



USAID Alumni Association

September 2021 Newsletter

Note from the UAA Board

The extraordinarily challenging situation regarding Afghanistan continues to consume much of our attention. We remain very concerned about the future of USAID FSNs, retired FSNs and Afghan partners and collaborators. We will continue to send along important information as we receive it to USAID retirees registered with UAA. Stay alert for email messages.

This has been a busy and productive year for UAA. This fall you will receive UAA's annual report with highlights of major accomplishments. Later in September, USAID managers and UAA representatives will meet to discuss progress in implementing the USAID/UAA MOU. At the end of October, we will host the UAA Annual General Meeting; it will take place, again, as a virtual event given ongoing concerns with the delta variant. Stay tuned for time and agenda. We hope you will join us! UAA Board elections are coming up, and if you are a contributing member, we request that you vote. Winning candidates for the UAA Board and winners of the UAA annual awards will be announced at the AGM.

Regrettably, the UAA picnic this month is canceled due to resurgent coronavirus pandemic concerns.

Finally, UAA's accomplishments and productivity rely on the active participation of our members in the committees. We hope you will consider joining and working on: Development Issues, Public Outreach, planning for the AGM, Membership, Strengthening USAID through mentoring support for USAID staff, or Finance and Administration. Check the UAA website for names of the co-chairs of each committee, and let them know of your interest by sending an email to office@usaidalumni.org.

Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

VIRTUAL -- Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.
EDT -- The **Development Dialogue at DACOR**, hosted by DACOR and UAA,

will feature **John Norris** in conversation with retired USAID Mission Director **Carol Peasley** about John's recently published volume ***The Enduring Struggle: The History of The U.S. Agency for International Development and America's Uneasy Transformation of the World.*** They will discuss his experience in writing this book and the interplay in USAID's history between development and diplomacy before leaving ample time for a Q&A period. To register for this discussion, please click [here](#).

CANCELED – **Sunday, September 19, 2021, 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. EDT** – The **UAA 11th Annual Summer Picnic** is canceled. The UAA leadership regrets the need to forego this annual event at this time due to the coronavirus delta variant surge that is highly infectious to both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons indoors and outdoors. We look forward to getting together soon.

VIRTUAL - **Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. EDT** – The **UAA Development Issues Committee's** next meeting will focus on "Personal Reflections on Afghanistan." Panelists will include:

- Ambassador **Earl Anthony Wayne**, former coordinating director for development and economic affairs and deputy U.S. ambassador in Afghanistan, currently Distinguished Diplomat in Residence at American University School of International Service;
- **Hilda M. (Bambi) Arellano**, former coordinating director for development and economic affairs in Afghanistan, currently Board Director at CORUS International; and
- **James A. Bever**, former Director of the Independent Office of Afghanistan-Pakistan Affairs, currently a member of the UAA Board of Directors.

The meeting is open to all UAA members who have made a contribution to the UAA in 2021. Please register [here](#) for this event by c.o.b. September 20. All registrants will receive information on how to join the Zoom meeting on September 21. In a change from recent meetings, we will take direct questions and comments from the "gallery," and ask that you keep your interventions concise.

VIRTUAL – **Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm EDT.** Former USAID Assistant Administrator and now CEO of The Carter Center, **Paige Alexander**, will be our guest for the **UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue** to be held virtually (virtual). Her topic will be "Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope – The Work of The Carter Center." Please join us in welcoming Paige back to Washington as we learn about the extraordinary work of the Center, including, but certainly not limited to, its pioneering election observer role. Watch for an announcement closer to the event to register to attend.

VIRTUAL -- **Friday, October 29, 2021, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. EDT** – The **UAA Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will be held virtually via Zoom

and not in person due to continuing pandemic concerns. We have invited Administrator Samantha Power to provide the keynote address followed by a Q&A session with UAA Board members. Topic for our major panel is "Development Cooperation in the International Response to COVID-19 and Efforts to Advance Health Systems Strengthening." Please click [here](#) to read more AGM details.

Contributing UAA members are welcome to participate but the UAA membership contributions for 2021 must be received by September 30 to ensure an invitation. Please check the UAA website listing [here](#) to assure that you have contributed in 2021.

New! on USAIDAlumni.org

In Memoriam: Sadly, the In Memoriam page features nine obituaries of USAID colleagues, including Thomas Robert Ross, Sidney Kidd Bliss, Thomas Elliott Johnson, Idris M. Diaz, Peter A. Gajewsky, Larry Cowper, Roger Simmons, Ann Morales, and Tresja Denysenko.

