



Global

USAID AWARDS CREATIVE ASSOCIATES ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PROCESSES IQC



Casting a ballot in Iraq.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In recognition of Creative Associates International Inc.'s expanding expertise in governance, the U.S. Agency for International Development has awarded the Elections and Political Processes Indefinite Quantity Contract to a Creative Associates-led consortium.

Announced by USAID on Sept. 14, the Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC), further solidifies Creative Associates' position in developing innovative programs to help countries establish credible electoral and political processes.

"We've done a good deal of work in elections support," said M. Charito Kruvant, president and CEO of Creative Associates International Inc., a 26-year-old professional services firm based in Washington D.C. with 16 offices worldwide. "And we're very honored and pleased to continue to help build sustainable democracies through elections and political processes support.

"Free and fair elections and political processes are crucial steps toward sustainable democracy," Mrs. Kruvant said.

This five-year IQC offers Creative Associates opportunities to assist USAID missions and offices seeking to implement activities in support of election administration and observation, political party development, civic education and citizen participation, as well as support for local government, legislatures, and civil society in pre- and post-elections environments.

A leader in civil society strengthening and post-conflict transitions, Creative Associates has developed innovative programs in advocacy and coalition-building, organizational development and civic education and applied them to electoral and

political processes. Current activities include a radio-based civic education campaign in Haiti and support for the peace process and civil society in Liberia.

In 2001, the firm was credited with helping a broad range of Nicaraguan organizations observe national elections, lending credibility to the process. Creative supported electoral reform and legislative modernization in El Salvador, and advocacy for democratic reforms in Serbia after the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Montenegro.

In Peru, following the resignation of President Alberto Fujimori, the firm supported congressional and local government reform through a combined strategy of research and analysis, public aware-

continued on page 9



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MINDANAO: Implementing A Standard Curriculumpage 2

SOUTHERN SUDAN: Town Planning Responds to Urgent Needspage 3

IRAQ: TV Series Encourages Peaceful Coexistencepage 4

ALBANIA: Sarah Stephens Says Trafficking Prevention Takes Rootpage 5

LIBERIA: Life Skills Training for 4,000 Youthspage 6

5 Questions with John Stuart Blackton, Senior Strategic Advisorpage 7

KENYA: Creative Associates Establishes Regional Officepage 8

IRAQ: Singing Praises of Operation Harmonypage 9

New Facespage 11

“Free and fair elections and political processes are crucial steps toward sustainable democracy.”

M. Charito Kruvant
President and CEO
Creative Associates



EQuALLS: IMPLEMENTING A STANDARD CURRICULUM, HELPING MUSLIM STUDENTS ACHIEVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



PHOTO BY: GUTIERREZ MANGANSAKAN

Madrasah first-grade students at the Ma'ahad Mahwill Al-Irshadie in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

As millions of Filipino children and youths returned to school to resume their studies of math, science, English and Filipino language, about 92,000 others filed into Islamic community schools where the curriculum has, until recently, focused exclusively on the study of the Koran, Islamic subjects and the Arabic language.

The Muslim community schools, called a madrasah or madaris (for the plural), vary in size and quality. Of the approximately 1,100 that exist, several dozen are full-time learning institutions where the basic course of study, up to the secondary level, takes 12 years. Hundreds more are informal schools where students are taught for a few hours on weekends in such makeshift classrooms as a mosque, a community hall, or the exterior of a village's Islamic scholar's home.

Although Islamic schools are found in many areas of the country, including urban centers like metropolitan Manila and Cebu, the single largest number, some 440 madaris, are found in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The Madaris, however, compelled by government orders, are increasingly complying with the adoption of a standard curriculum. The nation's leading educators, both religious and secular, are starting to appreciate the fact that all students, whether attending a madrasah or a public school, deserve a well-rounded basic education. Too many youths in Muslim Mindanao are denied quality basic educations, leading to deplorable consequences including illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, frustration and despair.

"The aim is to have a [madrasah] curriculum that is relevant, total and balanced, in answer to the aspirations of Filipinos who want to be good Muslims and good citizens of the Republic," said Salipada Tamano, president of the National Federation of Associations of Madaris and a former ARMM secretary of education.

In 2004, the issuance of Executive Order 13 of the office of the ARMM regional government and Memorandum Order 51 of the Department of Education, provided a standard curriculum for privately-operated madaris, incorporating the

regular education subjects of English, math, science, Filipino and civics into the traditional madrasah curriculum.

