



USAID Alumni Association

REPORT TO MEMBERS ON ACTIVITIES IN 2015 AND ON PROPOSED ACTIVITIES IN 2016-2018 TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS TOWARD UAA STRATEGIC GOALS

September 2015

In February 2015 the Board of Directors of the USAID Alumni Association approved strategic goals and proposed implementing measures for 2015-2017. This strategic plan benefited from input provided by UAA members in response to requests from the Board. The strategic plan sets out five operational goals and relies primarily upon the Association's five operating committees, each of which takes a lead role for implementing activities in furtherance of a strategic goal.

The Board intends to update the strategic plan in December 2015 by reviewing the existing goals and 2015 activities and then proposing implementing activities for 2016-2018. As a part of that process, it has prepared this report to members on progress toward the goals and implementing plans. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) on October 23, 2015, will provide an opportunity for members to reflect on the responsiveness to their interest of the current UAA goals and implementation plan. Following the AGM the Board will elicit membership views through a survey. The views of UAA members will be a primary source of guidance for the Board in updating the strategic plan for 2016-2018.

PART I. REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD UAA GOALS IN 2015

The five goals adopted for 2015-2017 and the implementing actions taken or planned during 2015 are summarized below to inform UAA members and to elicit their comments, questions, and suggestions.

Goal 1. Expand, maintain, and enhance beneficial relationships with other organizations and facilitate opportunities for USAID alumni to inform audiences and communities about development and the role of the United States and USAID. Lead: Public Outreach Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2015 UAA undertook the following actions:

- UAA strengthened collaborative relationships with DACOR, through expanding the jointly sponsored Development Dialogue programs to include informal Monday morning discussions over coffee in addition to the luncheon programs.

- UAA supported USAID's participation in the United States Diplomacy Center (expected to open in late 2016).
- UAA collaborated with USAID to arrange for training and materials for USAID alumni interested in communicating to the public information on USAID priority issues (initially ending extreme poverty and promoting democratic institutions).
 - o To date, 22 alumni around the country have received USAID training and are available to speak to a variety of audiences.
 - o Dialogue with USAID continues as the Agency plans to expand public outreach activities, including with the university community.
- UAA collaborated with Life-Long Learning Institutions around the United States to expand awareness of USAID alumni interested in offering lectures and participating in courses on development themes.
- UAA exchanged information and ideas on possible opportunities for collaboration with the American Foreign Service Association, the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, and the Center for Global Development.
- UAA raised its profile by publicizing its work on the Association's Linked-In page, which now has approximately 800 followers.
- UAA initiated a major effort to generate support for an independent and objective history of USAID's 55 years of development experience. This major study is also intended to provide guidance for current and future development programs. An estimated \$300,000 will be needed to finance the project. Initial steps in 2015 include:
 - o The Center for Global Development has offered to be the home for the project and to publish the final product.
 - o UAA has received more than \$150,000 in pledges from within the UAA community.
 - o Before the end of 2015 UAA will seek to raise additional funds, select an author and review committee, and begin research and organization of the book (and possibly ancillary materials in electronic format).
- UAA, with support from the USAID Knowledge Resource Center, developed and published on the UAA website a bibliography of books written by USAID alumni. The bibliography will be updated from time to time. It is also available on the USAID/KRC website and the USAID/KRC library has set aside a shelf containing some of the books listed in the bibliography.

- UAA participated in expanding coverage of USAID experience in the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training collection of oral histories. Steps in 2015 include:
 - o ADST completed two interviews of former USAID officers which will be posted in 2015.
 - o UAA has explored with USAID and ADST the possibility of funding for a larger number of UAA oral histories in the ADST collection.

Goal 2. Maintain and enhance a continuing relationship with USAID that will make alumni available to support the training, mentoring, and coaching of USAID staff on a systematic basis. Lead: Strengthening USAID Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2015 UAA undertook the following actions:

- UAA met with the Acting Administrator and other senior USAID officials to discuss various ways in which alumni could be supportive of USAID initiatives.
- UAA and USAID further expanded the mentoring program, which pairs experienced alumni volunteers with officers serving in USAID Missions. So far, the program has provided more than 50 mentors and a corresponding number of mentees in Missions around the world, including more than 20 mentorships that are currently active. A new program cohort is tentatively scheduled to begin in November.
- UAA recruited additional volunteer mentors to keep pace with expanded demand, including through a notice on the UAA website requesting expressions of interest.
- UAA and participating USAID bureaus conducted joint surveys of mentoring experience to identify successful approach and problems with a view to making adjustments that may improve the program.
- UAA published on its website information provided by USAID periodically on assignments, promotions, and departures of USAID staff (formerly published in USAID's "Frontlines"). This information has proven to be of interest to alumni as well as to current USAID employees.

