



U.S. Military Donates 10,000 Radios to the Afghanistan Primary Education Project

The U.S. military has donated 10,000 radios to the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) helping ensure that teachers in 18 provinces can now tune into APEP's Radio-based Teacher Training (RTT).

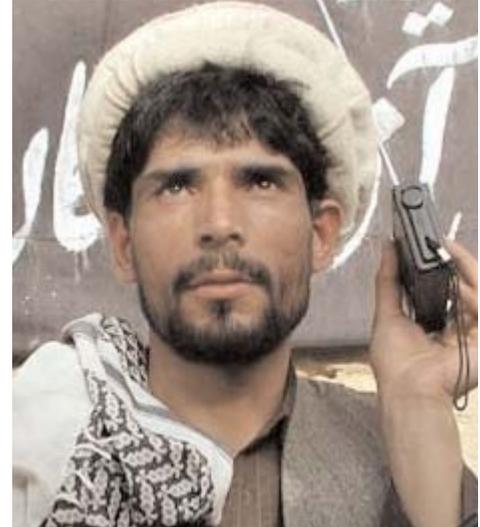
Seven days a week, the RTT program airs 12-minute broadcasts in Pashto and Dari. Teachers across Afghanistan are turning in to hear the latest news on teaching practices and subjects.

The radios were distributed by APEP's other partners who manage the accelerated learning activities component across Afghanistan. APEP is funded by USAID and implemented by Creative Associates.

Once a week, the RTT program broadcasts an episode in a serial drama that reinforces the importance of education. The radio shows appear to attract teachers and mainstream audi-

ences. Afghans of various backgrounds, especially youngsters, are tuning in to the dramas for entertainment. Many children are drawn to the programs, perhaps in part because about a half-dozen child actors play roles in the scenarios. It's rare for young listeners to hear others their own age on the radio. RTT program casts also include male and female teachers. The RTT program is managed by Media Support Solutions, a British NGO, one of APEP's implementing partners.

One RTT program supporter is the governor of Paktika Province, Gulab Mangal. A former broadcast journalist on Radio Free Afghanistan, he asked APEP for 2,000 radios. He then had them distributed to teachers 22 districts of Paktika. In the following weeks, he monitored both the RTT programming and the local teachers' reactions to it.



AFGHANISTAN

photo by Creative Associates
An Afghan man uses a donated radio.

see page 2 >

APEP Renewed, Expanded

After a long and arduous negotiation process, the expansion of the Afghanistan Primary Education Program was finalized in March, 2004 bringing to \$87 million the cumulative APEP budget.

The expansion, agreed upon by USAID, key Afghan ministries and Creative Associates, will extend APEP's activities into 14 new provinces in addition to the three provinces-Faryab, Baghlan, and Nangarhar-that participated in the first phase of the project. This second phase will continue to target primary education in four key areas-accelerated learning with a particular emphasis on serving over-aged girls, teacher training, textbook production and distribution, and capacity building within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education.

Most notably, to support capacity building efforts, an Education Support Services Program has been added to assist the Ministries of Education and Higher Education through enhancing infrastructure, programs, and materials to respond to the increase of students entering the education system.

Albania: Fighting Human Trafficking

The growth in the trafficking of human beings in Albania has prompted the U.S. government to kick off a policy based on the three 'Ps': prevention, protection, and prosecution of those who traffic in humans.

In May, a dynamic mix of people committed to ending trafficking gathered in Tirana, Albania to launch the Albanian Initiative: Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking or CAAHT.

The 100 participants included members of eight Albanian ministries and government offices, 30 Albanian NGOs, UN agencies and USAID partners.

The CAAHT program is USAID funded. Creative Associates is implementing the effort according to the Albanian anti-trafficking community's need to further develop trafficking prevention and improve reintegration services for trafficking survivors.

The U.S. government's sponsorship addresses the needs of civil society, law enforcement, judicial reform and political collaboration in an effort to end trafficking.

Celebrating Success: APEP Staff Appreciation Day

see page 5 >



Inside this Issue

- Ad Campaign Tackles Guatemala's Past page 2
- Teacher Trainer Reveals Iraq Experience page 3
- Creative Produces APEP Video page 4
- Liberia Recovers with Help from Grants page 8
- A Message from President Charito Krivant page 10

Creative Launches New Web Site, www.caii.com



Campaign Urges Guatemalans to Reckon with Past, Build Future without Torture

In December 1996, the Guatemalan Peace Accord ended more than three decades of devastating civil war.

The social and political reconciliation of crimes carried out during Guatemala's conflict will take some time to heal.

But the healing has been helped along by an innovative media campaign led by Creative Associates' USAID Human Rights and Reconciliation Project, or HRRP. The campaign set out to raise public awareness of the war's atrocities.

"If we don't know our past, we can't construct a better future," goes one of the slogans in TV and radio spots and newspaper ads.

The reconciliation campaign relied on a leading advertising agency, BBDO and collaborations among four local NGO's, two international agencies and the Guatemala Human Rights Ombudsman's Office. The result was a six-month multi-media campaign that also sought to raise awareness of the need to heal war scars and unburden the nation of its violent past.

Yet many Guatemalans are still unaware of the atrocities that unfolded during the conflict, when at least 200,000 people were killed and millions displaced or were never heard from again.