"Every country has a universal educational system that serves as a basis for national unity," says Manaros Boransing, Undersecretary for Muslim Affairs in the Department of Education. "In this regard, the provision of the standard curriculum is a positive development for madaris."

The Department of Education is being assisted in building the capacity of madaris to implement the standard curriculum by donor organizations, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Australia Agency for International Development (AusAID), which assisted in the preparation of the curriculum and training modules in Department of Education subjects for the *asatitha*, or teachers, in Arabic.

A consultative workshop on the implementation of the standard curriculum for this school year recently was held in Davao city by ARMM Department of Education officials, Islamic educators, and operators of private madaris, with

continued on page 10



SOUTHERN SUDAN: TOWN PLANNING RESPONDS TO URGENT NEEDS, REFUGEE CRISES

Sudan has become home to one of the world's worst refugee crises. In southern Sudan alone, up to 4 million people are believed to be internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, who were forced from their homes over 21 years of civil war between government troops and the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Now with the war's end, the internally displaced and other refugees are migrating to southern Sudan's towns in search of basic necessities to rebuild their lives. But many towns cannot accommodate the influx of new residents for lack of basics including roads, electricity, schools, health clinics and government buildings.

But in a cooperative agreement with the U. S. Agency for International Development, Creative Associates International Inc., is implementing the Sudan Participatory Town Planning Project, which uses satellite imagery to create digital maps of ten towns in southern Sudan.

The project is modeled on a pilot project that Creative implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme in the interim capital of Rumbek. The newly created maps will serve as centerpieces for the future allocation of government buildings, roads, schools, hospitals, clinics, parks and neighborhoods. The project also provides a road map from which the development of community priorities can be visualized. International donors recently pledged \$4.5 billion to rebuild southern Sudan from scratch to help secure the peace and respond to the needs for infrastructure. This mapping exercise will be critical to avoiding problems in the rebuilding process.

The project facilitates the involvement of southern Sudanese through participatory urban planning which is part of the nascent nation's transition toward building democratic processes.



PHOTO BY: PACOLA BOBADILLA

Rumbek is one of ten South Sudan towns where Creative Associates, in partnership with USAID, initiated a strategic town planning project. Last year's Rumbek Town Master Plan, marked the region's first initiative of public engagement and consensus building at the municipal and grassroots levels for a comprehensive town plan.

In Nairobi, Kenya, for the first time, 20 southern Sudanese are being trained to survey and develop town plans including using satellite imagery and digital mapping as part of the participatory town planning project that Creative Associates is implementing. The 20 trainees, including five women, are employees of the Secretariat of Physical Infrastructure and Town Planning (SPITP), who are taking part in the four-week workshop.

“In many ways, there's a critical and strategic importance to town planning,” said Rich Wagner, Creative Associates' project director of the Sudan Participatory Town Planning Project. “First of all, there's a new government which is striving for legitimacy mainly by effectively responding to the needs of its citizens, long accustomed to the deprivation brought by the long years of conflict. If [town planning] is done correctly, in an open and transparent fashion, people within these communities will feel confident that government is working to serve their interests.”

With southern Sudan on its way to becoming an autonomous region, the transfer of power in Juba from the government to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement will try the ability

of state officials to govern effectively. Of the ten towns to be mapped, four were controlled by the Khartoum government and thousands of soldiers are garrisoned there who will have to eventually be transported back to the north.

“The governance challenges in these towns are the most complicated and critical,” Wagner said. “The new government will have to effectively adjudicate contested property, avoid urban mismanagement of land resources, and establish a legitimate and effective government.”

The Sudan Participatory Town Planning Project plays to Creative's traditional strengths in securing political transition, democracy and governance. Southern Sudan is seeing nearly a complete vacuum in governance, exacerbated by the lack of planning. “We start with the basic tools, map and database, and then apply that to consideration of a future vision for the town such as land use patterns, economic organization,” Wagner said.

Creative's work in the town of Juba is particularly significant because it is to be the next capital of southern Sudan. Along with town planning, Creative is conducting an assessment in Juba to



IRAQ: TV SERIES TO ENGAGE CHILDREN IN LEARNING ENCOURAGES PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

A new children's cartoon series to air on Iraqi television features Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish kids learning and playing together, in the hopes of instilling life lessons in peaceful coexistence.

The cartoon series is intended to allow Iraqi preschoolers to enjoy an age of innocence - away from the war that the world has come to know in headlines. At once educational and entertaining, the show's characters are motivated by the pursuit of fun, games and curiosity - storylines that reinforce positive behavior, good deeds, love and understanding.

