

CREATIVE TIMES

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SPOTLIGHT:

WORKING LOCALLY

IN THIS ISSUE

Q&A	pg. 3-5
Creative Spotlight	pgs. 6-8
Creative Voices	pg. 9
Creative Worldwide	pgs. 10-12, 14-15
Profile from the Field	pg. 13
Book Review	pg. 17
New Faces	pgs. 18-19

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FRONT COVER:

Governor Halim Fidai of Wardak Province, Afghanistan.



We are pleased to bring you this edition of Creative Times: Working Locally. For thirty years, Creative has been a technical partner to our government in crafting sustainable local solutions. Like other development professionals, we do this by seeking out collaboration with experienced local specialists in the design and implementation of projects and engaging the political will of local communities.

The Spotlight section features Governor Halim Fidai of Afghanistan's Wardak Province who knows international development from a practitioner's perspective. Investing in two-way partnerships with Afghan non-governmental organizations is also in the Spotlight. There is a story of creating space in Central America for restorative justice to help victims and offenders find new lives that come to terms with pain and debts to society. In the West Bank, we learn of the transformation underway as a small, traditional social club includes women.

In a Profile from the Field, we learn of Juan Jose Hernandez's journey from seminarian to El Salvador's police chief to now working with Creative to reach out to at-risk-youth. Creative Voices carries Spike Stephenson's thought-provoking piece "Foreign Aid: Go Big—or Long and Deep." Creative Worldwide takes us to Nigeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tajikistan and a ground breaking election security handbook.

We look forward to accompanying you in our shared journey of being of service to children and others through this and future editions of Creative Times.

Peace,

Chau. ts



HALIM FIDAI

Governor of Wardak Province, Afghanistan

Halim Fidai was appointed governor of Wardak Province in 2008. His previous professional experience with Creative Associates led to the creation of a nation-wide network of hundreds of local civil society organizations in Afghanistan.



Q: What are your priorities and challenges as the governor of an important province at this critical juncture in your country's history?

A: My priorities are those of the central government.

To pursue peace and reconciliation. Reintegrating Afghan Taliban to mainstream government and politics – 95% of the population is not supporting insurgency and terrorism and most of the Taliban and insurgents are fighting for economic reasons and political freedom.

To bring security and stability. To strengthen the Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army and National Department of Security and the Afghan Public Protection Program, train them, equip them and increase their institutional capacity.

To ensure better governance. To devise and implement programs that can increase the institutional and individual capacity of government institutions so that they can deliver services in a more effective and efficient way and to ensure transparency, accountability and peoples' participation in programs and issues that affect their lives

To boost economic growth. To encourage private sector, government and NGOs and civil society to create programs and bring the type of investment that can lead to more sustainable development. Build infrastructure in agriculture, irrigation and livestock, water and energy, education and governance to generate more revenue from domestic products and resources.

To Promote Coordination and Partnership with key stakeholders. In the province, this includes the people through their district councils, provincial councils and community development councils and traditional jirgas (councils), donors, US forces, Turkish PRT, NGOs, UN

and Government institutions and make sure that appropriate resources are allocated to work in partnership with each other. Through this we can gain the trust of the people.

Q: What advice would you offer from the perspective of one who has worked to implement U.S. foreign Assistance projects and had the responsibility for governing in Afghanistan?

A: I think civil society (NGOs) and contractors should play a middleman role between the government and the people. I believe that foreign assistance can create an environment conducive for Afghan NGOs, government and people to emerge, grow and sustain. Therefore, we should recognize the importance of foreign assistance. This assistance should be focused on—

Supporting state building compared to nation building. This means that foreign aid should be first used to strengthen civil and military institutions, technically, financially and institutionally so that they are able to deliver services in a sustainable way. A stronger government, a strong civil society and a strong private sector can sustain a strong partnership to fight poverty, corruption and ensure peace and security.

Promoting education for all in Afghanistan. Education is the building-block of sustainable development and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Building upon existing traditional structures to improve and reform them in a way which can respond to contemporary issues.

Eliminating parallel systems by focusing on improving existing laws, polices, and procedures.

HALIM FIDAI



Building governmental infrastructure to better serve the people by investing capital and designing programs that can create jobs for Afghans.

Designing integrated programs aimed at supporting agriculture and potable water resources including small dams, transportation and communication, and energy generation. They should develop a strategic plan for strengthening Afghanistan's largest legal export: carpets and the wool from which they are made. Also for dried and fresh fruit, and mines and marble quarries.

Supporting the reintegration and reconciliation efforts that are aimed at bringing a lasting security to the country, the region and to save every individual on the globe from the notorious phenomena of international terrorism.

Q: What contributions do USAID projects make to Afghanistan's progress? Are these lasting contributions?

A: In any society three sectors are playing a very vital role in its development: civil society, which includes Non-Governmental Organizations, the private sector and government. Afghanistan can achieve progress through a practical partnership between these three elements. I have worked with USAID-funded programs since 1994 and I have personally experienced that USAID projects promoted the partnership which will result in long term progress. These programs contributed to the growth of the civil

society sector in Afghanistan, built the capacity of local Afghan employees, introduced new policies, concepts and modern technologies, and most importantly invested in human capital which is the cornerstone for sustainable development. Take, for example, the Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) which operates in Wardak since 2006. USAID invested millions of dollars in our region in the field of health, security, education, public works and infrastructure and security. They have immensely contributed to human development, capacity building and good governance, which gradually help a qualified and educated Afghan civil society to emerge. On contrary, Afghans also contributed to introducing the country, its culture and also helped international agencies adjust their visions, programs and policies to meet the needs of the Afghan people.

