



USAID Alumni Association

REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE USAID ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (UAA)

ON ACTIVITIES IN 2020

October 2020

UAA's current strategic plan sets out six operational goals and relies primarily upon the Association's six operating committees to take lead roles in addressing each of the strategic goals¹. This report provides a summary of progress made during 2020 in achieving these goals.

UAA, as a non-profit all volunteer membership organization, relies on ongoing communication among its members and with all levels of USAID staff, including senior leaders. There were unusual challenges during 2020, as noted throughout this report. Highlights from 2020 include the following:

- In March 2020, the world was impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and resulting wide spread of the Covid-19 disease with most countries shut down economically and socially while travel and other communications were severely restricted. As a result, UAA had to adapt:
 - With the exception of Winterfest held in February before the pandemic lockdown, UAA held social, informational, and business events virtually, either by teleconference or by Zoom.
 - Virtual meetings are expected not only to continue the social and professional connection among UAA members, but also to increase participation in local UAA events by those living both within and outside the DC metropolitan area.
- During the spring, USAID experienced leadership changes; UAA met with the new leadership and was able to successfully complete negotiations and the launching of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with USAID that should permit stronger support from UAA and its members to address several identified areas of desired collaboration.

REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD UAA GOALS IN 2020

The six goals adopted for 2019-2021 and the implementing actions taken or planned during 2020 are summarized below. Member comments on these are welcomed.

¹ For background on the USAID Alumni Association (UAA) and its purpose, structure, and functioning, review the updated 2021-23 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1. 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, the UAA Membership Committee undertook the following actions in 2020:

- Conducted, analyzed, and reported an Evaluation of the 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the 2020 Annual Survey of Members to the Executive Committee. Reported on the Evaluation and the Survey to UAA members in the newsletter and on the website. Data specific to each UAA Committee were shared with them.
- Successfully implemented this goal's activities in 2020, beginning October 01, 2019 through September 30, 2020, resulting in increased UAA **registered alumni** from 1,064 to 1,137 (a 7% increase from 2019). These are USAID alumni who meet the same eligibility criteria as for membership, whether contributing financially or not to UAA, to receive UAA emails or to request listing on the UAA Registry directory.
- This increase in registrants included 437 (18%) additional **contributing members**, consisting of those who are eligible USAID alumni who donate annually to support UAA operations. These contributors include:
 - 170 (34%) additional **Friends of UAA**, who are alumni wishing to make a more generous contribution of \$100 or more compared to donations of \$75 for alumni living within a 50-mile DC radius and \$25 for alumni living outside a 50-mile DC radius, outside the U.S., former FSNs, and associate members; and
 - Several **associate members**, consisting of widows, widowers, and former spouses and partners of USAID alumni eligible to join UAA. It is a non-voting category of membership.
- Recruitment efforts included the following actions:
 - Further developed a standard methodology for identifying potential new contributors among those who attend UAA events;
 - Sent tailored emails to those who attended events, newly registered without contributing, or who had previously contributed to UAA but had not yet contributed in 2020;
 - Met with USAID Foreign Service and General Schedule imminent retirees attending the Foreign Service Institute Career Transition Center seminars to inform them about the UAA, and successfully encouraged many of them to join;
 - Provided USAID Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) senior staff the updated UAA brochure and sent it to Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) around the world and to Executive Offices (EXOs) worldwide to share, in turn, with soon-to- retire FSNs and already retired FSNs;
 - Placed a recruitment advertisement for UAA membership in the Foreign Service Journal;
 - In September, held the annual picnic virtually via Zoom to encourage UAA registrants and contributing members around the country and overseas to participate along with those living in the DC metropolitan area;
 - Attracted new volunteer talent to the Membership Committee;

- Explored with the Public Outreach Committee how we might reach out to geographic groups of alumni living outside the DC Metropolitan area to support local UAA chapters, or “satellite hubs.” While this effort has been slowed down due to the novel coronavirus restrictions, the Membership and Public Outreach Committees continue to focus on how we may proceed to identify one or two areas where prominent clusters of alumni reside outside the DC area; and
 - Initiated analysis to compare contributing membership changes in and outside the DC Metropolitan area.
- Supported continuing strong participation by alumni at UAA’s broadly attended annual events, most notably the Annual General Meeting in the fall.
 - As noted above, virtual meetings were expected not only to continue the social and professional connection among UAA members, but also to increase participation in local UAA events by those living both within and outside the DC metropolitan area.
 - The Winterfest social event, drew approximately 60 members and guests, the same number of people who attended the previous year;
 - The Annual Summer Picnic in September had over 70 virtual members and guests compared to 44 physically present last year;
 - The AGM this Fall is expected to exceed the 2019 attendance of 140 contributing members and guests, as it will be held via Zoom.
 - Sent a monthly newsletter to the increasing number of registered alumni. The newsletter includes a calendar of events, links to the website, and a monthly profile on the interesting post-retirement activities of one member.
 - Assisted in a comprehensive communications system review and implementation of the UAA newsletter and website improvements, begun in 2020 and still underway.
 - The Awards Committee plans to present the UAA’s signature annual Alumni of the Year awards at the 2020 AGM in November to two members, each nominated by a UAA member, for their outstanding contributions to their communities at home and abroad. [Note: The posthumous Lifetime Achievements recognition of two distinguished UAA members at the 2019 AGM was an exception with no plans to be repeated in future years.]