The show is "the rainbow at the end of the heavy rain! It is a breath of fresh air for a generation of children that grew up with fear, sadness and destruction...it is the sort of program that puts a smile on a child's face," said Randa Ayoubi, chief executive officer of Rubicon, a Jordanian software company that is working with Iraqi trainees to produce the show.

The series is designed by Creative Associates International Inc., the Iraq Ministry of Education and Rubicon as part of the Education II project. Creative Associates implements Education II with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Consisting of more than a 100 episodes with 13 themes to teach the alphabet, counting, time, colors and shapes, emotions and feelings, among other subjects, the programs are targeted at early childhood development. While similar to the renowned American children's program, "Sesame Street", the show is distinctly Iraqi, as seen in the show's characters, names, dress and accents.

Shirin, a girl who wears the traditional Kurdish dress, is a typical child who

does not always listen to grown ups and strives to get her way. Through her adventures, children learn how to deal with disappointment and disagreement with friends and parents.

"The show teaches children positive values, history through fables, introducing our Arabian ancestors, norms and traditions, acceptance of others regardless of ethnicity and differences, love for the land," said Lara Safadi, Rubicon's program manager.



Characters from the new Ed II early childhood development television series for Iraqi preschoolers. The program, now in production, promotes peaceful coexistence and positive values.



The program, which has yet to be named, is intended to fill a major gap in preschool education in Iraq. Production takes place at Rubicon's offices in Amman, Jordan, where a team of more than 30 Jordanians and Iraqis, among them six trainees appointed by the Iraqi Ministry of

Education, are producing the first half-hour show to air early next year. The Iraqi trainees have been in training for many months.

"It should be different than any production in the Arab world, not only in Iraq. It's a large production in size and in value in terms of an animated series produced from A to Z by Arabs for Arabs," said Safadi.

Far from being a passive experience, the program is designed to also engage parents by providing accompanying workbooks with which they and their children can work. The program's child-centered and family oriented philosophy helps build bonds with parents as a way to foster preschoolers' healthy emotional and cognitive development. Like the cartoon whose characters are playful and fun, the workbooks contain games and puzzles to entertain children while educating them and involving their parents.

"This program is an essential educational opportunity for children, and works as a supportive element for parents - as a guide," said one of the program's Iraqi staff who is also learning how to be an animator.

For the creators, the program and workbooks provide children a foundation for their lives as they mature in Iraqi society. "The characters are like children everywhere, looking to carve their own place in the world, while drawing on the love and care of their families and friends," Ayoubi added.

—Alexandra Pratt

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Nawar, Program Iraqi staff



ALBANIA: SARAH STEPHENS SAYS TRAFFICKING PREVENTION TAKES ROOT



PHOTO BY: LAZARINA TODOROVA

Chief of Party Sarah Stephens spoke to Creative staff about anti-trafficking efforts.

Sarah Stephens, chief of party of the Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking program, recently told Creative Associates staff and guests that through coordinated activities among communities, NGOs and government, human trafficking prevention efforts have taken root in Albania.

Stephens spoke at one of Creative's regular "brown bag" luncheons, where visiting chiefs of party and other Creative specialists and guests have a chance to talk about program impact or an expertise. Stephens spoke of the rise of trafficking in Albania and CAAHT's activities to stem the flow. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), CAAHT is implemented by Creative Associates International Inc.

CAAHT's mission is to strengthen the ability of Albanian community leaders, NGOs and government entities to improve programs that decrease trafficking in human beings, and improve and expand services which assist and reintegrate the victims and reduce re-trafficking.

"We've taken an integrated approach, we've demonstrated facilitation of coordination among government and non-governmental partners," Stephens said. And the strategy has

worked. CAAHT has convened 16 Regional Cluster Group meetings with increasing participation from local government, which includes 78 members. Today, the groups are a model of teamwork, but the drive to coordinate members wasn't at first welcomed.

"There was cynicism and pessimism by government and non-governmental sectors. They had the attitude that we were just another organization that was going to tell them what to do, and teach them what they already know- but we told them we're here to facilitate and to work with them," Stephens told the audience.

Trafficking in Albania began in the early 1990s as a result of massive emigration that began after the fall of communism. "Once you've got movement across borders, you have the potential for trafficking," said Stephens. Between 1994 and 1997, trafficking had become widespread but remained unacknowledged by the public and government. From 1997-1999, the collapse of pyramid schemes, political instability and the Kosovo crisis which resulted in increasingly porous borders, increased the flow of trafficking in human beings.