USAID and other donors have supported five major media organizations, nearly 500 radio stations, newspapers, satellite channels and television stations. They also support 2,300 NGOs including women's organizations, over 22,000 community development councils, and community service organizations (CSOs) which collectively provide diverse and important benefits and employment to thousands of Afghans.

Q: What, have you gained professionally from working on such projects?

A: My work with USAID-sponsored projects was of great help professionally. I gained hands-on experience and my contributions also helped the NGOs to efficiently and effectively deliver services to the people. Many of my colleagues at the USAID-sponsored NGO community said that these programs were like a "practical university" for most of the young Afghans, because the Afghans had to develop and implement solutions to complex problems. I even saw many of the Afghan NGOs begin competing with the international NGOs. Such competition creates increased efficiency.

“The world needs to watch the movie of progress and prosperity in Afghanistan and not tyranny, isolation and fear. This could happen with the support of foreign aid.”

Q: If someone told you that foreign aid is a waste and its benefits ephemeral, how would you respond?

A: Foreign aid is necessary, its benefits are real, but working together we can make the need ephemeral. Our goal is to use the temporary help to build a sustainable Afghan solution to fill current gaps. The focus should be on how to use foreign aid wisely, fairly, and in a transparent and accountable way. The best use of foreign aid builds partnership among all three sectors: civil society, the private sector and government. I think foreign aid should be provided in partnership with the Afghan government, which is a strong partner working toward achieving a common goal – eventual self-sufficiency.

Q: How do you feel about working with contractors who help to implement donor’s projects?

A. I believe that in principle they must be part of the partnership and team. Contractors can contribute to the development of Afghanistan. However, the level of their contribution varies from contractor to contractor, some work very well and some need improvement. Most contractors focus their programs on public welfare and benefit to the people, but there are some who exploit the needs of the people and hoard needed goods. Gaining profit shouldn’t be the primary goal. The focus should be on the ability to provide for public needs.

I personally believe that no sectors can achieve their organizational goals without the assistance of the other two sectors and I also believe that each sector has a significant role to play in the development of Afghanistan.



Working Locally in Fragile Environments



People living in emerging democratic states understandably want their government to provide adequate public services, including security, economic management and basic social infrastructure such as quality schools. There is consensus that development aid is more effective where there are good policies and strong institutions. In conflictive or post-conflict situations, emerging government structures often operate in complex social environments with uneven systems in place for ensuring transparency.

Creative Associates seeks out and employs qualified, experienced local professionals in the design and implementation of projects. Engaging the political will of local communities to build local capacity with in-country NGOs and government ministries is key. Working in partnership with communities at large, Creative's approach helps foreign assistance beneficiaries identify and act upon their own priorities.

In Afghanistan, over the last seven years, Creative partnered with five indigenous Afghan organizations to deliver education services. These partners—the Afghan Development Association, Afghan Women's Education Center, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Coordination of Afghan Relief and Development & Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan—have implemented nearly \$60 million dollars in contracts under two USAID-funded projects.

By partnering with Creative on the Afghanistan Primary Education Project (APEP) and the Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST), the Afghan NGOs have grown professionally to the point of managing their own projects today. Creative's approach helped these organizations to adopt management, accounting and technical skills to run projects efficiently.

Creative approaches collaboration with local organizations as partnership and a two way street. An educator from Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance observes, "Creative can bring some very good approaches and methods from outside, but it must adapt them to the Afghan context. We have experience working with the local community, dealing with the community, we know the culture of our community, and we know the habits of our community."

From 2003 to 2006, under APEP, the Afghan-Creative team reached the country's most remote mountain villages bringing education to nearly 170,000 students. Despite a challenging security situation, the team obtained the support of 3,600 communities in 17 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. What's most telling about the project's impact is that not only did village elders agree to open schools but also more than half of students in the accelerated learning program were girls. According to APEP's former accelerated learn-



“ADA and other NGOs used the success of the two Creative projects as a platform to apply for World Bank funding to implement teacher training in other Afghan provinces. We won our bid for the funding!”

ing manager, getting communities to send girls to school and provide in-kind donations for classrooms and materials required a delicate balance between diplomacy and winning their trust. In that three year period, these students completed six years of elementary school through an accelerated learning program. Under the current USAID-funded BESST project, Creative and its Afghan partners have trained more than 50,000 teachers throughout Afghanistan in modern child-centered teaching approaches.

Creative’s field staff meets weekly with local partners to discuss challenges they face in the field. Team members are expected to propose solutions to the problems they raise. “It’s learning by doing, sharing and learning from each other’s experiences.” said a BESST Program Manager. “For example, if there is a security threat in one area, Creative and partner NGOs will discuss what to do with the training team members. Sometimes they have to move the team to another location.”

Even though Creative’s local partners were well established in Afghanistan, they now have the experience to provide donors, especially the U.S. Government, the requisite audit and record keeping necessary to win and implement contracts. In fact, the Afghan Development Association is now leading

other NGOs in a World Bank effort to implement an education program in eight provinces.

“ADA and other NGOs used the success of the two Creative projects as a platform to apply for World Bank funding to implement teacher training in other Afghan provinces. We won our bid for the funding!” said a founder of ADA. “It would not have happened if we had not been involved in the APEP and BESST projects with Creative, and had not learned to implement these trainings so we can go ahead on our own.”

“The World Bank project shows that our partnership with Creative under APEP and BESST resulted in capacity development. This is the result of the close relation with and benefits of working with Creative and its staff.”

WEST BANK: Arrival of Computers Prompts Cultural Shift at All Male Youth Club

Just southwest of Nablus, there is a tradition-bound village of 5,000 called Tel. Men and women remain separated in most of their daily activities. But since The Tel Youth Club received an in-kind award of \$25,000 from the U.S. State Department's MEPI Community Leadership Empowerment Program members say the community is now experiencing a cultural shift.