Now in its final month, the campaign has penetrated communities across Guatemala. TV spots on 11 channels plus local cable stations have reached an average audience of more than 800,000 people a

month, according to media tracking. In May, the campaign reached 65 percent of Guatemala's TV viewers or an estimated one million viewers in the capital city area alone.

Five different radio spots are being transmitted on six radio stations. Guatemala's main newspapers have both run ads and posters will soon adorn bus stops.

Meanwhile, an art show, "The Art Behind the Truth," has invited painters from across Guatemala to become inspired by the truth and see their work exhibited in one of the country's acclaimed museums. And more than 1,000 third graders in 20 schools across Guatemala are taking part, designing puppets to play roles in puppet shows on human rights and conflict resolution. The child artists are involved in painting murals on the theme of truth.

Since in 2001, Creative Associates' HRRP efforts have mobilized citizens to protect human rights, work with communities to initiate remembrance activities, encourage coordination among human rights organizations and increases awareness of children lost during the civil war.

HRRP emphasizes networking, grant-making and technical assistance, mass education and social mobilization programs to benefit civil society organizations. The HRRP works with locally-based counterparts and relies heavily on Guatemalan interlocutors to promote human rights.

Since 2001, 83 grants valued at \$1.5 million have been committed to local civil society organizations working in the five regions that the civil war hit hardest. ■



GUATEMALA

A poster from the Human Rights Media Campaign sponsored in part by Creative Associates is one of a series designed by one of the world's top advertising agencies. It reads, 'If we don't know our past, we can't construct a better future.'

U.S. Military Donates 10,000 Radios to the Afghanistan Primary Education Project

(contd. from pg. 1)

"Radio has the potential of making positive changes in people's attitudes," Gov. Mangal said recently during a visit to Kabul where he met with APEP staff. "When they hear the instructions to teachers coming over the radio, they know that education must be important. They want education for themselves and their children. And when they hear on the radio that girls are getting education, they want that for their own daughters as well."

Gov. Mangal had come to Kabul to finalize details for establishing the first local radio station in his province. Presently, the province is served by national radio broadcasts. But Gov. Mangal says he wants to ensure that even the remotest regions of Paktika get clear broadcasts.

In the village of Sultani, about 25 kilometers outside Paktika's capital, Sharen, village elders and the local shura have listened to the RTT programs and have

decided that their girls and young women should attend school. In a recent breakthrough, the leaders of Sultani also announced that all women in the village should vote in the upcoming national elections in September.

"We talk about building a nation," Gov. Mangal said. "And here you can see it happening before your own eyes. Radio carries the message to the villages. The villages are ready." ■

Dr. Hind Rassam Culhane, RISE Teacher Trainer Finds Relief, Hardship and Hope for Future Teachers in Iraq

Flying across the desert from Amman to Baghdad, Hind Rassam Culhane realized she was home while passing over flourishing groves of Iraqi palms, a vibrant reminder of Iraq's beauty.

Iraq's palms are unlike the palms anywhere else, she reminded the audience during a recent visit to Creative Associates, where she spoke about her role as Senior Education Advisor and Teacher Training Coordinator for RISE.

Tall and sturdy, these palms give dates, a food that in many ways is central to Iraqi culture, cuisine, and perhaps a symbol of determination to survive in harsh conditions. "The palm trees were a beautiful sight," she said.

But beauty and remembrance gave way to confronting the harsh reality of Baghdad under occupation. Although she, like many Iraqi-American exiles, dreamed of returning to an Iraq free of Saddam Hussein, her relief collided with anguish. Speaking through tears, she said: "This has been an emotional journey for me. Iraq brings me to tears. For those of us who were Iraqi-Americans returning to Iraq after a long period of being away, we only dreamed of the day Saddam would leave."

Rassam Culhane spoke to headquarters' staff eager to hear about the challenges she confronted while administering teacher training under RISE, the USAID funded and Creative Associates implemented project that set out to meet Iraq's education needs after years of neglect under Hussein's rule.

Rassam Culhane has a Ph.D. and has had a long career in academia; her work in Iraq for Creative was her first exposure to development. Still, her success came at considerable personal sacrifice. During her stay in Iraq, she would return to the United States to tend to her husband's health. Soon, however, she was back on a plane to Baghdad.

It was during that first trip to Baghdad in July 2003, however, when Rassam Culhane and the RISE team—which included Deputy Chief of Party David Carroll and Regional Director Semere Solomon—set out to the Sheraton Hotel. She described the trip to the hotel as shocking because of the ravages of war.

"The looting and destruction of Iraqis to their own capital was disturbing," she said. "When we arrived at the Sheraton, it was in shambles as were most of the hotels in Iraq. You could sit in a chair and it would break from under you, you could turn on the shower and it would flood. The toilet had no seat."

Rassam Culhane, with the other members of the RISE team and Dorothy Mazzaka, Senior Education Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority, reported to work the next morning at the temporary Ministry of Education offices in the Athamia district of Baghdad. Their job was the "de-Baathification" of the ministry.

Upon arrival, they were confronted by a mass of people pleading for jobs and services. The pleas would only presage the difficulties that awaited.



photo by Angela Aldave
Dr. Hind Rassam Culhane speaks of her Iraq experiences.