With the growing attention to the trafficking issue by governmental and non-governmental agencies, it became clear that the most effective way to stop trafficking was through prevention mechanisms. USAID held a workshop in February 2003 where it asked various agencies and groups to respond to the problems of trafficking. The USAID workshop resulted in an RFP that led to the CAAHT project.

Based on the findings of the February 2003 USAID workshop, CAAHT was established to help coordinate efforts of various parties concerned about trafficking, so that they could share their expertise, refer clients, build

capacity, disseminate information and to work on the problems of reintegration.

Today, 12 grants of more than \$1.4 million have been disbursed to grantees in all geographic areas of Albania. "People outside the capital have learned a lot about anti-trafficking including their national frameworks and have gotten programming ideas from each other and there's increasingly substantive cooperation between partners where there had been none before," Stephens said.

With CAAHT's focus on prevention, one grantee is producing a nationwide radio soap opera that will focus on how girls and women are made vulnerable to trafficking by phony promises - for employment, marriage, educations, or other needs. Another grantee, a university, has developed a curriculum for social workers and psychologists to instruct them on how to work with victims and potential victims.

Up to now, CAAHT grants have reached 3,412 people through prevention programs. It's also providing 76 women and girls protection and reintegration assistance. Another 1,014 women and girls are receiving assistance from a combination of stakeholders.

Another significant component of CAAHT is its technical input which helps in information gathering and analysis from which further programming and legislation can be developed. "From the technical point of view, through monitoring and evaluation, we're trying to do quantitative and qualitative assessment of the problem which is not being largely done elsewhere. We're teaching how to ask the questions and how to analyze the data," Stephens concluded.

—Alexandra Pratt



LIBERIA: LIFE SKILLS TRAINING FOR 4,000 YOUTHS ADDRESSES NON VIOLENCE

The Community Youth Peace Education Program (CYPEP) is helping make a difference in the lives of Liberian youths.

In July, CYPEP trained 4,000 urban youths in the methods of conflict resolution. One aspect of the program is the requirement that participating youths pledge to foster tolerance in all facets of their lives, starting with the commitment to maintain peaceful and mutual coexistence in their homes. This pledge of non-violence in the home is expected to eventually expand into relationships community-wide.

CYPEP is an outgrowth of the USAID-funded Liberia Transition Initiative's Youth Education for Life Skills Program (YES) which will be implemented in 735 rural communities throughout Liberia over a two year period. The YES program is focused on war-affected youths ages 18 to 30. It seeks to teach basic literacy, numeracy and essential life skills to help them negotiate family life, health and employment. And the program stands to influence thousands of youths who, ultimately, will assume responsibility for Liberia's future. By enabling urban youths to think through critical issues, the program hopes to plant the seeds for lasting peace in Liberia.

CYPEP was created to address a wave of youth-directed urban violence such as mob justice and crises last October when young people burned churches and mosques around Monrovia. The program's primary focus is to constructively engage youths by promoting peaceful co-existence in multi-ethnic, urban communities and deterring youth related violence.



One participant of the



PHOTO BY: ALIA AFSHAR

James Yarsiah, YES Program Manager, with beneficiary of The Community Youth Peace Education Program (CYPEP), which promotes peaceful co-existence in multi-ethnic, urban communities and aims to deter youth-related violence.

CYPEP training said: "I used to always fight whenever Manchester United of the English premiership lost a match to another team. Since the CYPEP training came to my community, I have been mostly involved in stopping fights between my friends. Today my friends call me, 'Mr. Peacemaker'."

town with me. I see them almost every day but when you know who you are, as we learned from the program, you respect other people."

—Alexandra Pratt

During the intensive six week CYPEP trainings, participants are encouraged to share their experiences and perspectives providing them with the opportunity to review their own behaviors. One female participant said during her training program, "I used to be the one to add to the conflict, but since the training, I have taken on a whole new role. I am the one who tries to help people resolve the conflict whenever and wherever I see them."

CYPEP courses include sessions in identity, health, peaceful living, good governance and the environment. A 24-year old man noted, "From the program I truly know my role and responsibility to the community and the need to live together in peace and to help develop the community. Interestingly, some of the very guys who did a lot of things to me and other people are right in this

The program's primary focus is to constructively engage youths by promoting peaceful co-existence in multi-ethnic, urban communities and deterring youth related violence.