The shift began in July 2009 when The Tel Youth Club, which doubles as a cultural center, set up a fully functional computer lab complemented by computer training workshops. In the past, the Club's leadership worked with other Nablus district NGOs to expand its services to include workshops and seminars. Yet, since its establishment in 1971, the club maintained an all-male member status and program focus.

For Tel Youth Club board member and director Muhammad Shtayeh, the change at the Club is radical. Before collaborating with Creative Associates, which manages the MEPI award, the Club faced difficulties attracting women to its activities in response to donors with specific requirements to include women. According to Shtayeh, fellow board members were forced to invite their female relatives to meet donor requirements for utilizing funds. "Creative's decision to fund a computer lab and skills workshops gave women a reason to attend Club activities," said Shtayeh.

Now the Club's leadership is revising its strategy for including more women in Club activities. The all-male board invited two women to attend its meetings. The inclusion of women on the board led to several decisions, including opening the Club from morning to early afternoon for women to use the facilities while their children are in school. The board is also seeking additional funding to establish a fitness center that will cater to women as well as men. For Shtayeh, the Club's new strategy to include women in its activities is not simply a response to donor demands. He thinks there is a change in the mentality of community members themselves. The opening of the computer lab transformed the club's makeup from exclusively male to actively co-ed membership.

The Tel Youth Club worked closely with Ms. Itidal Zaydan, director of the Tel Women's Society, to ensure access to the computer lab to both women and men from Tel's community. With the influx of girls and women to its facilities, the Club



Young woman practices her computer skills at the Tel Youth Club.

began to accept female members into its ranks. The Club expanded from 300 male members to now include 30 female members. Its culture also underwent a shift from segregation along gender lines to being socially interactive and inclusive of both sexes. This change in culture is so pronounced that Shtayeh is considering changing the name of the club from *Nadi Shabab Tel*—Tel Youth Club—to *Nadi Shabab wa Shabat Tel*—Tel Young Men and Women's Club.

Ms. Zaydan is committed to encouraging more girls and women to join the club and will attend its board meetings. "As long as they are active and have the computers, I won't leave them," Ms. Zaydan says. "I have the right to be there." The club's move to change its name and the cultural shift are bringing about the first co-educational youth club in Tel. As a result of the cultural change, a USAID-funded project in the vicinity approached the Club board regarding a mixed computer training class. Already, more than 80 girls and boys in the 9th and 10th grades have applied. Of these, the applications of 15 girls and 15 boys were accepted and the group will, emphasizing the cultural shift underway, be trained together.

— Shahnaz Jubran

Foreign Aid Go Big—or Long and Deep?



James "Spike" Stephenson

There is currently much debate about the future of USAID; the nexus of Defense, Diplomacy and Development; how to better administer stability and reconstruction in conflict and post conflict environments; and how to rebuild the staff capacity of the State Department and USAID so that they may be effective expeditionary partners to our military forces. These are all serious issues, but they beg the question of how civilian agencies and partners should operate and what is the most effective and viable model for overseas stabilization, reconstruction and long-term development. How we operate—the model—will drive organizational structure and size. Dick McCall, Alexandra Simonians and I published an article entitled *Not in Our Image* in the National Defense University's Prism magazine, that speaks to the "how" of stabilization in conflict environments. Recently, the Kauffman Foundation and the Command and General Staff College Foundation invited me to write a paper and participate in a summit on "Entrepreneurship and Expeditionary Economics" and sit on a panel on "Current Post-Conflict Planning and Execution." The "how" has been much in my thoughts of late.

After the defeat of the Taliban in late 2001, U.S. forces and the Pentagon were dissatisfied with the State and USAID response to rebuilding Afghanistan in terms of personnel and resources. This led to President Bush's order to place Iraq Reconstruction under DOD. The Coalition Provisional Authority, under J. Paul Bremer, decided to go "big" with a massive infrastructure program to rebuild Iraq, using a staff of thousands of civilian and military personnel. When the State Department inherited the CPA program in 2004, the program was realigned, but staffing remained in the thousands and State embarked on building the largest embassy in the world for a staff of 1,500. Last year, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, and State began implementing a staff increase in Afghanistan

from approximately 300 to more than 1,200. Civilian and military operations are integrated.

My experience in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and El Salvador dictates to me that we have met "Big Army" and been captivated and intimidated into forgetting who we are and where we have been. We are going "big" with an unnecessary, ineffective and fiscally unsustainable business model. Our strength in El Salvador—one of the great counterinsurgency successes of the last century—was what many thought was a weakness: Congressional limitations on numbers and actions of US military advisors, and limitations on the number of personnel assigned to the Embassy. We could not go big, so we went long and deep—over a 12 year period we enabled the Salvadorans to create the conditions for peace, a democratic government and a strong economy. In the Balkans, we used large peace-keeping forces in Bosnia and Kosovo; but our civilian efforts while large in funding, were modest in staffing. Building on our experience in the rest of Eastern Europe, we enabled the transition—we did not do it for them. We are successfully using a similar model in Colombia.

We must and should be able to work closely with the military; but if we are to emulate them, then we should look more to special operations forces, which use limited but highly trained manpower, often to enable indigenous forces to protect their population. The military—even "Big Army"—will understand and support a leaner business model. We just have not made the case.

Stephenson is a senior adviser to Creative Associates and is the author of *Losing the Golden Hour: An Insider's View of Iraq's Reconstruction*. Stephenson's USAID experience includes senior positions held in missions in Iraq, Serbia and Montenegro, Lebanon, Egypt, Barbados, Grenada, El Salvador and Washington, D.C.