Goal 2. Maintain and enhance a continuing relationship with USAID, including management of a program to make alumni available to mentor USAID field-based staff. Lead: Strengthening USAID Committee.

Efforts to achieve this goal expanded in 2020: specifically they include a new, comprehensive MOU signed between the UAA and USAID to provide gratis support in a variety of areas as well

as conversations about a range of new activities which may take place under the MOU and UAA's ongoing Mentoring Program.

- The UAA-USAID MOU: In June, UAA Co-Chairs (Anne Aarnes and Nancy Tumavick), USAID's Deputy Administrator (Bonnie Glick), and USAID Counselor (Chris Milligan) signed the first-ever comprehensive, multi-purpose MOU between UAA and USAID. The MOU covers a variety of areas (discussed in the July Newsletter). August and September have been devoted to establishing the organizational and implementation structures and documents to execute the MOU. UAA is hopeful that these documents will be finalized before the AGM and will guide volunteer activities moving forward.

Upcoming activities for MOU implementation during the remainder of 2020 and 2021-23 are likely to include:

- Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs) and Strategic Planning -- Among the areas of potential support, Board members discussed assistance to USAID's Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) Bureau in assisting Mission-level CDCS preparation. The conversation continues to evolve.
- Internships -- UAA is discussing with USAID expanding internships to assist USAID recruitment goals.
- Mentoring Program: 2020 was a 'banner year' for the Mentoring Program which partners UAA members with USAID FSOs. The Program's 9th Cohort kicked off in the Fall of 2019. As planned, Cohort 9 expanded to provide both direct mentoring for those new to Senior Leadership Group (SLG) assignments and direct mentoring support for DC-based graduates of the Payne Fellowship Program. The expansion doubled the size of the mentoring program. More specifically:
 - SLG Expansion: The 9th Cohort expanded to mentor new SLG officers which tracks with the Agency's effort to support FSOs as they enter senior positions in the Agency. This program provides mentoring directly to new Deputy Mission Directors (DMDs) serving in their first overseas SLG assignment. For Cohort 10, and again for 2021, we expect to provide 15-18 new DMDs with mentors.
 - Payne Graduates Expansion: Payne Fellows receive mentoring and coaching during their 2-year period of study prior to joining USAID, but upon joining USAID they lose their formal mentoring connection. While some mentors continue to support the new Payne Graduates, they do it informally since the Graduates are initially assigned to Washington, DC. The transition from Fellow to USAID USDH is significant and challenging and warrants specific support to new Graduates. Mentoring helps to ease that transition and thus helps ensure the diversity of USAID's labor force. Learn more about the Payne Fellowship Program at www.paynefellows.org

- Looking Forward: First, we expect that the Mentoring Program 'agreement documents' will be modified to conform to the new MOU. We're in 'discussions' with the Office of General Counsel (GC) and hope for a smooth and speedy agreement on the documents. Also, our reporting will evolve into a more consistent, clear format over the course of 2020. And always, demand for Mentors continues to rise as we approach Cohort 10 and 2021, so we need to recruit more mentors and assure candidate mentors that we provide professional training and committed support. (Note for those reading this report: Let us know you're interested by contacting: Roberta Mahoney and Rose Rakas, Committee Co-Chairs (rosetrakas@gmail.com and robertacairo@hotmail.com).

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, the UAA undertook the following actions in 2020; however, It should be noted that the disruption of “normal” activities caused by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic significantly impeded efforts to maintain a more robust effort to contribute to the Goal.