Reflecting on those first days, Rassam Culhane said: "What sustained us was that we were very focused on doing a good job, although we faced many constraints: no security, no electricity, excessive heat."

In addition to the harsh conditions and dire social needs for jobs and services, the team also dealt with the challenges of ordinary Iraqis who expressed a common refrain: "You Americans, you bring tanks, you are the most powerful nation, but you can't start electricity."

As an Iraqi-American, Rassam Culhane felt the strain of meeting expectations of both Iraqis and Americans. She met this challenge by reminding herself that those who work abroad whether in

Iraq or just anywhere are ambassadors who must live up to their responsibilities to both sides.

Speaking of her work with RISE, she said she began from ground zero. "It's one thing to get a plan and another to implement it," she said. At the outset, she assessed the teacher training capacity in Iraq.

She discovered the Iraqi Institute of Teacher Training and Development and paid a visit only to find it in ruins. "There were no chairs, no tables. The dean of the Institute was a Baathist and so had been discharged."

In her intrepid research, she found teachers eager to hear more about teacher training, "But they were suspicious, mistrustful. They said 'what do you have to teach us,'" she said.

Finally, in September the first training of master trainers took place at Baghdad's Palestine Hotel. "Iraqis are enthusiastic and we discovered the talent to help us carry out our training," said Rassam Culhane. She found a number of individuals who came forward and offered their expertise in video-taping, power point and other technical skills which they had acquired by nighttime pirating of the Internet, a media that Hussein's intelligence services monitored but only during the day.

Rassam Culhane, who was instrumental in designing the teacher training program, said she viewed its unfolding as a work in progress. "We learned as we went along what workshops worked and what didn't," she said. She said the addition of a workshop on values addressed issues of responsibility, rights, and civic values.

"The first day of the teacher training we were met with resistance," she said. "The teachers essentially told us they know it all and that we weren't going to teach them any methods that they didn't already know." She responded to the resistance by assuring teachers that they had something to offer to the training and by inviting them to stick around.

Characteristically forthright, she is also diplomatic. Many teachers stayed, still others joined. And naysayers were invited to leave if they didn't find it worthy of their time. Such is the life of a teacher trainer in a conflict zone.

One tactic used to shake teachers out of their comfort zones was to ask them to bring their old lessons plans to the workshops and revise them. The teachers balked.

The breakthrough came when one teacher stood up and told colleagues to tell the truth, many in the room hadn't written lesson plans in decades.

see page 10>

Creative Produces APEP Video, Reveals Lesson Learned: Education Key

On a rubble-strewn road in Afghanistan sit the remains of a tank, a symbol of previous wars, enemies and a country's disintegration. It's a jarring scene like so much else in Afghanistan. But stories of renewal and hope have also become more common -- as in children reading from new text books in open-air classrooms.

These scenes, the counterpoint to Afghanistan's collapse, unfold in a film produced by Creative Associates that chronicles how Afghanistan's violent past and present, to varying degrees, may be overcome in an innovative education program that is guiding children along the path to brighter futures through learning.

The program is the Afghanistan Primary Education Project, or APEP, funded by USAID and implemented by Creative Associates.

The film begins as APEP senior field researcher, Isaq Negargar, introduces the viewer to Afghanistan's conflicting truths:

"The history of Afghanistan was a struggle between two extreme tendencies - one, the tendency of imposing change on the society and the other not to let the society accept change," said Negargar.

These provocative scenes are the introduction to the film that takes the viewer to the challenges APEP confronted and its eventual successes.

The APEP project was started to administer education capacity building--accelerated learning, teacher training and textbook printing--in 2003 after the fall of the Taliban. As Negargar relates, the consequences of Afghanistan's two extreme tendencies have had dire, and devastating, consequences for the country. It is programs like APEP that take the viewer to a new

Afghanistan, one not often seen in footage on the nightly news.

By interweaving the voices of students, teachers, and community leaders, the program's filmmakers, Rob Davenport and Lazarina Todorova, reveal APEP's impact on Afghans and their enthusiasm for education. The film was accomplished with support from Creative President Charito Kruvant and Senior Advisor Bill Kruvant.

Although the pursuit of education presents difficulties to teachers and students alike, various scenes reveal surprising, even shocking, realities of affording education to children in conflict environments. One girls classroom in Jalalabad sits a few feet from a major highway, between the wall of a home and an irrigation ditch. As trucks rumble past their open air classroom, students astonishingly appear focused on their teacher.

The scene shows the resiliency of students as well as teachers. "I rented this space with the room next door. In this portion I created a classroom and I live next door in the other space," one teacher tells Creative. "Our students are very happy ... despite the inconveniences of our lack of roof and the noise of the highway. Sometimes it rains here and it can be cold but despite this our students love to come here and study."

One school girl, Salima, is asked what she would say to those who carry weapons. She answers that she would tell them "to put away those weapons and start working or studying in order or them to help their people and reconstruct their country. It doesn't matter if they are a boy or a girl, they need an education."

The revelation that class could be held in the open air with bright-eyed and motivated students is one of the film's most poignant scenes. And there are more surprises for the viewer as

when several men express their support their daughters' educations. One man, a refugee for 12 years, said that during exile he discovered the need for education and that it should be equally available to all. Even in rural communities assumed to have more conservative views on education for girls, the film reveals the seeds of new possibilities.