NIGERIA: Project Launch Called “Exemplary” by USAID Officer

The USAID-funded Nigeria Northern Education Initiative (NEI) launched its first work planning session in Abuja on February 1, 2010. Speaking of the 5-day planning session, the USAID Nigeria Education Team Leader Dr. Sandy Olesksy-Ojikutu noted, “It is just this attention to programmatic details that has brought Creative Associates to the forefront of development work.”



In attendance were representatives from each of the implementing partners—Creative, RTI, JHU/CCP—and Nigeria’s Federal and State ministries of education, including State Ministries of Women’s Affairs, State Ministries of Religious affairs and USAID-Nigeria.

“The Work Planning process for the NEI was quite an experience—the best I’ve seen in my 21 years with USAID! The logical progression and sequence of the week’s events unfolded gently, purposefully—engaging participants in ever increasing levels of participation and ownership. Exemplary!” added Olesksy-Ojikutu of the planning session that was led by Creative project director Semere Solomon.

The project will strengthen state and local government capacity to deliver basic education services by addressing key education management, sustainability and oversight skills. NEI will also increase the access of orphans and vulnerable children to basic education and services such as health information and counseling in Nigeria’s two northern states of Bauchi and Sokoto.

The choice of Bauchi and Sokoto presents an opportunity to make a difference in partnership with state and local governments and non-governmental agencies. Nigerian authorities recognize the need to address low education, health, gender equity, economic indicators, and drop-out and repetition rates among students that exceed the national average in Bauchi and Sokoto. Teaching conditions are more difficult, with pupil-teacher ratios of 93:1 in Bauchi and 60:1 in Sokoto. Nationally, the rate is 42:1. Similarly, the percentage of National College of Education-qualified teachers in basic education is only 26 percent in Bauchi and 42 percent in Sokoto, compared to 62 percent nationally. The number of orphaned and vulnerable children, including boys leaving home, remains high in the north, and systems for identifying and supporting them are only beginning to develop.

Under USAID’s leadership, Creative will partner with Nigerian local and state agencies to reinforce their role in delivering quality basic education services and also helping orphaned and vulnerable children integrate into the mainstream. In keeping with Creative’s community-based approach, the Northern Education Initiative will establish Community Coalitions to support vulnerable children through “compassionate communities” of established networks and institutions. Teams will track the children’s progress in school and ensure they have access to all available programs on an ongoing basis to prevent them from “falling through the cracks.”

“NEI as a contract will benefit from close collaboration with USAID—a positive partnership, I believe. I enjoyed being part of the process—and learned, too. How I wish the NEI Work Planning process was “standard” for all our Work Plan development activities,” said Olesksy-Ojikutu.

EL SALVADOR: The Call for Restorative Justice

Violent crime by young gang offenders in Central America is highly exposed in local media and weighs heavily on the administration of justice. While getting tough on crime is politically appealing, grappling with reality is far more complex. Juvenile Justice Magistrate Doris Luz Rivas Galindo of El Salvador underscores the point: “I sent a juvenile offender to a juvenile detention center with no tattoos and when he left the center he was completely tattooed and without any aspirations in life. I felt like an accomplice.”

USAID’s Regional Youth Alliance Project is empowering governments and civil society to reduce the numbers of youth who join gangs or break the law by improving Juvenile Justice and applying restorative justice solutions. The long term strategy is to reverse the trend of economic stagnation. The prevalence of delinquent youth discourages legitimate businesses, perpetuating unemployment that fuels gang recruitment and crime. The Alliance works in close collaboration with the Central American Integration System (SICA), an intergovernmental organization of regional states.

The concept of restorative justice is rooted in international law. The United Nations Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice (2000) encouraged the “development of restorative justice policies, procedures and programs that are respectful of the rights, needs and interests of victims, offenders, communities and all other parties.”

According to the United Nations, “Restorative justice refers to a process for resolving crime by focusing on redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions and, often also, engaging the community in the resolution of that conflict.” Under this approach, “...the victim and the offender, and, where appropriate, any other individuals or community members affected by a crime, participate together actively in the resolution of matters arising from the crime, generally with the help of a facilitator.”

In El Salvador, there is a strong social perception that juvenile delinquency needs to be dealt with harshly. El Salvador’s current heated debate about raising sentencing limits for children 17-years and younger from 7 to 15 years is a case in point. Salvador Stadthagen, project director of the Regional Youth Alliance Project in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, points out that approximately 6-8% of violent crimes are actually committed by juveniles. A February 1, 2010 report by the Juvenile Justice Unit of El Salvador’s Supreme Court substantiates the point, recording only 661 juveniles currently detained. Many more received alternate measures that get little follow-up.

The call for restorative justice is driven by the need to comply with international standards with respect to the rights of the child and to respond to rising crime rates in Central America. Faced with the choice of sending a child back into a life of crime, Judicial practitioners such as Justice Galindo are seeking out the restorative justice approaches being advanced by the Alliance. In 2008 and again in 2009, the Alliance organized successive Regional Juvenile Justice Forums in Tegucigalpa and San Salvador. Attended by judges, international juvenile justice experts, SICA and U.N. representatives, the gatherings provided restorative justice recommendations to the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

“Youth are more malleable and likely to benefit from a system that promotes restorative justice over traditional justice,” said Stadthagen. “Also, unlike traditional justice that focuses on the criminal, restorative justice also focuses on the victims, opening the way for reconciliation and reparations.”

Influenced by the Alliance’s work, policies and practices involving alternative restorative justice measures are evolving. Unfortunately, governments lack resources to invest in these initiatives. The 2008 budget of 3.4 million dollars for the Salvadoran Institute for Integral Development of Children and Adolescents represents less than one half of one percent of the national budget. Likewise in Guatemala and Honduras, laws provide alternative measures to assist children in trouble with the law, “but assigned officers cannot follow-up with kids, especially those outside of urban areas to make sure they are attending school, literacy classes, and so on, because they do not have funding,” said Stadthagen.