- **Development Issues Committee** The Development Issues Committee held one “in-person” meeting at Arizona State University’s D.C. “campus” on January 23, 2020 with a USAID team, led by **Maureen Shauket, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) Bureau** and **Donald Niss, Chief of the Policy, Planning and Strategy Office of the Bureau for Africa**. The USAID Team provided an overview of the process that led to the “country road maps” for USAID client countries and of the revised Country Development Strategy Statements (CDCSs) which are due to be completed by every USAID Mission by the end of calendar year 2020. At the conclusion of the meeting, the USAID Team said it would welcome the insights of UAA members who might wish to volunteer their services to PPL and relevant Bureaus to strengthen the CDCSs of Missions open to valuing their inputs. This led to a series of follow-up actions described below.
 - The coronavirus pandemic scuttled plans to hold further “in-person” meetings of the Development Issues Committee for the remainder of the year. However, once the UAA created a Zoom account in early July, the Committee organized a “virtual” meeting and discussion on August 27 led by **Andrew Herscowitz, newly appointed Chief Development Officer of the recently created U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** the successor to OPIC. Mr. Herscowitz, who moved over from his USAID position as Coordinator of the Power Africa initiative, described the formation of the DFC and some of the challenges facing the organization during its first nine months of operation. He focused his remarks on

his role in strengthening the development focus of the DFC and of maintaining close links with USAID.

- The August 27 virtual meeting was a breakthrough for the Development Issues Committee as the number of members registering for the event, 61 in all, was roughly triple the number who normally are able to participate in the in-person meetings and included a significant number of UAA members who live outside the greater D.C. area. An event announcement was sent to all UAA contributing members and was publicized in the UAA newsletter and website. A future virtual meeting will be scheduled for later in the year and efforts will be made to include continued participation by members outside the D.C. region.
- **UAA/DACOR Development Dialogues.** UAA has traditionally organized a series of talks 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 lunchtime events and less formal Monday morning conversations over coffee. In 2019 eleven such events were held. In 2020, we started with two in-person events in January and February, and through October held three additional events, done virtually, two with former USAID Administrators. It is expected that one or more additional events will take place before the end of the year. The one advantage of virtual programs has been our ability to reach a wider audience outside the Washington, D.C. area. Well over 125 alumni members and a number of DACOR members “attended” these latter two events. Individual event announcements are sent to all members on the UAA list and are publicized in the UAA newsletter and website. Audio for most events is posted on the UAA website, and video for the virtual events is now available on the website as well. Presentations in 2020 included:
January - AFSA President Eric Rubin spoke at a UAA/DACOR lunch on **“The State of the Foreign Service and its Future”**.
February – A panel of retired senior USAID officers spoke on **“Afghanistan: Lessons Learned for America’s Future – Insights of USAID Mission Directors to Kabul”**. The panel was moderated by **Bambi Arellano** and comprised of **Craig Buck, Alonzo Fulgham, Bill Hammink and Skip Waskin**.
June – **Gayle Smith**, former AID Administrator and current President/CEO of the ONE Campaign, spoke on **“Attacking Poverty in a Rapidly Changing Global Environment”**.
September - Henrietta Holsman Fore, current Executive Director of UNICEF and former AID Administrator, spoke on **“From USAID Administrator to UNICEF Executive Director - Challenges and Opportunities”**.
October – **Jeremy Konyndyk**, former Director of USAID’s OFDA and now a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, spoke on **“Responding to Pandemic and Humanitarian Crises”**.
- **UAA Book Club** The UAA Book Club, under Stuart Callison’s leadership, was likewise affected by the corona virus pandemic during the year. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, the Club held two meetings at the Bistro 1521 Restaurant in Arlington.

Subsequent book club meetings unfortunately had to be suspended due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

- On November 20, 2019 **Lee Roussel** led a discussion of the *Climate Casino*, written in 2013 by William Nordhaus.
- On January 15, 2020 **Jim Fox** led a discussion of *Blowout*, written in 2019 by Rachael Maddow.

Copies of the reviews prepared for discussion are available on the UAA Book Club Reviews section of the UAA website.

For its next meeting, to be re-scheduled when possible, the Book Club has selected *The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite*, written in 2019 by Daniel Markovits. The discussion will be led by **Bobbie van Haeften**. The Book Club is looking into the possibility of holding its next meeting virtually on Zoom.

- **Collaboration with USAID on the CDCS Process** Following the suggestion of USAID senior staffers in January that they would welcome the participation of UAA members in improving the CDCS process, Development Issues Committee (DIC) members began a discussion with PPL leadership on creating a mechanism which would allow interested alumni to lend their perspectives and experience to Missions drafting CDCS parameter setting statements (Phase 1 of the CDCS process) and to later stages of the process as needed. The DIC recruited 10 UAA members to volunteer their services to this effort. However, the lack of an overall Agreement between UAA and USAID on volunteer services, together with on-going personnel changes to UAA's contacts in PPL and competing demands of PPL staff, hampered progress in initiating this effort.