5 QUESTIONS WITH JOHN STUART BLACKTON, SENIOR STRATEGIC ADVISOR TO CREATIVE



For almost 40 years, John Stuart Blackton has witnessed great changes in the realm of international development. As Creative Associates' senior strategic advisor, he provides an insider's view of current trends and issues governing international development. He has served as head of mission for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Philippines and in leadership roles at the Near East and Policy Bureaus in USAID, Washington D.C. From 1994 through 1998 he was a professor of national security policy at the National War College in Washington, D.C. and has lectured at numerous conferences on law and governance in Iraq and Afghanistan. He recently spoke with Creative Times about the history of U.S. assistance and Creative Associates' strengths in meeting future challenges.

Tell us about your role at Creative?

Maybe I can use my job title as a point of departure: I'm the senior strategic advisor. My job is to focus on the way the external environment is changing and what strategic opportunities and challenges those changes in the environment pose for Creative. I try to look at the evolving national security environment, at the changes in the Washington bureaucracy, at the changing relationships between diplomacy, foreign assistance, and military intervention and at the evolution of the geopolitical environment worldwide and to see how all of these changes bear on how we may be doing business next month, next year, maybe even in the next decade.

Give us a bird's eye view of international development aid in 2005.

Over the past decade international development has crystallized into three distinct and separate spheres—the first combines humanitarian efforts with increasingly well-defined aims of reaching the very poor. The second is sustainable development with a focus on institutions and efforts to maintain them overtime. The third is the whole nexus of conflict and international security related issues, which in some ways is becoming the largest of the spheres - to achieve national and international security objectives. One of my concerns

is that these three spheres are not coming together as well as they might; rather, they are drifting apart whether viewed from the funders' or the practitioners' perspectives. On the positive side, the articulation of the intellectual underpinnings of each of the three spheres has become better articulated in recent years, but we are still awaiting the “great synthesis” that puts them all into a conceptually integrated whole.

What is the single most important issue in international development today? How should firms like Creative best address the issue?

Probably, from the perspective of the world's donors, the biggest development question on the table has to do with whether development is primarily achieved by policy reform or by specific investments in projects and programs. Here in Washington, that dichotomy is exemplified by the 50-year-old USAID on the one hand, and the one-year-old Millennium Challenge Corporation on the other. Creative has grown up in the shadow of USAID and is staffed and equipped for the world of projects. If the other model, the Millennium Challenge model, begins to assume real prominence in the development world, than we at Creative will have to look deep within ourselves to see what we would have to do to work in an environment where policy reform and not projects are the dominant model of international assistance. I believe we could make that transition but that it would not be easy and would require an enormous and very collaborative effort from all the associates, all the managers and all the owners to make it happen.

Would you say there has been a significant shift in U.S. policy with regard to international development and if so, what's behind it?

Yes, there have been two big shifts, in the last 20 years, and from the end of World War II where U.S. foreign assistance policy was built around Cold War

objectives. This gave the overall aid world a high degree of focus and clarity. The hierarchy of objectives was transparent. In the first five or six years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, foreign assistance went through a period of uncertainty where it lacked a clear policy rationale. But, beginning during the middle of the Clinton administration, a new consensus involving both Democrats and Republicans, evolved around the belief that foreign policy could be an effective instrument in mitigating new set of “global threats” that had replaced the old threat posed by the former Soviet Union. These new challenges were seen to include narcotics, AIDS, poverty-driven migration (both cross-border and internal), ethnic conflict, and, particularly in the past five years, politically inspired terrorism.

What are Creative's strengths in meeting the objectives of international development trends?

Creative has a number of strengths that are very relevant to the foreign policy challenges that we face today. First of all, its practical experience tends to be community based, grass roots level. We are bottom-up in orientation, which sets us apart from many other development practitioners whose core style starts from the top and works down. A second core strength of Creative is our inbuilt capacity to mobilize and deploy very quickly. Both the staff and the company style are built around quick response, and the nature of contemporary global threats tends to pose challenges that require this quick response. And, the third truly distinctive advantage that Creative brings to the contemporary foreign aid scene is the combination of a very multicultural staff and a multicultural organizational style. So, both individually and collectively, Creative team members are able to size up a situation quickly, appreciate its cultural distinctiveness and respond accordingly.

SOUTHERN SUDAN: TOWN PLANNING RESPONDS TO URGENT NEEDS, REFUGEE CRISES



look at possibilities for municipal management, land tenure and economic revitalization.