Rehabilitation and juvenile detention centers in the three countries are often overwhelmed. “In El Salvador, there have been 20 assassinations carried out at rehab centers which are dominated by gangs,” said Stadthagen.

“The juvenile justice track is second class. Kids get the larger share of the blame.” In response to this counterproductive approach, the Alliance is encouraging Juvenile Justice systems to offer measures such as supervision, counseling, education and vocational training programs and other alternatives to institutional care for children.

“Our next step is to pursue advocacy and to deepen the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the circumstances governing juvenile justice. We’d like to bring in an academic component to help the process move forward,” said Stadthagen. “We are also considering a pilot program in Guatemala. There, kids in detention centers must visit a judge every three months, for those in rural areas they must travel sometimes more than 400 miles to see the judge because there is one juvenile justice judge in the entire country appointed to serve these kids. We are thinking of a virtual courtroom so that kids wouldn’t have to travel so far.”



Aida Luz Santos de Escobar, President of the National Public Security Council of El Salvador, speaking at the Regional Restorative Justice Forum’s opening ceremony. AJR Director Salvador Stadthagen is seated at right.

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As the SICA-led Alliance supports governments in meeting their commitments to improve juvenile justice standards in the region, there's a glimmer of hope for juvenile offenders and their victims to find reconciliation and a new beginning in life. USAID'S Regional Youth Alliance Project is implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. of Washington, D.C.

—Alexandra Pratt

ELECTIONS: A Framework to Deter Electoral Violence in Unstable Situations

Despite an arctic cold day, over 35 experts gathered at Creative Associates on January 7 to examine a draft Technical Guidance Handbook on Electoral Security. Although elections seek to advance the peaceful determination of governance and transfer of political power, addressing the persistence of electoral conflict and violence has emerged as a priority for USAID and other donors.

Broad participation in the workshop drew from the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the United Nations, the Helsinki Commission, academic institutions such as Princeton, American and George Mason Universities, non-governmental organizations such as the United States Institute of Peace and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and private security firms such as GardaWorld and Pax Mondial. This timely and constructive review provided comments and guidance to USAID and Creative on the development of this Handbook and an accompanying Electoral Security Assessment Framework.

“Creative’s electoral team set an example by inviting serious review and discussion by government and private experts,” Creative’s President & CEO Charito Kruvant commented. The Handbook is to serve as a complementary guide to USAID’s Democracy and Governance Assessment Framework and its Conflict Management and Mitigation Assessment Framework.

“While popular self-determination through the ballot remains a universal principle of governance, the persistence of electoral violence threatens to compromise this universality by usurping its premises of constructive political competition. In devising this Handbook and Assessment Framework, USAID and Creative seek to counter these threats to assure that elections remain peaceful instruments for parties to

achieve governance,” said Handbook author Jeff Fischer.

Still a work in progress, the Handbook is intended to assist USAID officers in developing elections programming throughout the world. While 57 percent of the world’s population lives under democratic governance, many nations continue to struggle to establish democratic processes in their countries. Western donors have long made a priority of allocating resources to ensure that fair and transparent elections proceed with minimal irregularities in post-conflict countries.

“The purpose of the Handbook is to provide USAID Democracy and Governance Officers, policy-makers and practitioners with strategies and methodologies to guide the development of policy and programming for electoral security,” Fischer said. “This strategic approach intends to develop electoral security systems that are sustainable and can be assisted by USAID programming initiatives.”



Election workshop attendees, Dorothy Taft, Director of USAID’s Office of Democracy and Governance, and William Lafontaine from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Given these goals, the Handbook is no small undertaking and could influence electoral programming for some time to come. The Handbook provides a methodology for USAID Democracy and Governance officers to identify potential targets of violence and establish likely perpetrators and their motives. The “electoral cycle” approach developed by the European Union and the United Nations Development Program is employed to identify points in the pre-election, Election Day or post-election phases when violence could occur. As threats may also vary by region, municipality or neighborhood, potential locations for violence also need to be mapped. Finally, the level of intensity of the potential violence is explored in order to determine what tactics will be employed by perpetrators to achieve their ends. By capturing such an understanding of the violence, Democracy

[continues on page 14 >](#)

EL SALVADOR: Indirect Path Brings Youth-at-Risk Program Officer to a Happy Place

Juan Jose Hernandez's professional trajectory has been anything but conventional. From the priesthood he turned to psychiatry and from there to becoming El Salvador's chief of police following a brutal civil conflict. Yet, says Hernandez, throughout these years, he was not meandering aimlessly.

Serene though with a contagious energy, Hernandez has travelled wide in search of self-understanding so that he can enrich the lives of those he serves. His story is as compelling as it is inspirational to those who come into contact with him.

"The seminary, psychiatry, the police, they all have a common purpose and that is to help others," said Hernandez, currently the program officer for the Regional Youth Alliance USAID-SICA project, which is implemented in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The goal of USAID-SICA is to provide constructive alternatives to a life on the street for youth-at-risk and former gang members. "I learned from the different fields: from the seminary, I learned empathy, from psychiatry, I learned science and in my years with the police I learned the significance of action."

At 13, Hernandez's mother took him to see the bishop after he informed her of his desire to become a priest. The bishop was none other than the late Monsignor Oscar Romero, a committed human rights advocate whose outspokenness led to his assassination in 1980. Though Hernandez did not join the seminary there and then, Romero told him if he still wanted to become a priest after his high school graduation, he could do so then. "He, Romero, told me, he would wait for me," Hernandez recalled. It was to be their first and last meeting, "but, [Romero] remains an inspiration for me and many others."

