explore the possibilities. One way is to work through InterAction. There are also country strategies within which USAID works and there are some essential programs. For example, PVC works to strengthen the capacity of U.S. PVOs. On the question of the USAID requirement for direct partnerships, there seems to be a misunderstanding. PVC has required working with local NGOs, but this is not a policy that has been written at a high level within USAID. It is the way PVC works today, but there is also a lot of diversity. This wouldn't be applicable if USAID wanted to contract a service. Partnerships are talked about when thinking about effective development. It's a general development approach not a requirement.

Mr. Joshi: Most USAID funding takes place on a bilateral basis at the regional level.

5. There is an inherent conflict between things USAID is interested in doing and what NGOs are interested in doing. USAID needs to decide what expectations it has from NGO programs. If NGOs get into conflict resolution, it is a truly long-term process and USAID needs to let go of its short-term result requirements. USAID needs to think this through. Otherwise there is going to be a situation where NGOs will lose their comparative advantage while USAID doesn't really get what it needs.

Mr. Fawcett: This is a fundamental point. This is why NGOs need to think in political terms. USAID often gets it wrong. USAID's thinking is short term. Reality is much more complex. There is a need to be flexible, to shift programs as society changes. USAID needs to recognize this. It has to trust NGOs and provide five years of flexible funding. This won't happen if NGOs just turn to USAID for direction. They need to build their own political knowledge that allows USAID to fund them over the long-term.

6. Plenty of colleagues within USAID would like that approach. The problem is that the process is driven by Congress. USAID should not be blamed. USAID could have more influence on the Hill than it has in the past. Another thing that makes the job more difficult is the linkage between USAID and the State Department. Aid has become more politicized.
7. Part of the problem with short-term funding cycles is that USAID keeps changing its goals. Since 1993 there have been four different strategic plans. USAID has never realized that strategic planning is an oxymoron.
8. There is also the problem of competition between U.S. NGOs. Maybe there is a role for USAID to require cooperation.

Topic: Managing Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

Facilitators: Shamil Idriss and Gregory Gottlieb

Rapporteur: Hershelie Sullivan Chal lenor

The experience of NGOs in managing conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities:

1. Unreasonable expectations are a pitfall. Conflicts surround deep rivalries (tribal, ethnic, or religious) that have been around for many years. Conflicts evolve over time. One to three year grants are too short a time frame to turn around a conflict situation. It damages credibility to promise to fix something and then not deliver.
2. In conflict resolution the most important element to address is the root cause. For example, smuggling or alternate sources of income may impress youths to engage in criminal activities.
3. Economic activities and economic interests are very important. Some groups pursue conflict as a means to gain a better voice or means towards dialogue.
4. \$200 million was given to Cyprus to stop the conflict. That money went out the window. There is a need to be able to properly assess whether or not a program is working, and when to leave if it is not working.
5. Conflict is a permanent element of global society.
6. People to people successes need to be reported and replicated (for example, small loan programs, direct education and grass roots programs).
7. Doctors of the World has a development-oriented program in Kosovo called the De-Institutional Program that takes kids out of psychiatric units and puts them back into the community. This program cuts across ethnic and program barriers, and works with local government.
8. There is a need to build local institutional strength. An example is South Africa where there is an effort to develop local institutional strength to combat conflict in Durban.
9. Christian Children's Fund (CCF) in Angola uses local leaders for programs, not expatriates. CCF trains children (ex-soldiers) in cultural sensitivity, orientation, and daily problem solving.
10. There is a conflict resolution page on the Africa Bureau website.
11. Conflict is a cross cutting issue.

Summary points:

- Long-term engagement
- USAID needs to provide a definition of conflict resolution
- Assess effectiveness
- Assess and acknowledge what is really going on politically
- Groups and governments working together
- Identify people to people successes and share
- Develop conflict resolution skills at local levels

What NGOs need from USAID:

1. Long-term commitment and good monitoring and evaluation tools are needed.
2. There needs to be more flexibility to fit unique circumstances.
3. USAID should accept qualitative indices, not just quantitative ones.
4. NGOs need to be able to respond to local needs without “pandering” to donors.
5. USAID feels NGOs “bring their own agenda” and “don’t follow orders.”
6. Keep conflicts in perspective. NGOs cannot help big problems (government issues).
7. Conflicts are between “haves” and “have nots.” Programs need to project a vision of inclusion.

Funding Problems:

- Moving away from relief to development
- Restrictions on International Disaster Assistance account funds
- Congressional restrictions on humanitarian assistance
- Too many restrictions on NGOs

Management Strategies:

- Work with NGOs/government/military groups
- Include all players
- Information sharing and coordination
- Management for results

Summary points:

- Problems between USAID and NGOs
- Management for results
- Clear expectations from USAID

- Cannot find indicators for conflicts
- Successful conflict prevention has no indicators
- Identify seeds of discontent (migration/students/ethnic issues)
- Need for flexibility (long-term, less rigid format)
- Tension between conflict transition and showing how it was effective
- USAID definition of conflict
- Limited funding
- Get to the community level through other programs (child survival, for example) than through democracy and governance.

Views of NGOs toward conflict resolution and peacebuilding:

1. One should distinguish between PVOs & NGOs.
2. Conflicts are cyclical.
3. NGOs should build strong bridges with each other. There is little contact or information sharing among NGOs.
4. USAID's approach to conflict transformation should be to work it into all stages and sectors of aid - development, rule of law, etc. Conflict transformation should not be compartmentalized within an organization.
5. To institutionalize its emphasis on conflict prevention, USAID should create a conflict office with a budget
6. Foreign Ministers agreed at a meeting that conflict resolution was a critical issue. The role of women was also identified as important. USAID should work on these issues.

Summary points:

- Local level strategies are important
- Work through civil society
- Address conflict with multi and cross-sectoral work and communication
- Work on methodology
- Build democratic society
- Emphasize the role of women
- Encourage USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives to broaden perspective on civil society and widen the definition of transition