"It's a strategic opportunity since effectively there's a vacuum in governance in this critically important town. Very few international actors are based in Juba and little analytic research has been done. Therefore this assessment will provide the international community with critically needed analyses of short-term and long-term opportunities and constraints," Wagner said.

At the heart of the Southern Sudan Town Mapping and Planning Project is the impact that it will have on peoples' lives. The project is establishing a process to allow communities to build a foundation for the future. The next step will be to convene public participatory meetings with the government and all interested stakeholders who will decide on planning options suggested by the maps, such as land use recommendations. "It's a process by which stakeholders and interest groups can consider the future directions of their communities, Wagner said. "Southern Sudanese have few opportunities to organize and participate in open democratic forums where their voices can be heard. So, we see the end result of this project as linking the new government

to their constituents that they govern and creating a forum by which people can make informed decisions."

The plans for Juba and the other towns present an opportunity for southern Sudanese to begin anew. "Our experience in Rumbek was that the maps truly served as a catalyst for interested, sometimes heated public debate," Wagner said. "This is the essence, the beginning of a nascent democratic process."

—Alexandra Pratt



africa

KENYA: CREATIVE ASSOCIATES ESTABLISHES REGIONAL OFFICE IN EAST AFRICA



PHOTO BY: PAOLA BOBADILLA

Creative Associates International Inc., has expanded its operations to East Africa with the opening of the East Africa Regional Office (EARO) based in Nairobi, Kenya.

"One objective is to establish both a foothold and a significant footprint in the East Africa," said Peter Parr, Creative's East Africa Regional Director. Since EARO opened, Creative Associates has implemented projects in southern Sudan.

Choosing Nairobi as EARO's base of operations provides Creative with strategic advantages. "The UN organizations and all the major donors use Nairobi as their regional hub for all of their regional operations, and by having a presence there, our ability to meet and talk directly with donors and identify partner organizations is enhanced," Parr said.

Creative's procurement, logistics and

travel administrator, Faisal Sultan, also operates from Nairobi, handling \$6 million in procurement last year and travel arrangements for Creative's worldwide staff.

In southern Sudan, Creative is implementing a town planning project that is central to the future growth and expansion of the area. The project, the Southern Sudan Town Mapping and Planning Project, follows from a pilot project in Rumbek and combines urban planning with civil society strengthening. Using satellite imagery, master plans will be created for key southern towns strengthening the capacity of local government to work with civil society.

"The two town planning projects funded by UNDP and USAID will form the framework in how all future regional and town planning is done in the southern region. In other words, Creative is setting the standard," said Parr.

Already, the company has established its reputation. Recently, at the invitation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the EARO director was invited to participate on a field assessment mission to advise on the basic infrastructure needs of three district towns. "The growing significance of Creative's role in town planning was demonstrated by the fact that Creative was the only outside organization to be invited on that mission," said Parr.

Parr's primary role is to develop strong working relations with USAID and other donors such as the World Bank and the UN organizations as well as local agencies.

—Alexandra Pratt



IRAQ: SINGING PRAISES OF OPERATION HARMONY

“Art is something that unites all people across cultures, races, ages.”

Bill Kruvant—Creative Learning

Not long after the fall of Baghdad, the city's main museum, with its priceless collection of artifacts, and nearly all of the city's cultural centers, were looted or destroyed. Gone, too, were scores of musical instruments including pianos, violins, cellos, guitars and traditional Arab lutes. In light of the destruction, the White House asked federal agencies to find ways to help rebuild cultural resources in Iraq.

In April 2004, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) approached Creative Learning, the non-profit sister organization of Creative Associates International Inc., to help transport and deliver musical instruments donated by Americans to help rebuild the shattered dreams of Iraqi student musicians.

“The genesis of the project was that during that terrible period of bombing and subsequent looting of cultural artifacts in Baghdad, there was a small news clip that ran showing the smashed instruments at the school of music and ballet,” said Pennie Ojeda, International Coordinator for the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. “The clip showed a smashed piano and several professors weeping.”

Reaction to the footage was swift. The NEA launched a campaign to help reestablish musical training for the next generation of Iraqis through the creation of a public-private partnership. And soon, Operation Harmony was born.