Over the next few years, Hernandez led the life of a typical teenager with few thoughts of the seminary. However, after graduating high school at 17, Hernandez entered the seminary. Five years later and two years shy of his ordination, Hernandez abruptly changed course, and moved to Italy to study psychiatry. "I would have been a priest at 24-years old. I was afraid to fail," Hernandez noted.

Despite the raging conflict in El Salvador, Hernandez returned to his country in 1988, and having had significant training in clinical psychiatry, he took a post at a psychiatric hospital. When the conflict ended, he redirected the course of his professional life by joining the national police force. "I felt I could most useful there, because after

the war there was a need to build the peace, it was my way of supporting the movement toward peace, public security. It was essential," said Hernandez who eventually became chief of police.

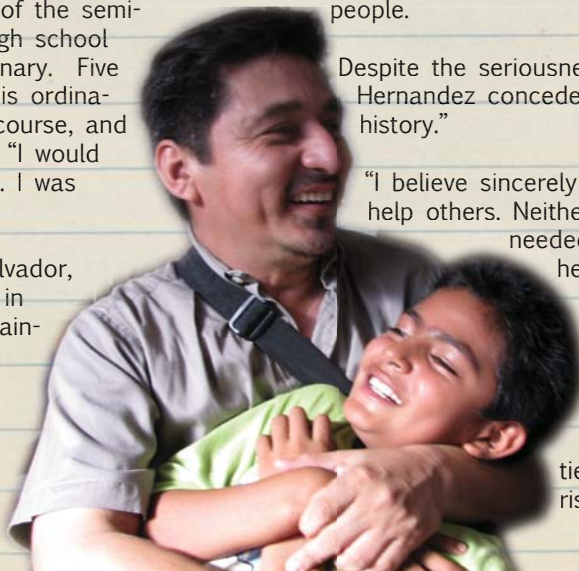
Spending nearly a decade with the civilian police gave Hernandez insight into the needs of the population and an awareness of those most likely to fall victim to crime. From the civilian police, Hernandez joined the UN Mission in El Salvador which later transferred him to their Guatemala office. In Guatemala, he joined a small USAID-funded program, the Youth Alliance Program, aimed at marginalized communities and youth-at-risk, the precursor of today's Regional Youth Challenge USAID-SICA project. Implemented by Creative Associates International on behalf of USAID, the youth project has mobilized communities and businesses in its efforts to rehabilitate former gang members and to provide safe spaces where marginalized youth spend free time constructively.

"Last year, 7 youth with whom we worked were killed by other gang members," said Hernandez. "You feel angry when they die, they're gone." Hernandez's natural calm and good humor faded momentarily in anguish. "But, at the same time you take some comfort in knowing that person had shifted his life in the right direction, was on the good side."

Hernandez has been deeply influenced by psychiatrist and holocaust survivor Victor Frankl who taught that, no matter what the situation, people have the freedom to choose the course that will alter their circumstances allowing them to transcend horrendous suffering. This human capacity to overcome dehumanizing circumstances by becoming spiritually and mentally whole again is at the core of Frankl's teaching and guides Hernandez's work with young people.

Despite the seriousness of his life's work, Hernandez concedes, "I am happy with my history."

"I believe sincerely that we are here to help others. Neither riches nor genius is needed" he says, "only a heart and a desire to help others. Creative Associates and USAID have given me the opportunity to help those who really need help in their communities, especially youth-at-risk."



and Governance officers can develop program responses to prevent, manage or mediate these threats.

While the expert comments are being incorporated into the draft, the Handbook is being further informed by field research into conflictive election environments undertaken by Fischer in Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Colombia. Once the Handbook and Framework are completed, the content will be developed into a curriculum for a training of trainers program for USAID Democracy and Governance Officers.

TAJIKISTAN: US Government Delegation Visits Quality Learning Project Teacher-Mentors

For years, even decades, Tajikistan’s children learned by rote memorization, a teaching method that does not foster critical thinking and is teacher driven.

But, over the past year, the USAID Quality Learning Project has trained 1,000 teachers in a new pedagogy that is child-centered—one that takes into account students’ learning styles and promotes the development of each child. This pedagogy teaches that learning is the result of a mind well formed rather than one that serves as a simple repository for data. Widely praised by teachers and beneficial to students, the new method of instruction aims to move a generation of teachers and students into the 21st Century.

Yet, the unfamiliar child-centered pedagogy has left some teachers wary of implementing the new methods, especially after the trainers have left. The training while extensive lasted only a few days. To bridge the gap between the “old” method and the “new,” the Quality Learning Project team initiated a mentoring program to bolster teacher confidence, a critical element in the long-term implementation of the new methodology.

“The training, above all, helped me to change myself and then my entire approach to the learning process and way of working with the kids and my colleagues. I am now much more aware of how to approach my colleagues and help them to change as well,” said Hadisa Jumaeva, a primary school teacher-mentor in



USAID’s Regional Mission Director, Andy Sisson (far left) greets training participants.

Kulob. “It is always difficult at the first stages to introduce new behaviors into professional lives, because old habits are constantly resurfacing.”

The Quality Learning Project’s mentoring program enables USAID to complement its training. The application of modern teaching and student assessment methods will continue in Tajikistan’s schools, ensuring maximum training outcomes.

The initiative caught the attention of U.S. Government representatives who visited a Quality Learning Project mentors’ training session in Kulob on January 20th. The delegation was headed by Necia Quast, the U.S. Embassy’s Deputy Chief of Mission in Tajikistan and Andrew Sisson, Regional Mission Director for USAID in the Central Asia Region. The new teacher mentors trained in this session will become part of an ongoing day-to-day teacher development program that is being introduced to the system.