"I think you can't change a society if you don't change the minds of the people and the only way to change the minds of the people is education. You educate them, you prepare them to examine ideas, to choose from the ideas and accept the ideas, and to change their lives," Negargar said.

Sometimes as a matter of cultural sensitivity, filmmaker Davenport, a blond and blue-eyed American, would wear Afghan clothing to blend in. "We hoped to create a space for Afghans to tell their story, to celebrate their schools and communities, and to share this humanity with program stakeholders. Most Afghans hold education in high regard, for both their daughters and sons," he added.

"Having a small camera helped because with a small camera, people aren't thinking journalists or news - often people don't take you as seriously, which can be an asset," he said.

Negargar reappears in the last scene and further reflects on Afghanistan's reality. "I found the society ready for change," he says. "This is a change in attitude and this change in attitude was brought forth by the bitter experience of 25 years of war and destruction. They have destroyed their own country with their own hands and now they're ready to rebuild it with their own efforts. I want to be a part of this process." ■



AFGHANISTAN

photos by Rob Davenport

From left to right: Dil Afroz, a radio coordinator of APEP's "It's Great to Learn" program; an outdoor girls' classroom in Jalalabad and Isaq Negargar, APEP senior field researcher, all featured in Creative's APEP video.

Celebrating Success: APEP Staff Appreciation Day



AFGHANISTAN

photo by Creative Associates
Child performers regale 120 people at APEP appreciation day.

Nearly 120 people attended the first annual "Celebrating Success: APEP Staff Appreciation Day," to commemorate the commitment and hard work of Creative's Kabul field office staff, partners and others over the past year.

"We hope to make this an annual event," said Peter Parr, Chief of Party for the Afghanistan Primary Education Project in Kabul.

APEP staff, their families, representatives from USAID, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, partner organizations and local Afghan groups attended performances by children who sang traditional Afghan songs. The Afghan Mobile Mini Circus for Children also regaled the crowd.

The child actors belong to APEP partners Media Support Solutions and the Afghan Mini Mobile Circus which work with broadcasters in developing countries to create radio and TV programs about social issues, including teacher training, health education, gender, good governance and the environment. The mobile circus is an Afghan-Danish NGO which also provides psycho-social support

to children in difficult circumstances through informal education, drama and sports.

A traditional Afghan drummer led "Attan," the national dance of Afghanistan, for more than an hour to conclude the festivities. But before leaving, each child received a coloring book, crayons and candy, leading a few of them to think it was a typical day for their parents who work with APEP. Program coordinator Mohammad Hassan's children told him they want to go to work with him every day.

"It used to be like this in Afghanistan," mused Hassan, program coordinator for the Afghan Development Association, one of nine partner organizations working with APEP. "When I was a child, we sang and danced all the time and there was a real sense of community."

As his children clapped their hands to the beat of the drummer setting the rhythm for the Afghan national dance, Hassan said: "The last 20 years have been very difficult for my country, and events like this are a reminder of what it used to be like here and what it can be like again." ■

Creative Associates Partners with Microsoft

Creative Associates is teaming with Microsoft Corp.'s Latin American Division to support the software giant's Partners in Learning initiative.

With Creative's vast experience advising educational and civil society institutions in Latin America, it is the perfect partner to help Microsoft design guidelines for a regional grant-making program to improve education standards and introduce new technologies in the classroom.

"As an industry leader, Microsoft has a responsibility to help make technology more accessible and affordable to students and teachers," said Maggie Wilderotter, Microsoft senior vice president of business strategy. "Through feedback from our government customers and educators, Microsoft has developed the Partners in Learning initiative to provide a sustained investment in technology and training to help students focus on learning and teachers focus on teaching."

The Partners in Learning initiative will employ a comprehensive approach to the challenge of empowering teachers and students. At the heart of the initiative is the Learning Grants program which will provide more than \$250 million worldwide in cash grants over the next five years, of which \$50-\$60 million will be distributed to Latin America over a four-year period. The cash grants will help

deliver technology skills training to students and teachers and assist in Information Communications Technologies integration in curricula and learning.

Part of Creative's role with the Partners in Learning will be to initially produce and deliver a grant making tool kit that will serve as a manual for education and civil society institutions in developing educational content, training methodologies and implementing new technology into local curricula. Internet access is still limited in Latin America; the Partners program will seek to reduce this technology gap. Creative has also offered to evaluate grant proposals and to provide input for the grant management process.

Microsoft funding will also support the establishment of local Microsoft® IT Academy Centers in conjunction with local advisory councils, education institutions and training providers. The Microsoft IT Academy Centers will use a variety of training methods to deliver student skills certification, leadership and teacher development, curriculum and assessment tools, school-based technology support, and research. The Microsoft® IT Academy Centers' goal is to empower schools to boost student achievement through teacher leadership. "We are excited about working with governments and educators to address local challenges and continue advances in education and learning," said Wilderotter. ■



EL SALVADOR

photo by Majella van der Werf
To read about a Creative Associates sponsored conference in El Salvador on "The Role of Civil Society in Transparency and Anti-Corruption: Best Practices," see www.caii.com



Children pose for photo.

photo by Creative Associates



Children dance the Attan, the national dance of Afghanistan.