The looting of the Baghdad School for Music and Ballet made an impression on Americans who donated instruments with the help of Boy Scouts, church groups and musical instrument shops to the NEA. At least 230 classical instruments valued at \$130,000 were collected and sent to the NEA which entrusted Creative Learning with their shipment and delivery to Baghdad. Dr. Sabah Al-Jadoa, a Creative Associates employee in Baghdad, channeled \$3,000 in funds to the Baghdad School of Music and Ballet to replace some of the instruments that were lost.

“The teachers at the school were very touched by the donation,” Al-Jadoa told Creative Associates staff recently. In appreciation, the teachers presented Creative Learning with a commemorative plaque for its efforts. To Al-Jadoa, the chance to help Iraqi music students remains a source of great pride. “I was just touched by the donation, that

someone from outside donated to Iraqi children. It was a sense of joy to do the job, to improve the quality of students in Iraq on the art side - which is music,” Al-Jadoa said.

In appreciation of Al-Jadoa's commitment to Operation Harmony, Creative Learning's President, Bill Kruvant, said: “There's something very special about people putting themselves out volunteering for the arts, because art is something that unites all people across cultures, races, ages. It is art that always brings out the best in people.”



—Alexandra Pratt

A gift from teachers at the Baghdad School of Music and Ballet to Creative Learning, in appreciation of its efforts to provide instruments to Iraq's student musicians.

PHOTO BY: LUIS AGUILAR

USAID AWARDS CREATIVE ASSOCIATES ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PROCESSES IQC

continued from page 1

ness, civil society advocacy and oversight, and training for elected officials and their staffs.

“This is a very exciting IQC because technical assistance is not limited just to the conduct of elections,” said Richard McCall, senior vice president of programs at Creative Associates. “It involves strengthening procedures to mitigate potential conflict surrounding the electoral process, political party development and engaging civil society very actively in the political

and electoral processes in their countries.

“We have assembled a very strong consortium to respond to the various requirements under this IQC, with the highest possible professional skills necessary to achieve successful and sustainable outcomes,” McCall said.

Partners include: Management Systems International; The Asia Foundation; Accenture, LLP; American Manufacturers Export Group; Carr

Swanson & Randolph, LLC; Center for Strategic and International Studies; Computer Frontiers, Inc.; Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, Inc.; Kroll Government Services; Mud Springs Geographers; PA Consulting Group, Inc.; PAE Government Services, Inc.; Paige International, Inc. and Public International Law and Policy Group. As partners, they offer a full range of services and global expertise and significantly expand USAID's programming options in the elections and political processes arena.

EQuALLS: IMPLEMENTING A STANDARD CURRICULUM, HELPING MUSLIM STUDENTS ACHIEVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

continued from page 2

the support of the Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) project. EQuALLS is funded by USAID and implemented by Creative Associates International Inc., in partnership with the Department of Education, local NGOs, local foundations, and private sector institutions.

Workshop topics ranged from the conceptual framework for madaris to practical considerations, such as financial sustainability, formal recognition and accreditation of these institutions, and training in the teaching of Department of Education subjects.

In the ARMM, the majority of the madaris serve poor communities where they may be the only schools for children and youths. After having completed their studies, however, and lacking a thorough grounding in basic subjects, even the most motivated and intelligent madrasah students who move into public high schools experience difficulties. Students not only lack instruction in basic subjects, but also the secondary education curriculum is bilingual in Filipino and English, and madrasah students are unprepared in both languages, making it near impossible for them keep up with classes. Unable to complete high school, students find it almost impossible to get into universities or other tertiary-level schools accredited by the Department of Education.

“With only an Arabic language background, our students get stuck when they apply to enter college,” said Arpah Datudacula, who administers the Nurul Huda Al-Islamiah, a madrasah in Malabang, Lanao del Sur.

Without high-school or college educations, young people face fewer job prospects and limited options to improve their social and economic status. The lack of a secondary education produces a domino effect which not only leaves thousands of Mindanao's youths unemployed but has also led to increased levels of anger, frustration and crime in the region.

With support from the EQuALLS project, fifteen madaris have begun implementing the standard curriculum on a pilot basis. Half of these have made arrangements with a nearby public school to exchange teachers for a few hours per week. The public school teacher will provide first-grade madrasah students with instruction in the standard public school curriculum. The other madaris are experimenting with a different approach, training madrasah teachers to conduct basic education classes.

“The involvement of public school teachers in mentoring madrasah teachers creates a link with the public schools, making it more possible for madrasah students to take equivalen-

cy or placement exams in order to transfer to public schools at a later point in the education cycle,” says Dr. Tom Kral, chief of the USAID Office of Education in Manila.