After the training, Sisson joined participants in a discussion. Sisson was particularly interested in knowing the factors that affect student achievement and the formative processes that the teacher can use to identify student progress.

“We developed criteria and indicators to improve our mentoring skills. We reflected on what qualities were needed of a mentor and applied the training to develop such qualities. Throughout the training, we had to continuously evaluate our actions to make them measure up to the parameters we developed and agreed upon,” Boron Madiyorov, a training participant told the delegation. “This urged us to change something within us every time we behaved contrary to the mutually agreed parameters. For me, it was a wonder to see myself changed in such a short time!”

JORDAN: Training Workshop Boosts Teachers' Enthusiasm, Now Teaching More than a Job

Jordan's Ministry of Education is committed to producing teachers whose skills are sought after in a knowledge economy. This strategic undertaking is being assisted by the U.S. Agency of International Development's newly launched Education Reform Support Program (ERSP). Within the first nine months of implementation, ERSP is working hard to support training programs that boost the professional development of teachers.

In Jordan, teaching is a profession that has been historically regarded as boring. Teachers often felt static and lacked resources to foster creativity within their classrooms. This lack of enthusiasm was deadly to students' motivation to learn. Now, after participating in a series of four teacher training workshops, nearly 581 teachers have been given a glimpse of what their profession may be like as more than just a job.

"This is the first time I stay interested for three hours straight in a workshop, I would have definitely regretted it, if I had missed it!" noted Ashraf, a teacher who was initially cynical about the outcome of the workshops. Accordingly, after the ERSP workshops, Ashraf and other teachers are more motivated, and are gaining a greater understanding of the communication skills required to promote modern teaching techniques in their classrooms.

Over the course of six weeks, beginning in November 2009, 28 schools in 7 directorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan participated in the ERSP-managed workshops. Inspired by the workshops, a group of teachers decided to experiment with a non-traditional classroom format. In this experiment, two teachers specializing in two different subjects jointly lead a class to create a multidisciplinary lesson. In Irbid, a social studies and art teacher joined forces to create a class entitled, "Archeological Sites in Jordan."

Spurring kids' interest in education requires vision. The workshops' neutral environment generated in-depth discussions between principals and teachers who together created a vision for each school. This combined effort is leading to staff

becoming personally invested in their school mission, fostering basic teamwork skills and laying the groundwork to improve relationships throughout the school community.

The workshops have also served as a catalyst for several participating schools to develop monthly magazines to serve as communication channels between teachers, students and parents. "The magazine", suggested one principal, "can develop in the future to also reach the local community to make them more aware of the schools' accomplishments."

ERSP is managed by Creative Associates International of Washington, D.C.

— Costandi Tadros

"This is the first time I stay interested in a workshop for three hours straight, I would have definitely regretted it, if I had missed it!" said Ashraf, a teacher initially cynical about the outcome of the workshops.

UPDATE

Creative to Help Morocco Lead Change, Stem Tide of Drop-outs

USAID recently launched a new reform project with the Moroccan Ministry of Education. Through the “Support for Training to Improve Quality” project, Creative Associates will support the Ministry’s reform goals to improve teachers’ professional skills and help stem the tide of middle school drop-outs.

Creative president Charito Krivant underscored, “When education truly engages young people, their lives will be different. Those who stay in school are far more likely to delay starting a family and find success in the workplace. This has a broad and positive influence not only on their lives, but on their neighborhoods, their country and the regions where they live.”



The gap between policy reform and improved student performance is often wide. As Morocco moves its reform initiatives from theory to application in schools, ensuring that policy reform messages are understood and suited to school-based realities is the priority. On behalf of USAID, Creative will support Education Ministry leaders in Rabat and the Ministry’s Regional Education Academies in developing a common vision that supports an integrated teacher training system bolstered by post-training monitoring. The Creative-led team will help strengthen the links between training institutes and Regional Education Academies by adapting modules to the teacher training curriculum for instructors and school leaders, including inspectors.

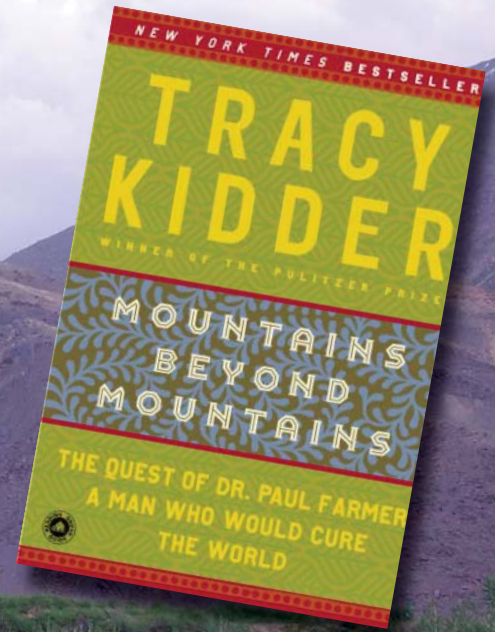
A key element of improving the quality of education is empowering teachers to lead change in their schools. By the end of the Education Quality project, the Ministry’s teacher training institutes will ensure closer collaboration among teacher trainers with an improved curriculum, including published guides for 21 middle school teacher training modules. Some 500 school leaders will be engaged to support teachers and school communities.

The Project will also test a curriculum innovation aimed at involving communities in activities to keep youth in school. Using the Passport to Success lifeskills training method, the project will equip young people with educational opportunities and professional skills that give them confidence to succeed in life. The approach highlights a service-focused learning program aimed at helping young people embrace the value of giving back to their communities and encouraging community leaders, including local businesses, to actively engage with youth.