By the time the UAA and USAID signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to govern relationships between the two organizations in late June, the CDCS Phase 1 process had largely been completed and Missions were at least in the Phase 2 Results Framework stage. The eventual involvement of **Maura O'Brien, Acting Senior Advisor in the Office of the Counselor, the assignment of Rayma Baran** to shortly succeed Ms. O'Brien and the persistence of the UAA's point person to interface with USAID on MOU volunteer issues, **Roberta Mahoney**, led to renewed discussions on ways to move forward. Ms. Baran suggested that given the advanced state of development of the CDCSs it might be more productive to have UAA volunteers lend their experience and perspectives to willing Missions throughout the overall Program Cycle. These discussions are on-going with hopes that appropriate arrangements between UAA volunteers and Missions can be structured in the coming months.



Goal 4. Compile and publish a readable independent history of USAID’s nearly 60 years of development experience to increase understanding of USAID’s accomplishments and the lessons learned that can guide current and future programs. In further support of this goal, increase the number of USAID oral histories and build a bibliography of books by USAID authors.

Lead: History Project Committee

In furtherance of this goal, the UAA undertook the following actions in 2020:

- **USAID History Project** Our author, John Norris, completed his manuscript by late August, 2020. The manuscript, entitled *THE ENDURING STRUGGLE - The history of the U.S. Agency for International Development and America’s uneasy transformation of the world,* has received very positive endorsements already from several former USAID Administrators. Throughout the drafting process, the UAA Advisory Committee, comprised of Alex Shakow (Chair), Jim Michel, Carol Peasley and Dan Runde, provided advice and concrete suggestions to complement John’s well-written and very interesting drafts. Updates on progress were provided throughout the year in UAA Newsletters and on the UAA website. The last few months of 2020 have been focused on finding a commercial publisher in order to provide access to a broad public audience. [We are pleased that a publisher has been found and a contract signed with a publication date in the first half of 2021.] We also expect to complete the terms of Norris’ contract and make the final payment to him by year’s end.
- **Oral Histories** Early in CY 2020, UAA worked with the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) to prepare a proposal to USAID for a follow-on grant to expand the number of USAID oral histories done by ADST. The \$150,000 grant proposal was submitted on March 20, 2020 to cover the costs of an additional 70 oral history interviews and videos. In conjunction with the proposal, UAA members have had a series of meetings with senior USAID leaders to encourage USAID approval. In mid-September, we learned that USAID could not fund the proposal this year; they will consider for the next fiscal year.
- **UAA Bibliography of USAID Authors** This extensive bibliography project (conceived and led by John Pielemeier), with 284 titles, is now much more accessible than in the past. At the beginning of the document (updated quarterly) there is a full Table of Contents that can quickly be scanned to find the name of a favorite author or colleague. Then, thanks to the technical support from Tish Butler and Ven Suresh, you can simply click on the attached link which will take you immediately to that entry in the bibliography. Readers are encouraged to try this much simpler system to using the bibliography. For example, you might look up several new additions by former USAID Chief Economist Constantine Michalopoulos, including the intriguing *Ending Global Poverty: Four Women’s Noble Conspiracy.* Others are *Reflections and Remembrances,* a book of poetry by Michael Hacker, *Mongolian Countryside,* a book of photographs by Daniel Miller, and *Africa Memoir,* a memoir/reference compilation of three books by Mark

Wentling. A September 2020 update includes books by Roy Stacy, Alexi Panehal and FSN Victor Masbayi. You can find the Bibliography at:
<https://www.usaidalumni.org/bibliography-usaid-authors/>.

Goal 5. 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, the UAA undertook the following actions in 2020:

- UAA continued to strengthen collaborative relationships with DACOR, through expanding the jointly sponsored Development Dialogue programs (see above under Goal 3 for detailed list of speakers). The UAA also contributed \$1,000 in 2020 to the DACOR-Bacon House Foundation for the House Preservation Fund.
- UAA has also continued to strengthen relations with other like-minded organizations by working closely with the board of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC). Regarding the latter, UAA had a meeting in 2020 with the senior leadership to explore possibilities and ways to link UAA members to USGLC educational events outside the D.C. area. Our AFSA meeting resulted in AFSA publishing a quarter-page advertisement about UAA (prepared by the Membership Committee) urging AFSA USAID retirees to join UAA. In return, UAA published a link on its website encouraging Foreign Service Officer alumni to join AFSA as retirees.
- UAA raised its profile and connected with USAID alumni around the world through its Linked-In webpage, which now has close to 1,100 followers.
- The UAA's Public Outreach Committee also met with the incoming Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) of USAID's Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) to discuss opportunities for UAA collaboration with LPA activities aimed at building better understanding by the American public of U.S. foreign assistance.
- UAA is reviewing the Agency's current "USAID 101" Power Point, its tool for New Employees' orientation, to suggest improvements for its use by USAID alumni around the country when speaking with the American public about USAID and the value of U.S. foreign assistance.
- Similarly, UAA has posted on its website the curricula used by many UAA and other professors for courses on international development. This will facilitate sharing among

them to improve their own curricula, as well as for new Alumni who wish to teach or speak publicly.