photo by Creative Associates

Scenes from the APEP



Girl with flag watches Afghan Mobile Mini Circus for Children performance.

photo by Creative Associates



Dr. Zafar, an APEP employee, leads the Attan, the national dance of Afghanistan.

photo by Creative Associates



Three women enjoy a moment at Staff Appreciation Day .

photo by Creative Associates



Clown performance by the Afghan Mobile Mini Circus for Children.

photo by Creative Associates



Staff Appreciation Day



APEP staff and families enjoy the Afghan Mobile Mini Circus for Children Performance.

photo by Creative Associates



Afghan drummer performs for APEP staff, partners and families.

photo by Creative Associates

Liberia Recovering Through Grants, Partnerships

Creative Associates in Liberia and the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives are working to prevent conflict and increase access to education as part of the Liberian Transition Initiative's conflict prevention and youth training efforts.

Creative is OTI's implementing partner for the Liberian Transition Initiative (LTI) program, which provides assistance in four areas: good governance, transitional justice, media and youth training.

Since the program's March launch, OTI and Creative Liberia have given \$1.2 million in grants to Liberian agencies. LTI launched in March 2004 to help consolidate the gains of the Accra Peace Accord signed by two Liberian armed factions and the Government of Liberia on August 18, 2003.

In early April, as the UN restarted disarmament activities throughout Liberia, university and high school students, many of whom had been out of school for several months as a result of the wide-

spread civil conflict, took to the streets of the capital to protest the lack of progress in reopening and rehabilitating Liberia's public education facilities. The students wanted to see immediate school improvements.

In an effort to defuse the crisis, LTI implemented an \$18,000 grant for equipment to the Inter School Sports Association (ISSA) of Monrovia, providing 320 soccer balls, 60 basketballs, 160 pumps and 12 soccer nets to 158 public high schools in greater Monrovia. The grant, which received specific praise from the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, the Honorable John Blaney III, provided a springboard to gain access to public high school students and provide safe and healthy alternative activities.

In addition, to address the transitional needs of Liberia's students, foster an atmosphere of peaceful dialogue and interaction and increase public access to information and civic education, LTI is working with Concerned Students of the University of Liberia to rehabilitate four university buses, refurbish the student union, replace and

repair classroom furniture, and institute participatory community processes to identify future rehabilitation priorities.

Students participated in the work, except the bus rehabilitation, which was done by local mechanics as part of this \$18,000 grant. LTI is working closely with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Civil Affairs unit, which is also providing \$14,000 to support this activity.

Further, in support of its efforts to improve conditions for Liberian students and prevent conflict, LTI is working with Parent-Teacher Associations at five Monrovia public high schools to provide essential repairs and equipment to high schools in the capital. Students from the five high schools were involved in the April disturbances; the goal of this effort is to provide the schools with basic school functionality to create incentives to attend classes. Each grant is valued at \$25,000 and will fund supplies equipment and materials for general clean-up and rehabilitation of school facilities-with students doing much of the labor. ■



LIBERIA

photo by Creative Associates

Liberian students attend class. Some students protested school conditions. Grants are helping bridge the gaps in youth training programs.

Pablo Maldonado Thanks APEP Staff, Partners in Kabul

During a visit this spring to Kabul, Afghanistan, Pablo Maldonado, Creative Associates Senior Vice President of Marketing and Operations, met with the Afghanistan Primary Education Project's (APEP) staff and partners. At a gathering to celebrate APEP's accomplishments, Pablo told staff that they are vital to the program's success.

"Today, we've gathered to honor and recognize the work of our staff and partners. The more I learn about our staff and partners, the more I understand how critical they have been to the success of the APEP Project. I now understand that we simply could have not done it without you. From the bottom of my heart: thank you.

APEP is important in the context of the political transition, and it's critical to the future of Afghanistan. Let's not forget this. Let's not forget about the importance of our work.

For 25 years at Creative Associates, we've worked passionately under the belief that education is the key--the bridge-- to peace, equality and prosperity. I'm very proud of the APEP project and of the contributions it's making to shape a new Afghanistan. I pray to God -that he continues to bless us with vision and energy so that we can continue to serve this beautiful country." ■



AFGHANISTAN

Pablo Maldonado Creative Associates Senior Vice President for Marketing and Operations speaks at the APEP staff appreciation day in Kabul, Afghanistan. Photo by Creative Associates.

Morocco MEG Project Surpasses Expectations and Deals Blow to Inequities

Marylee Rambaud and Michael Gubser visited Morocco, from April 4 - 10, 2004, to gather information for a Case Study on the recently concluded MEG project--Morocco Education for Girls. Along with Louise Filion, COP of the current BEPS Morocco project, they met with representatives of the ministry of education, local NGOs and USAID. Here is what they found.

The Moroccan education system presents a picture in contrasts. Although the westernized cities of Rabat and Casablanca can boast high educational indicators, schools in rural Morocco suffer from under-enrollment, low performance, and poor facilities.

Only 55 percent of rural school aged children, and only 37 percent of rural girls, were enrolled in primary school in 1997. Family and culture contribute to this problem. But studies also suggest that poor pedagogy, low achievement, and significant indirect costs are the main reasons parents keep their children out of school. And the social costs are significant: nearly 50 percent of Moroccan adults are illiterate, and the figure is slightly higher for rural women.