According to Moner Bajunaid, an Islamic education specialist based at Creative Associates' project office in Cotabato City, the pilot project appears to be a simple step, but it is a highly significant one for Islamic educators opening their doors to the Philippine education system.

“This is the first time that the national language [Filipino] is being taught in Mindanao madaris,” said Bajunaid. “Considering longstanding fears and cultural biases in Mindanao that date back to the Spanish regime, this is a breakthrough.”

“Among Philippine madaris, the idea of bringing in the Department of Education basic curriculum is in the process of becoming universally acceptable,” says Boransing. “The main problems lie in implementation, and this is where the international donors are being helpful.”

—EQuALLS Project Staff



PHOTO BY: JON SILVERSTONE

“The involvement of public school teachers in mentoring madrasah teachers creates a link with the public schools, making it more possible for madrasah students to take equivalency or placement exams in order to transfer to public schools at a later point in the education cycle.”

Tom Kral, Chief
USAID Office of Education in Manila.



NEW FACES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Thea Anderson joins Creative's Education, Mobilization and Communication division as a Management Associate devoted to the

Afghanistan Primary Education Program. Thea brings years of professional experience in project finance and administration, grant and contract management, and project startup and systems.

Most recently, she served as a Deputy Director and Program Manager for Save the Children UK in Afghanistan, where she was the primary liaison and negotiator with project partners, the Afghan government, NGOs and international agencies. Before that, she was the Director of Finance and Administration for CHF International in Iraq, where she managed all financial, administrative, human resources, and procurement aspects of microfinance and USAID reconstruction programs valued at \$ 61 million in central and southern Iraq.

Thea's international experience also includes Azerbaijan, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nicaragua, Romania, Serbia/ Montenegro and Uzbekistan.

Thea received a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, Women's Studies and International Studies from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina; and a master's degree in International Education from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is highly proficient in Spanish and conversant in Arabic.



Zelma Harrison joins Creative's Human Resources Unit as Field Human Resources Coordinator. Zelma comes to Creative from

World Learning, where she served as a Senior Administrative Director since January 2004.

Through her work at World Learning, Zelma brings valuable experience in the area of human resources administration. From January 2004 until her arrival at Creative, she liaised with headquarters to provide human resources support and service for new and permanent employees, particularly for procedures involving recruitment, termination and short-term contract hire. During this time, she was also responsible for security and emergency preparedness procedures for three offices located in Washington, D.C.

Before that, Zelma served with the Peace Corps, as a rural development volunteer in Guinea-Bissau, a desk officer for East Africa, and finally as an administrative officer in Uganda. Her various positions with the Peace Corps positioned her to train overseas staff in a variety of finance-related topics, to oversee human resources management and to act as country director for a limited time in Uganda. Knowing what it takes to work successfully overseas, Zelma will be working closely with our field personnel from her base at headquarters.

Zelma received a bachelor's degree in political science from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and a master's degree in political science from the University of Chicago. She is currently working towards a second master's degree in conflict analysis and resolution at George Mason University in Alexandria, Virginia. She is fluent in Fulani, which belongs to the Niger-Congo language family.



Natalie Topa joins Creative's Communities in Transition division as a Project Officer for the Sudan Participatory Town Planning

Project. She will be based in Rumbek, Southern Sudan and work directly with Richard Wagner, Sudan Project Director.

Natalie brings valuable experiences in community development and urban and regional planning to Creative. She recently served as a Long-Term Disaster Recovery/Community Development Specialist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, where she was part of a multi-disciplinary effort to develop a plan for sustainable, long-term disaster recovery in an agricultural community after the 2004 hurricanes.

For the past 3 years, she has worked as an urban planner for EDAW, Inc. a leading international consultancy in urban planning and environmental design. Her accomplishments include the design of an urban regeneration plan for the City of Miami, which focused on the empowerment of under-represented minorities and low-income communities, urban design, recreation, tourism, transit villages, economic development and implementation strategy.

Natalie received a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado at Denver and a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Human Services from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. She is fluent in Spanish and proficient in Polish and French.

PHOTOS BY:
LAZARINA TODOROVA

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PHOTO BY: TROKON WAYNE - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, LIBERIA TRANSITION INITIATIVE (LTI), LIBERIA 2005

Local communities support the USAID/OTI Liberia Transition Initiative Accelerated Learning Program by providing local structures for classes at Lutheran Youth Training Institute in Nyor, Liberia.

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