- UAA is examining its alumni zip code directory to identify geographically proximate groupings of alumni. In 2020, UAA identified several prominent geographical clusters, most notably in Florida, New England, New Mexico, North Carolina, California, and the Seattle/Portland areas. Conversations have begun to assess the interest and readiness for some of these groupings to form UAA satellite hubs in order to encourage both social and public outreach activities.
- UAA is exploring reaching out to U.S. universities and USAID Missions, with appropriate USAID HQ support, to pilot new Overseas Graduate Student internships at Missions overseas.
- UAA continues to participate in the AFSA- led Education and Public Outreach Committee that meets quarterly with government, private sector and non-governmental organizations dedicated to public education on foreign affairs, foreign assistance and the importance of such to the political and economic benefit of the United States. (Note: due to Covid 19, the committee suspended further meetings beyond the first quarter of 2020.)

Goal 6. Assure that internal UAA systems and procedures provide effective, efficient and transparent management of resources and services to USAID alumni.

Leads: Finance and Administration Committee and AGM Committee.

In furtherance of this goal, the UAA undertook the following actions in 2020:

- The UAA Annual General Meeting was organized as two virtual meetings given pandemic restrictions. A substantive webinar on climate change and development, scheduled for October 30, will include Kerri-Ann Jones, former Assistant Secretary of State, and Masood Ahmed, President of the Council on Global Development (CDG), discussing the broad development issues and challenges related to climate change. Bob Ichord, of the Atlantic Council, will moderate discussion by three panelists of strategic priorities and challenges in health, agriculture, and development finance related to climate change. The second meeting, on November 6, will include discussions of UAA activities such as advocacy policy, mentorship program, UAA reports, election results, and awards.
- Two UAA Board members' terms will end in 2020; both are eligible for second terms and have been invited to stand for re-election. The contributing members will vote on their re-election and the results announced at the 2020 AGM.

- Under leadership of the UAA’s part-time Administrative Assistant, membership and directory databases and Constant Contact sub-lists have been continually updated, thereby improving outreach and communication to the membership. The Administrative Assistant’s contract was renewed for 2 more years, with an increment in both salary and number of hours which may be billed per month reflecting the increasing value of his work to achieving our goals. This has been especially important as we ventured into virtual meetings in order to continue our work this year.
- The contract with the author of the USAID History was extended through December 31, 2020.
- With the replacement of the Treasurer with Carol Dabbs and the Webmaster with Tish Butler, we have begun the transition from our founding members who initiated these critical functions for UAA.
- We maintained our separate bank accounts for operating expenses and the history project. Under the leadership of the UAA Treasurer, new separate monthly Financial Reports and Budget Reports were initiated, providing the Board a thorough monthly picture of the financial standing of UAA.
- A subcommittee of the Board was established to review the formal and informal internal controls of UAA. Completed in June 2020, the following are that committee’s major findings requiring action, and the corrective actions taken or planned:
 - While UAA is generally following good practices for an organization of our size, UAA financial policies and procedures are not adequately documented—these procedures will be documented for Board approval in 2021;
 - UAA has not to date undertaken an independent financial review/audit of its financial records, largely due to the delays inherent in working during the pandemic-- UAA’s accountant will be contracted to prepare a financial compilation and review covering 2019, and, if sufficiently useful, a similar report will be prepared annually for the Board; and
 - The Treasurer was both approving invoices and making payments, which should be separate duties—at the June meeting, the Board separated the functions of invoice approval and payment.
- As was the case for 2017 and 2018, the IRS information return for 2019 required a 990 long Form, rather than the 990N postcard return. It was prepared by our accountant and submitted prior to the extended due date.
- Following a 2020 review of UAA communications with particular emphasis on the website by Board Secretary Margaret Neuse, the UAA undertook a significant overhaul of its website with an emphasis on clarifying information for member registration,

archiving outdated information, and ensuring current, accurate, and relevant information across the many pages of the website. Utilization of the website remains high.