Between 1997 and 2003, Creative Associates' MEG project worked to reduce these disparities by improving teacher training, promoting community involvement in schools, and strengthening the education management system in eight rural provinces and at the national level. MEG was the third USAID-funded project designed to improve girls' education in the kingdom. AmidEast (America-Mideast Educational and Training Services) managed the Training for Development project (TFD) in the 1990s and MSI Management Systems International ran the Girl's Education Activity (GEA).

According to partner NGOs, state inspectors, and officials in Ministry of National Education and Youth, the MEG project "surpassed expectations" in its ability to redress Morocco's educational inequities. Moroccan officials praised MEG staff members for collaborating effectively with local communities and national officials, introducing a participatory approach to teaching and learning, and boosting girls' primary school attendance in rural areas. These accolades indicate some of the key lessons learned during the six-year project, which closed in September 2003.

Lessons Learned

The first lesson is to collaborate with local educators and officials on a close personal level, as confidence-building takes time. MEG worked closely with local communities in building PTAs and with an education ministry that many donors found overly bureaucratic. The willingness to collaborate at all levels of the education system and devote time to building relationships led to strong support

throughout Morocco despite the project's initial staffing difficulties. One minister noted that the great familiarity among MEG personnel and Ministry officials meant that he felt comfortable calling anyone on the project staff.



MOROCCO

photo by Creative Associates
Moroccan girls attend a MEG class.

Because of this collaborative approach, MEG was able to support Morocco's official efforts to reform the kingdom's primary education system. As part of its commitment during the 1990s to implement the worldwide Education for All initiative, Morocco prioritized girls' enrollment on its education agenda. The National Charter for Education and Training, passed in October 1999, outlined a set of goals for strengthening basic education, combating illiteracy, alleviating regional disparities in education, and improving the levels of teaching and school administration. As part of these reforms, the Ministry of National Education and Youth set out to decentralize its traditionally hierarchical education

system, granting greater authority to school directors and provincial planners. According to several Ministry officials, MEG became an integral part of this reform campaign.

A second lesson learned is that trainings must have clear and replicable methods that can be tailored to different communities. MEG used local consultants - university education professors - to train an initial cadre of trainers who then went on to instruct regional teachers and school directors.

The vast regional differences in the country created challenges for the rural school reform project. From Al Hoceima along the Mediterranean coast to the arid Souss Massa Draa region, MEG's eight provinces differed in climate, culture, and economics.

Languages are also windows on Morocco's cultural diversity. Though Arabic is the country's official language and French the language of business, many rural Moroccans learn them in school as foreign languages. Still, MEG expanded its beneficiaries by using Arabic as the language of instruction.

Berber, an indigenous language that no longer has a written form, is commonly spoken in the MEG provinces of Ouarzazade and Zagora. A recently-formed government commission charged with reviving the Berber language has developed a new script by reconstructing Berber's ancient glyphs. Morocco plans to reintroduce Berber as a language of instruction in provincial primary schools. Future projects must continue to adapt to the country's diversity in order to reflect "le vrai Maroc."

A third MEG success was the creation of a variety of modules that appear in Arabic on a project website. To date, sixteen modules, on topics ranging from student-centered teaching methodologies and equity in the classroom to developing results frameworks for educational managers and tailoring school activities to regional and local needs, have been adopted by the Ministry of Education for national audiences. This official adoption, however, does not indicate the modules' full impact. NGOs and foundations also use them as the basis for education strategies and classroom usage. The BMCE Foundation, for example, which manages a series of rural model schools, uses MEG's PTA training module.

Perhaps the greatest compliment to MEG came from Minister Ahmed Rami, a long-time education coordinator who said that Moroccan children in MEG schools talked about their classes with their parents. "MEG created hope through a series of small victories over apathy and mediocrity," Rami said. "It was a marvelous and vibrant project." ■

NEW FACES - NEW FACES - NEW FACES



Charles L. Alliman is the new Director of Security & Emergency Preparedness within Operations. He will work directly with Jerry Rubino on security issues. Before Creative, Charles was the Deputy Director of the Security and Emergency Planning Staff for the U.S. Department of Justice where he had a 30-year career. Charles received a bachelor of science in business administration. He also is a U.S. Army veteran.



Uzma Anzar joins as a Management Associate and BEPS Deputy Director. Uzma works closely with BEPS Director Don Graybill. She comes to Creative from Academy for Education Development where she was a General Educator/Gender Specialist. She also has experience as a Girls' Education Specialist. Uzma received a Ph.D. in education, speaks fluent Urdu and has knowledge of Panjabi and Arabic.



Leonard Chitekwe-Mwale joined EMC as the new APEP Finance Manager in Kabul, Afghanistan. He brings ten years of experience in financial analysis and management. Prior to Creative, Leonard was a multi-cultural therapist, responding to the needs of clients with diverse cultural backgrounds. He worked as a Financial Advisor for American Express Financial Advisors. He also worked as a financial planner for MetLife. He received a master's in social work in policy planning and administration from Western Michigan University and a master's in business administration from Indiana University, South Bend. He also consulted at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.