“The middle school years are a key transition period in the lives of young people when they become increasingly involved in making decisions—including whether or not to stay in school—that will influence the rest of their lives,” said the Project’s Chief of Party Christina H. N’Tchougan-Sonou. “Youth are searching for relevant options for training that will ensure their futures, and the Moroccan government is committed to opening up a broader range of choices in support of these aspirations.”

MOUNTAINS BEYOND MOUNTAINS

A book review by Jane Casewit



It is a timely honor to present Tracy Kidder's remarkable book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*, to Creative colleagues and others who work to alleviate some of the burdens of those less fortunate than ourselves. The book's title is a Haitian proverb: Deye mon gen mon or "Beyond mountains there are mountains." A simple but fitting image for the challenges Haiti presently faces.

The January 12th earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 devastated hundreds of thousands already living on the fringes of what is humanly bearable. Tracy Kidder adeptly describes Paul Farmer's early years and brilliant academic and professional career at Harvard Medical School. This rich description leads the reader to realize that Farmer's destiny lay in making an indelible difference in the health of thousands of people. We read that Farmer was one of six children born into a modest family with a strict father and a devoted mother. During his childhood in Alabama, he first encountered Haitian migrant workers and spent several summers helping them pick fruit. Before long, Farmer's father moved the entire family to Florida where they lived in a small mobile home and then on a small house boat without running water. In spite of the family's cramped quarters and simple lifestyle, the young Farmer excelled academically. This period of his life prepared him for later challenges, such as enduring the wretched conditions of the dusty settlements in Cange, located on Haiti's middle plateau.

It was in Cange, we read, that Farmer sorted out his life goals and philosophy. Kidder chronicles how Farmer sought to understand the beliefs of Haiti's Vodun faith and employ these lessons in curing hundreds of people with malaria. Inspired by Catholic Liberation Theology, Farmer sheds light on his beliefs: "The fact that any sort of religious faith was so disdained at Harvard and so important to the poor—not just in Haiti but elsewhere, too—made me even more convinced that faith must be something good." It was also in Cange in the 1980s that Farmer met his companion for many of his decisive years in Haiti, Ophelia Dahl, the daughter of the famed children's author Roald Dahl. Ophelia Dahl's support and help is interwoven throughout

Kidder's account of Farmer's life and work in Haiti and his time at Harvard. Though they never married, Dahl is presently in Haiti coordinating the relief efforts of "Partners in Health," the organization she helped Farmer found.

Defying enormous odds, Farmer, Dahl and their Haitian and American collaborators raised the money to set up a health clinic for desperately poor people in Cange. In the process of curing thousands of cases of malaria and tuberculosis (TB), they discovered why many TB patients in developing countries are unable to be cured of TB even when treated with the most modern medications. Farmer proved that the poor in Haiti and elsewhere were victims of "multidrug resistant TB," a disease that, as Farmer notes, "makes its own preferential option for the poor."

Farmer discovered the underlying causes of this complex dilemma and was able to halt the spread of TB in Peru, Cuba, Siberia, Africa, and the suburbs of Boston, but he always returned to Haiti. By 1995, Farmer's founding organization, "Partners in Health" was building hospitals and health centers all over the country and sending out mobile clinics to treat every variety of human illness, without charge. "Partners" also distributes food to the hungry, delivers babies and conducts family planning visits. Over 120 countries have now adopted Farmer's prescriptions for treating the drug-resistant forms of tuberculosis and his models for public health for the poor.

This biography of Paul Farmer pokes at the unacknowledged uneasiness that many feel about our own place in the world. Kidder's account of how Paul Farmer vanquished this "ambivalence" is exemplary.

new faces



Lori A. McKinney joins Creative as a Human Resources Administrator where she will oversee recruitment, benefits, policies, and compliance for headquarters staff. In this capacity, Lori will also manage benefits for field staff.

Carla Antoinette Springs joins Creative as Human Resources Generalist where she will maintain records and manage procedures for personnel transactions, among other duties. In this capacity, Carla will report to Wendy Bradford, Creative's Director of Human Resources.

Robert "Sherman" Yehl joins Creative's Center for Stabilization and Development division as Legal Governance Advisor for the Local Governance Program III in Iraq, where he will be based. In that capacity, Sherman will provide "real time" feedback to the Senior Advisor of the Program on Iraq's implementation of Law 21.

Klaudia Youell joins Creative's Education, Mobilization and Communication division as a Program Associate, where she will provide day-to-day operations support to the Quality Learning Project being implemented in the Central Asian Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Klaudia will serve as a primary backstop for the Project's finances, working closely with the Project Director.

WASHINGTON, DC and WORLDWIDE



LEFT TO RIGHT:

Jennifer Chin joins Creative's Education, Mobilization and Communication division as a Technical Manager, where she will provide day-to-day technical and financial support to the Project Director for the Nigeria Northern Education Initiative.

Isaac Chipofya joins Creative as Finance Manager for the Education, Mobilization and Communication division's BESST project in Afghanistan, where he will be based. In this capacity, Isaac will implement and supervise the project's financial policy, budgets, and internal control measures in compliance with Creative and USAID policies.

Daniel Fickel joins Creative as Chief of Party for the Center for Stabilization and Development's CROWDED HOUSE project. Based in Afghanistan, Daniel will oversee all aspects of the project's day-to-day implementation.

Kathryn Erskine joins Creative as Recruitment Coordinator in the Office of Development and Administration's Planning and Development unit in Washington, D.C.

Raymond Clevenger joins Creative's Center for Stabilization and Development's CROWDED HOUSE project as Deputy Chief of Party. In this capacity, Raymond will work closely with Chief of Party Daniel Fickel to guarantee the project's successful implementation.

Creative's mission is to support people around the world to realize the positive change they seek.

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