As an unusual and tragic item for UAA to post, we draw your attention to the death of an active USAID DART team member Ms. Tresja Denysenko. Read the tribute to her in the statement from USAID Administrator Samantha Power which appears [here](#).

Articles: Our late July and August array of articles under the Development Resources tab included the following:

- **New!** [Power Play: USAID's Administrator Makes the Case for Global Engagement, More Focus on Effectiveness](#) (CGDev by Erin Collinson and Sarah Rose, July 21, 2021)
- **New!** [Biden revives Trump's Africa business initiative; focus on energy, health.](#) (Reuters by Doyinsola Oladipo and Andrea Shalal, July 27, 2021)
- **New!** [What is DFC's mandate? Debate over a bill turns up many answers](#) (Devex by Adva Saldinger, July 27, 2021)
- **New!** [Senators introduce bipartisan bill to expand foreign aid partnerships](#) (The Hill by Rafael Bernal, July 28, 2021)
- **New!** [Biden administration releases plan to tackle 'root causes' of migration](#) (**Devex by Teresa Welsh, July 30, 2021**)
- **New!** [House bill boosts US foreign aid funding, removes abortion restrictions](#) (Devex by Adva Saldinger, August 2021)

Bulletin Board:

- **New!** [Organizations Assisting Afghan Refugees](#)
- **New!** [Petition on Behalf of Afghan Refugees](#)
- [Peace Corps to Ambassador: Frank Almaquer in Honduras \(ADST Oral History\)](#)

- [Appointment of New Assistant Administrator -- Colleen Allen for AA/Bureau of Management](#)
- [Enduring Struggle: Why USAID Plays a Critical Role in the National Security Realm](#)
- [President Biden announces his intent to nominate Amy Searight to AA/ASIA at USAID](#)
- [Transcript of the Hearing for Isobel Coleman, Nominee for USAID Deputy Administrator for Policy](#)

ADST: John Norris on “The Enduring Struggle”



On July 29, **The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training** (ADST) held a virtual Diplomatic Lunch Discussion, hosted by its President Susan Johnson, featuring **John Norris**, author of the recently published book ***The Enduring Struggle: The History of The U.S. Agency for International Development and America's Uneasy Transformation of the World***. In conversation with UAA and ADST Board Member Jim Bever, Norris spoke in general terms about the book and particularly on the 60-year history of competing visions of development and diplomacy. The Q&A period that followed focused as well on how development can best serve U.S foreign policy and national interest. Click [here](#) to watch the video.

USAID Histories

In coming months there will be numerous occasions for UAA members and others to see reports about, or hear directly from, John Norris on his just published book, ***The Enduring Struggle: The History of the U.S. Agency for International Development and America's Uneasy Transformation of the World***. The book is available directly from the publisher at a 30 percent discount at rowman.com (use promo code [RLFANDF30](#)) or from Amazon.

As noted by all reviewers thus far, the book is extraordinarily well researched. For example, 63 individual ADST oral history interviews of former USAID and State officers are cited, along with books written or edited by such alumni luminaries as Sam Butterfield, Barry Riley, and Janet Ballantyne, as well

as reports and articles by countless other USAID alumni. You may well find yourself or friends on the pages! Continue to read about ongoing plans [here](#).

Annual Vermont Development Wallah's Picnic

On August 4th, some 22 Vermont Development Wallahs -- consisting of USAID alums, spouses and friends -- gathered in Rochester, Vermont to celebrate in person once again. The group enjoyed a fun get-together with warm reconnections, good food and refreshments. Anne Aarnes and Susan Fine spoke briefly about a UAA initiative to encourage new regional chapters. If you are interested in learning more about this initiative for the Northeast, please contact Susan Fine at finesusanf@gmail.com.



(From left, kneeling) Mike Van Dusen, Jim Bednar, Ann Van Dusen, (standing) Jason Weisfeld, David Oot, David Sprague. Jean Baker, Monica Knorr, Fritz Gilbert, Susan Fine, Anne Aarnes, Steve Sinding, Anne Tinker, John Westley, Tracy Atwood, Connie Carrino, Joan Westley. (Attending but not in picture) Jock Cony, Ellen Frost, John Henderson, Bill Pedersen, Jeff Sharat.

Annual Call for UAA Volunteer Mentors

The UAA Mentoring Program begins its 11th Cohort this autumn! Join Us! The program rests on a partnership between UAA volunteer mentors and USAID Foreign Service Officer (FSO) mentees and remains wildly popular, and successful, with participants. USAID FSOs value UAA mentors, their experience, and their capacity to listen and help put mentee issues into perspective;

mentors derive deep satisfaction from their conversations with newer USAID FSOs and camaraderie with other UAA mentors.