Shannon Fischer joins CIT as the Chief of Party for the Democratizing the Peace in Liberia. Before joining Creative, Shannon spent several years in Albania where she was the Deputy Director for the project, Weapons in Exchange for Development in Tirana, Albania. Before that, she was the Regional Project Coordinator for Area Rehabilitation and Recovery in Elbasan, Albania. Shannon received a master's degree in international education from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif.



Jeff Ghannam is director of Communications and Media Development in the Office of Marketing and Operations. A veteran journalist and lawyer, he covered civil rights and international law at the American Bar Association Journal in Chicago and was a staff writer and editor at the Detroit Free Press. He has also contributed to The Boston Globe from Detroit. From 2001-02, he instructed on media law and on war reporting as a visiting professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Overseas, he has trained journalists in best practices, ethics and investigative reporting and consulted on media development from Morocco to Qatar for several Washington-based organizations. Before joining Creative, he served as a special assistant attorney general for the State of Michigan. He received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Michigan State University, a master's degree in international affairs from Georgetown University and a juris doctor from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.



Michael Sarco joins CIT as the Grants Manager for the Democratizing the Peace in Liberia project. Michael has more than 13 years of international experience in planning and managing development projects, including setting up an administration, programming grants, and supervising small scale construction. Michael received a master's in business administration from James Madison University and speaks French.



Jeff Weiss has been a familiar face, consulting at Creative since July 2002. Now he's a member of the staff as Senior Advisor to President Charito Kruvant. He is involved in the design of human anti-trafficking programs as well as those involving community policing, community conflict resolution, and organizational development. Jeff has served as a director in the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Asylum Corps, and Community Relations Services. He received a master's degree in public administration from Southern Methodist University.

Dr. Hind Rassam Culhane, RISE Teacher Trainer

(contd. from pg. 3)

Still other obstacles emerged. One goal of the teacher training was to create a sense of team work and instill democratic values, having inspectors, principals and teachers sit side by side in training. It was difficult enough to get teachers in training, now the team work method had to overcome inspectors who felt insulted at being trained in the same room as teachers.

"After a few days, they begin to feel good working together and exchanging ideas," she said. "One of the most exciting things that happened in the trainings was the mixing of the ranks and the exchanges that ensued."

Still more surprises: Computer courses were well taught but without computers while boxes of unopened computers sat in storage rooms. Iraqi schools lacked staff to install them, she said. Teachers also faced out-of-pocket replacement costs if a computer broke on their watch. Few teachers were willing to take the risk.

Although she explained that most well-to-do Iraqis have computers at home. "In general, in Iraq curriculum is theoretical-- what they need is application," said Rassam Culhane. "I think the way Iraq will change is through education. They want all the things we have and more. The need and hunger for it is there." ■

Message from the President

Dear Friends:

President George W. Bush on Monday May 24, 2004 spoke to the United States and the world to reaffirm the war strategy in Iraq. Although much of what he reported is bleak, he did sound several optimistic notes. One of them was in reference to Creative Associates' efforts to train school teachers in Iraq.

President Bush referred to the USAID-funded RISE project, implemented by Creative Associates, to illustrate the ground-level work the United States has undertaken and as an example of a successful transfer of skills and control to Iraqis.

"The ministry of education, for example, is out of the propaganda business and is now concerned with educating Iraqi children," the President said. "Under the direction of Dr. Aladdin al-Alwan, the ministry has trained more than 30,000 teachers and supervisors for the schools of a new Iraq."

How gratifying it is to have been chosen as a positive example. How heartening it is to be the counterpoint to so much hardship. How proud we are to have earned the praise, despite enormous obstacles and doubt, about what could be done to improve Iraq's education system.

We have enabled more than 30,000 Iraqi teachers to lead scores of Iraqi children to brighter futures.

We recognize that rebuilding Iraqi society requires education. And we appreciate the recognition that comes from program success and the fundamental improvements in the lives of Iraqis young and old. Despite formidable obstacles and danger, seeing more than 30,000 teachers trained is a testament to the skills, commitment and professionalism of the Creative staff.

We look forward to delivering more programs and services that make a difference for children and societies around the world.

Peace,
Charito

See Page 3 to read more about Creative's teacher training in Iraq.

NEWS in BRIEF

Creative Advises Ricky Martin Foundation

Creative Associates, represented by Angel Saltos, attended the launch of the campaign "People for the Children" by the Ricky Martin Foundation (RMF) on May 27th in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The campaign is dedicated to creating awareness of child exploitation around the world. Child pornography and sexual slavery are "the worst wrongs of this era" said pop star Ricky Martin, in his remarks. "This is a war. And I want to be a general in this war."

Creative has been advising the foundation in its strategic objectives and institutional relations, helping build cooperation and communications between the foundation and key political and institutional leaders in Washington D.C. Creative facilitated the partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, which is supporting the campaign in Latin America. Creative will provide strategic assistance in the implementation of the foundation's endeavors in Latin America. ■



PUERTO RICO

(left to right): Representatives of USAID, American Bar Association, singer Ricky Martin, Inter-American Development Bank and Angel Saltos of Creative Associates.

Presidential Retreat to be Youth Center

Robert Murphy, Harold Sibaja and others from Creative's Guatemala office attended a ceremony in the Guatemala Cultural Palace on May 24th. At the event, President Oscar Berger Perdomo announced the donation of "Santo Tomas Farm", a former Presidential retreat, to the Fundación Jorge Turuno Lizarralde.

