



USAID Alumni Association

November 2016 UAA Newsletter

Mark your Calendars for Upcoming UAA Events

Friday, November 18, 2016 - noon. The UAA Economic Growth & Institutional Development book group will hold its next meeting. The reading is a review of the challenges in education titled "**The Need for Accountability in Education in Developing Countries**", by **Isaac M. Mbiti**, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Summer 2016. For further information contact Juan Buttari at jbuttari@verizon.net. The session will take place at the Circle Bistro Restaurant at Washington Circle N.W.

Wednesday, January 25, 2017 - UAA Development Dialogue at DACOR will feature **Ishrat Husain**, currently a Public Policy Fellow at the Wilson Center, formerly Pakistan's Central Bank Governor, Chair of the National Commission for Government Reforms and long-time World Bank economist, who will speak on "**Governing the Ungovernable**" - how to bring about improved governance in societies' with entrenched bureaucracies and rigid social structures.

New on USAIDalumni.org

- **Obituaries:** Several recent notices have been added to the [In Memoriam](#) page.
- Read the full report on the [2016 UAA Annual General Meeting](#). While you're doing that, click on the video links to see and hear the full event.
- In the [Forum](#), find out about 1) how victims of the OPM data theft may have to re-enroll for monitoring services and 2) how federal retirees will soon be able to donate to the CFC.
- In a recent UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue, UAA Alumni of the Year Award recipients, Paul and Kathleen Vitale, provided an intriguing presentation on their effort to help save the Maya textile tradition. Listen to it [here](#).
- In [Articles](#), take a look at 1) the ways ordinary citizens can influence government in helping to meet their needs, 2) an excellent article with superb graphics that explains the U.S. government's foreign assistance budget, 3) some good and bad news from the World Bank on poverty, 4) how refugees are now receiving cash instead of food to help meet their nutrition needs, 5) a Congressional effort to lengthen State Department FS tours to 4-6 years, and 6) how foreign aid is the surprise bipartisan success story of the US Congress.
- In [Web Links](#), view the latest edition of the USAID Impact Newsletter.
- In [Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities](#), several new job offerings have been posted.

Do you have news, an article or event you would like to share? Please send it to office@usaidalumni.org or, better still, post it on the [Forum](#).

Looking for someone with a USAID alumni background and skills to hire or as a volunteer? If you would like to post a job or volunteer opportunity, please email us at office@usaidalumni.org, Attn: Jobs/Volunteers.

2016 UAA Annual General Meeting

October 21, 2016 - Center for Global Development, Washington, DC

"Learning from History"

Over 160 UAA members, speakers, guests and USAID Young Professionals attended this year's Annual General Meeting at the Center for Global Development. The day's focus on the history of American foreign assistance programs was designed to highlight that many of the principles and objectives of today's USAID programs are rooted in beliefs, policies and actions dating back to the early days of this nation.



Photo credits: Barbara Garms

The Agenda for the day and the speakers' bio-data are [linked here](#). The full report of the AGM can be viewed at usaidalumni.org or [see a full video presentation of the event](#).

The AGM provides an opportunity to bring members up-to-date on organizational developments. Co-Chair Carol Peasley announced that contributing members now number over 300. The **re-election** to the Board of **Tish Butler** and the **election** for first terms of **Juan Buttari** and **Barbara Seligman** were announced.

Frank Almaguer, Chairman of the **Alumni of the Year Awards** Committee, announced that **Kathleen and Paul Vitale** and **David Garms** were this year's awardees. See the Profiles below.



Kathleen and Paul Vitale



David Garms

In her presentation, **USAID Administrator Gayle Smith** emphasized the many positive changes within USAID over the past few years, such as greater bipartisan support for foreign assistance and the increased respect for USAID in interagency fora. (See a full summary of her talk [here](#).)



Henrietta, Brian, Gayle, Peter

The final event of the day was the **panel of USAID Administrators** - Peter McPherson (1981-87), Brian Atwood (1993-1999) and Henrietta Holsman Fore (2007-2009) - along with the current Administrator. Their topic was "Lessons from the Past for the Next Administration." (See a summary of their discussion [here](#).) Read the CGD blog - Four Recommendations from Four Generations of USAID Leadership [here](#).

[Profiles of UAA 2016 Award Recipients](#) are below.

USAID Author Talks - We need your inputs

The Bibliography of USAID Authors was compiled in 2015, now has 190 titles and is updated quarterly with new books by former and current USAID staff, family members and FSNs. Visit the USAID authors page [here](#).

Flowing from the bibliography, this past year we have inaugurated a series of "Author Talks" with four presentations: Amb. and Mission Director Jonathan Addleton, Eric Chetwynd (in conjunction with the Wilson Center Urban Program), photographer Daniel Miller, and **Endangered Threads** creators Paul and Kathleen Vitale (in conjunction with the DACOR's Newberry Cultural Series).