The program has grown rapidly over the last few years, roughly tripling in size. We intend to analyze the implications of our recent growth, and integrate that understanding with the summer 2021 evaluation of the program. We know we will need more mentors to meet demand for the program. Please join us! We provide professional training, support, and camaraderie. You provide us with an average of two hours of your time each month, talking with USAID FSOs facing issues and concerns you faced during your career. These are among the most rewarding hours you will have each month!

To join us, please complete the mentor profile by clicking [here](#) to summarize your experience to help us match you to a promising FSO, or just let us know you are interested in being a mentor. As you express interest, please let us know if you: are continuing to work with a mentee from an earlier Cohort, are willing to take on more than one mentee, have deep geographic or technical skills to share, would like to work with a mentee in the Senior Leadership Group or with particular life experiences, or have anything else you might tell us that will help us make a good mentor-mentee match. Please send your expressions of interest to Roberta Mahoney (robertacairo@hotmail.com) or Rose Rakas (rosetrakas@gmail.com).

Call for Volunteers to Engage in UAA Public Outreach

The UAA is actively expanding into a number of important areas of interest and welcomes additional volunteers to join the Public Outreach Committee to assist in these activities. New committee members are needed to participate in discussions about public outreach opportunities and ways to encourage UAA members to share their knowledge about development issues; the benefits of overseas development assistance to the United States; and the role USAID, other U.S. Government entities, non-governmental organizations and private contractors play in developing and administering U.S. development assistance programs.

We are looking both for members who would be willing to serve on the committee as we develop ways to educate the American public about development assistance, and for members who may be interested specifically in assisting with our continuing efforts to establish regional UAA branches. We are engaged currently in preparing presentation material that members can use in public settings, and in working directly with organizations which are open to our actively addressing issues of mutual interest. We very much appreciate those who already are assisting with the regional branch formation and know that those members would equally appreciate some assistance.

For more information, please contact either Beth Hogan (bethhogan123@gmail.com) or David McCloud (dmcccloudinterdev@gmail.com), co-chairs of the Public Outreach Committee.

Alumni Profile: Madhumita Gupta



Madhumita Gupta was bitten by the 'development' bug at an early age! Raised as a World Bank (WB) brat, the family dinner conversations would center around the challenges of international development. Her travels to different continents during home leave and R&Rs brought home the realities of a world of "haves and have-nots."

Madhumita left Calcutta, India when she was nine months old. Her formative years were in England. At sixteen, she recalls gliding into New York Harbor at 6:00 a.m. on the QE2 – and as the mist cleared, there was Lady Liberty!

Madhumita tried to shake off the development bug! She switched from a masters in economics to an MBA and joined the private sector in the United States and India. However, an internship at the Brookings Institution drew her back to the field of international development. By the time she joined USAID/India, she'd

already worked for a number of years at the World Bank (WB) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris and had authored studies for the Organization of American States and Danish International Development Agency.

Madhumita left the safety of policy-oriented assignments at the WB for the challenge of field experience at USAID/India. She found the diversity of India, both in terms of challenges and solutions, addictive. She had the benefit of coming into the mission with a wide range of experiences, including competitive supply-demand studies, industry analysis, large-scale surveys and evaluations, and macro-economic analysis.

In 1992, she joined USAID/India, where she served as Mission Economist and Deputy Office Director for the Offices of Economic Growth and Program; Director of the Office of Education, Governance and Strategic Activities; and Senior Advisor for Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships. She was the Mission representative on a Harvard Institute for International Development panel, a member of several Donor Coordination committees, and the site officer for three Presidential visits (Clinton, Bush and Obama) to India.

Post retirement, Madhumita returned to the United States to continue work on short-term consultancies with different implementing partners for USAID and WB. She's also writing and illustrating 29 children's stories (10 completed), featuring the diversity of India; she just finished a 'How To' book on creating collages and is desperately seeking a publisher. She loves rummaging through antique shops and performing volunteer work at the Smithsonian Institute. Currently, while a travel captive of the coronavirus in India, Madhumita is working through a number of NGOs and charitable organizations to provide those affected by covid-19 with clothing, medical equipment, medicine, blankets, etc.

Madhumita would welcome hearing from former UAA friends and colleagues at mgupta8456@gmail.com.

Newsletter Schedule

The next newsletter will be sent on October 4, 2021. We hope you enjoy receiving this news of your fellow alumni activities. If you have information you would like to share, your contributions are welcomed. Please send the information, along with a captioned picture of the event, date, and people shown, to office@usaidalumni.org.

Make Your 2021 UAA Membership Contribution
USAID Alumni Association