The Fundación Turuno has delegated the Asociación Nacional Para La Prevencion Del Delito (APREDE), a Creative Associates-sponsored NGO, to convert Santo Tomas Farm into a Center of Technical Training and Civic Motivation for youth vulnerable to delinquency and gang entanglement. The program, "Prevenir es Invertir" or To Prevent is to Invest, at Santo Tomas Farm will house a large number of resident youths and day students who may take classes in cooking, auto mechanics, information technology, leadership and civic training. At the event, the National Guatemala Youth Orchestra "Jesus Castillo" composed of youths from disadvantaged communities surrounding Guatemala City, performed under the direction of Igor Sarmientos.

Creative Learning Operation Harmony Ships Instruments to Baghdad

More than 200 classical instruments are on their way to Baghdad with the help of Creative Learning and the Washington D.C.-based National Endowment for the Arts. The violins, cellos, and flutes to name a few, will be donated to the Iraq Ministry of Culture Conservatory of Music and Ballet and other music schools.

The NEA assembled the instruments from private donations. Creative Learning won them in an in-kind grant. Shipping company Paxton International is transporting and warehousing the instruments for free. The NEA has also donated the funds for the purchase of traditional Arab instruments in Iraq which the Ministry of Culture will distribute.

Parvaz Magazine, Good for Kids and Teachers, too

Creative Learning is supporting primary school students and teachers alike in Afghanistan by funding the printing of more than 14,000 copies of a colorful children's educational magazine known as Parvaz.

Parvaz, the word for "flight" in Farsi, is produced by the AINA media co-operative in Kabul, Afghanistan and is supported by the National Geographic Society. Parvaz reports on education issues in a way that engages teachers and pupils. Creative Associates Afghanistan Primary Education Program will use Parvaz as a teaching and learning aid in its accelerated learning classes through partner organization Children in Crisis, reaching a target audience of more than 1,720 children.

Parvaz, printed in both Pashto and Dari, the two main languages of Afghanistan, is the first full-color Afghan magazine for children. The magazine is published six times a year and has a circulation of 46,000 copies. The target audience is 7-12 years of age.

By supporting the printing of supplementary teaching and learning materials like Parvaz magazine, Creative Learning is contributing to the reconstruction of the Afghan school system and responding to the need for compelling and effective teaching materials.

CREATIVE TIMES

Photo of the Season

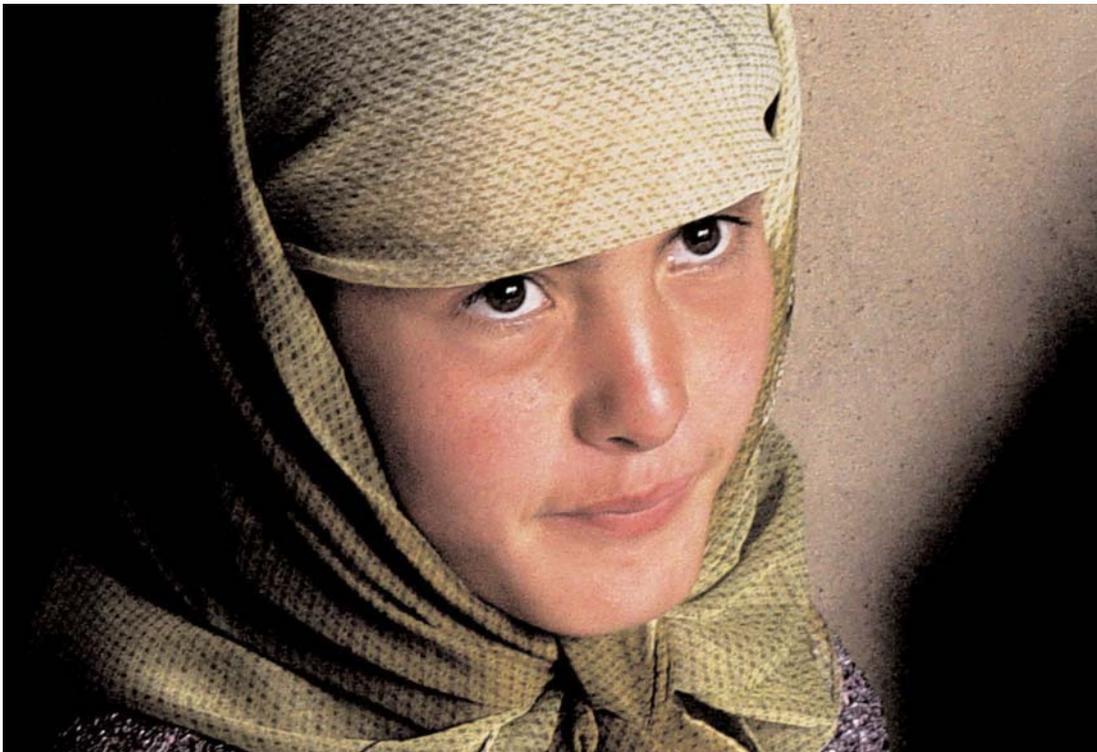


photo by Pablo Maldonado

A girl in Kabul, Afghanistan who is a beneficiary of APEP.

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