Looking forward into 2017 we would like to receive your suggestions on future speakers in our Author series. Please scan the bibliography and let us know who you would suggest. Send your ideas to John Pielemeier at Jpielemeie@aol.com.

USAID Oral Histories - More Coming.

We are pleased to announce that USAID has entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) to conduct 50 new oral histories of USAID alumni. ADST will do so in collaboration with the UAA. USAID has indicated special interest in interviews of USAID alumni (including FSNs) with experience in the following USAID programs: Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, South Sudan, and supporting anti-apartheid groups in South Africa. Please let us know if you have experience working in any of these countries and would be interested in being interviewed by ADST/UAA representatives. Also, we need your help in identifying former FSNs to interview. If you know of former FSNs who are strong candidates, please contact **Carol Peasley**: cpeasley@usaidalumni.org. We will keep you posted as the program proceeds.

Alumni Profiles - Paul and Kathleen Vitale



Kathleen and Paul Vitale

Paul and Kathleen Vitale are this year's winners of the UAA's Alumni of the Year award in the international category, a first for a USAID couple. They work together to document traditional hand-woven Mayan textiles, save the weaving techniques threatened with extinction in war-torn Guatemala, and highlight the weavers. It is an exemplary partnership, utilizing the talents and skills of both to the benefit of people whose contributions to world culture might otherwise be lost.

In 2001 they inherited a collection of hand woven textiles from Kathleen's mother, which led them to travel to some of the most remote and dangerous corners of Guatemala to record the disappearing skills and products of traditional Mayan weavers. Their NGO, "Endangered Threads Documentaries," promotes the videos they have made on these weavers, publicizes the traditional weaving techniques, and raises funds to cover costs. Their work has been recognized by the American Association of Anthropology and shown at museums in San Francisco, San Jose, Berkeley, Seattle, Denver, Urbana, Providence, Miami, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Guatemala City.

Paul and Kathleen Vitale's international work began when they both volunteered for the Peace Corps in 1963. Paul's degree in city planning led to work in community development in Ecuador and self-help housing in Peru. Kathleen, with a background in art history, also taught and worked with local artisans. A 25-year USAID career followed, for Paul, focusing on urban and community development in Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, and Washington. Meanwhile, Kathleen turned to writing and photography, working and traveling in Ecuador, Peru and Brazil, and in the states becoming a prize-winning journalist in Reston, VA.

Family was also a big part of their activities, with three lively children, Grant, Beth, and Micaela. Children figured prominently in Kathleen's overseas work as she helped in the adoption of homeless children in Quito by American and European families, including Grant and Micaela in their own home. She also found time to teach history and geography at a local school.

After retirement, Paul worked as an adjunct professor at the University of Oregon, leading seminars on world urbanization. After stints in journalism, Kathleen worked for IBM until moving to Oregon where she made training videos for docents at the University of Oregon Museum of Art and produced documentaries on American and Chinese artists. The couple moved to California in 2000, for family reasons, where they inherited their textile collection and began their mission to

highlight Mayan weavers and give back to the Maya their ancient history of being superb textile artists by putting all their documentary work on Youtube.

Alumni Profiles - David Garms



David Garms

David Garms is the winner of this year's UAA Alumnus of the Year award in the domestic category, for his work on land and soil conservation in Virginia, as well as for volunteer work with agencies serving people with disabilities.

Working with the Loud Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Potomac Conservancy, Dave secured funding for innovative conservation programs to protect wetlands and protect soil against erosion. Then he put the new concepts into practice, protecting 15 acres of wetlands and stream via a USDA easement, and planting four acres of hardwood trees and 10 acres of native grasses. Virginia's Department of Forestry has recognized this work for the forestry management practices carried out on his 225-acre farm in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

Because the projects were a first for the county, Dave turned his farm into a training site for farmers interested in land conservation, carrying the work beyond demonstration and into implementation by area farmers, earning recognition from the SWCD for this training program. That the projects, begun early in the 2000s, are still continuing is evidence of their sustainability and potential for larger impact on the watershed.

Coupled with the work on soil and wetlands conservation has been person-to-person volunteer work with individual clients of Fairfax County's social service agencies, for example, tutoring an autistic boy, assisting people with disabilities in daily activities, as well as helping them deal with various bureaucracies, the latter being an area he knows especially well! Although of narrower impact, this work is noteworthy for the patience, skill, and sensitivity needed to work on seemingly mundane tasks with individuals with special needs.

Dave's USAID career reflects a long-time commitment to rural development, beginning with his farming experience in Minnesota. Starting as a Rural Development Officer in Vietnam in 1968 and then Bangladesh, he expanded his scope by moving into Program Officer work in the Philippines, Malawi, and Sri Lanka, along with a stint as India Desk Officer. That experience culminated in his

appointment as USAID Representative for Food Aid, U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Rome. Upon his retirement from that position, he applied his experience in rural development and program design to the above projects promoting land conservation and improved forestry management, which he expects to continue well into the future..

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USAID Alumni Association

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