Goal 3. Facilitate contributions by alumni and sharing of information with respect to USAID policies and developments and trends in development cooperation. Lead: Development Issues Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2015 UAA undertook the following actions:

- UAA launched a new page called “Perspectives” on the “Development Resources” section of the UAA website. USAID alumni are invited to submit to perspectives@usaidalumni.org short essays on development issues of interest to them and to comment on the posted essays. Initial submissions have addressed climate change, economic growth, and institutional capacity strengthening.
- UAA, at USAID’s invitation, provided detailed comments on USAID’s Vision for Ending Extreme Poverty, a major policy statement in furtherance of the USAID Mission Statement. USAID responded with an expression of appreciation for “extraordinarily constructive feedback on the vision” and the “invaluable....judgment, experience, and intellectual ballast” represented by USAID alumni.
- UAA organized interactive conversations on a broad range of topics relevant to the interests of international development and foreign affairs professionals. These are primarily the jointly sponsored UAA/DACOR Development Dialogues, which include both lunches and less formal Monday morning conversations over coffee. Events are publicized in the UAA newsletter and website. Audio transcriptions of these events are posted on the UAA website. Discussions in 2015 include:
 - o January – George Ingram on priorities for foreign aid reform;
John Sanbrailo on the history of US foreign assistance, 1950-2015
 - o February – Pauline Baker on the potential for resiliency in fragile states
 - o March – Stephen O’Connell on USAID and ending extreme poverty;
Scott Radloff on 50 years of US family planning assistance
 - o April – Rolf Anderson and Andrew Steer on climate change and development
 - o May – Lilian Pinea on adapting to climate change at the community level;
Shahid Javed Burki on reassessing US leadership of the global economy
 - o July – Bill Hammink on managing the complexities of the USAID Afghanistan program;
Masood Ahmed on the Arab Spring four years on
 - o September – Emmy Simmons on transforming food and agriculture policy
 - o October (scheduled) – Lester Brown on the transition from fossil fuels to solar and wind energy
 - o December (scheduled) – Steve Radelet on The Great Surge: The Ascent of the Developing World

Goal 4. Ascertain alumni interests on a continuing basis; expand UAA membership, including by adding new contributing members who reside outside the Washington area; increase opportunities for social events and interaction among alumni. Lead: Membership Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2015 UAA undertook the following actions:

- In January UAA conducted a survey of member interests and views on UAA priorities to guide completion of the current strategic plan.
- In February UAA inaugurated a new event, “Winterfest,” at the home of Dave Eckerson.
- In May UAA held its annual spring reception at the home of Alex and Pat Shakow.
- In July UAA organized its annual summer picnic at Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria, Virginia.
- UAA continued to expand communication with alumni to encourage increased registration on the UAA directory, membership (by making annual contributions), and active participation in UAA. Activities included:
 - o UAA participated in retirement seminars for USAID staff.
 - o UAA provided to USAID brochures encouraging UAA membership to be included in departure materials provided to retiring and other separating USAID staff.
 - o UAA engaged in outreach to alumni groups outside the Washington area.

As a result, at the end of September 2015, the number of UAA members exceeds 250 and the number of USAID alumni registered in the UAA directory exceeds 900.

- At the Annual General Meeting on October 23, UAA plans to recognize the contributions of outstanding USAID alumni who have provided significant post-retirement service in furtherance of international development or community causes in the United States

Goal 5. Assure that internal UAA systems and procedures provide effective, efficient and transparent management of resources and services to USAID alumni. Lead: Finance and Administration Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2015 UAA undertook the following actions:

- UAA organized a content-rich 2015 Annual General Meeting on the timely theme of “Building a New Consensus for Development and the Role of Foreign Assistance.” Panels will include former Members of Congress and Congressional staff discussing Legislative/Executive collaboration on foreign assistance legislation as well as Center for Global Development experts leading a discussion of USAID in the next Administration.
- UAA recruited for the 2015 election of Board members an excellent slate of capable leaders to help manage UAA activities and resources. For the first time, the slate of Board candidates includes a member who lives outside the Washington area, providing a valuable perspective for being responsive to our broadly dispersed membership.

- UAA further expanded and refined the content of its website to increase its value to alumni. The number of visits to the website increased as this site has become an increasingly useful and user-friendly source of information. New pages added in 2015 included:
 - o “Perspectives” (under the “Development Resources” tab), a platform where UAA members can express views on development issues and also comment on views that others have expressed there.
 - o The bibliography of books written by former and current USAID staff.

PART II. UAA GOALS PROPOSED FOR 2016-2018 AND PROJECTED IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

For the period 2016-2018 the Board proposes to retain the five goals adopted for 2015-2017. This will permit an additional year of experience to be gained with a projection of UAA activities to a more extended horizon. UAA members are encouraged to offer comments, questions, and suggestions regarding these proposals.

Goal 1. Expand, maintain, and enhance beneficial relationships with other organizations and facilitate opportunities for USAID alumni to inform audiences and communities about development and the role of the United States and USAID. Lead: Public Outreach Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2016-2018 UAA proposes to take the following actions:

- UAA intends in each year to develop a program of collaborative activities with other organizations with which UAA has shared interests.
- UAA intends in each year to continue to promote and add to the Bibliography of USAID authors
- UAA intends to expand its collaboration with USAID to inform and prepare alumni interested in public speaking on development themes.
- UAA intends to move forward on the independent USAID history, including:
 - o Completing the writing by the end of 2016.
 - o Implementing a publicity and dissemination plan in 2017.
- UAA intends to support USAID collaboration with the Department of State’s Office of the Historian to assure appropriate inclusion of development history in the Foreign Relations of the United States and other publications.

- UAA intends to collaborate with ADST to update and expand the USAID page on the ADST's US Diplomacy website
- UAA intends to continue to support the collection and organization of copies of USAID files retained by USAID alumni as contributions to the USAID archives, to fill gaps in the record and replace documents of historical significance that have been lost over the years.
- UAA intends to maintain and continue to add to the bibliography of books and articles by USAID alumni.
- UAA intends to pursue further expansion of the number of USAID oral histories in the ADST collection, including:
 - o Support for not less than three more interviews of former USAID officers each year in the normal ADST program
 - o If additional funding is made available, work with USAID to identify a diverse set of USAID candidates for an increased number of interviews (with a special effort to include more Washington-based staff, minorities, and women.

Goal 2. Maintain and enhance a continuing relationship with USAID that will make alumni available to support the training, mentoring, and coaching of USAID staff on a systematic basis. Lead: Strengthening USAID Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2016-2018 UAA proposes to take the following actions:

- In each year UAA will recruit, train and help to establish mentoring relationships for mentors in order to sustain the expanded mentoring program.
- In 2016, UAA will review the operation of the mentoring program and, in consultation with USAID, develop plans for its expansion, modification, or termination.

Goal 3. Facilitate contributions by alumni and sharing of information with respect to USAID policies and developments and trends in development cooperation. Lead: Development Issues Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2016-2018 UAA proposes to take the following actions:

- UAA intends to organize each year discussion programs focused on current development issues of interest to alumni. Possible subjects include the evolving international framework for development cooperation, changing patterns of development finance, partnering relationships (*e.g.*, with developing countries,

implementing organizations, and private sector entities), updates on USAID Forward, sectoral issues (*e.g.*, climate change, democratic governance and human rights, agriculture and food security, fragile states, global health, and poverty). These discussions will seek to strengthen relationships with USAID and the broader development community and to identify potential themes for more sustained engagement.

- Building on its 2013 experience with urbanization and 2014 experience with the African Development Forum, UAA intends to organize one or more series of meetings each year to address in depth selected key issues.
- UAA, in collaboration with DACOR, will organize eight or more Development Dialogue events at DACOR each year, with emphasis on themes being currently addressed by UAA.

Goal 4. Ascertain alumni interests on a continuing basis; expand UAA membership, including by adding new contributing members who reside outside the Washington area; increase opportunities for social events and interaction among alumni. Lead: Membership Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2016-2018 UAA proposes to take the following actions:

- UAA intends in each year to conduct a survey of alumni interests and priorities for UAA programs and activities, as well as communications preferences.
- UAA will circulate each month a newsletter containing articles of interest to alumni residing inside and outside the Washington area, including alumni profiles and photos of membership events. (All newsletters are archived on the UAA website.)
- UAA will schedule each year a range of programs and social events intended to respond to interests of members and potential members, including events outside the Washington area. Possibilities under consideration include:
 - o Annual Winterfest celebration
 - o Annual spring reception
 - o Annual summer picnic;
 - o Panel discussions and presentations on subjects of interest to USAID alumni, including Development Dialogues at DACOR;
 - o Discussions of post-USAID options for employment and other activities;
 - o Discussion of issues of particular interest to FSN alumni.
- UAA will seek each year to expand UAA membership and active participation by:
 - o Recruiting new USAID retirees, including through participation in retirement seminars;

- Encouraging, including through use of the UAA website and newsletters, USAID alumni to update their contact information, become and remain contributing UAA members, and help to identify other alumni who might be interested in joining UAA;
- Expanding outreach to former FSN employees and to non-Foreign Service alumni and encouraging their participation in the UAA.

Goal 5. Assure that internal UAA systems and procedures provide effective, efficient and transparent management of resources and services to USAID alumni. Lead: Finance and Administration Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, in 2016-2018 UAA proposes to take the following actions:

- In 2016 UAA will improve its system for reconciling records of membership, registration, and contributions received.
- UAA will expand the flow of information to alumni and identify ways to increase feedback from alumni to UAA.
- UAA will organize each year a General Meetings to report to members on the Association's management, finances, and current activities and to provide a substantive program on issues of broad interest to USAID alumni.
- UAA will recruit from among its members capable leaders to maintain sound management of activities and resources and will recruit additional volunteers willing to serve actively on UAA committees and carry out activities on the Association's behalf.
- UAA will continue to maintain a high quality website to inform and engage the Association membership community. The site will include such items as a calendar of events, articles, obituaries, employment opportunities, and an alumni directory.