



africa

## UGANDA: EDUCATION SUMMIT SHOWS HOW CHANGE IS POSSIBLE



UNITY CHIEF OF PARTY RENUKA PILLAY (LEFT) WELCOMES THE PRIME MINISTER OF UGANDA, THE HON. PROFESSOR APOLO NSIBAMBI TO THE 'RENAISSANCE IN EDUCATION' SUMMIT IN GULU.

PHOTO BY: LAWRENCE NDAGIJE  
DRIVER/ADMIN ASSISTANT UNITY PROJECT

An education summit held in June with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development, has created a new dynamic in northern Uganda – a defining moment in the effort to expand education opportunities for children in the region.

After more than 20 years of a debilitating war, the prospect of gathering officials across party lines from northern and north-eastern Uganda's 40 districts to create a blueprint that will transform education in the region, understandably drew some skepticism.

But Creative Associates International's UNITY program team – working with its subcontractor, the Pincer Group along with the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA) and the Ministry of Education & Sports – has shown how change can be made possible.

The summit, held June 19 to 21 in Gulu, had been coined the "Renaissance in Education for Northern Uganda" and was heralded as "revolutionary" by the many participating NGO representatives. Falling under the umbrella of the President Yoweri

Museveni's Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for the north, the summit aimed to signal that the war-torn region is evolving from a state of emergency and humanitarian crisis to one of recovery.

According to UNITY Chief of Party Renuka Pillay, the event was "one of the project's most successful and inspiring events to date." The significance of the event was underscored by the attendance of President Museveni whose closing remarks lauded the participants for identifying education as a PRDP priority that requires urgent attention and collective responsibility.

Northern Uganda is in dire need of education reform and revival. The brutal conflict that has raged for more than two decades has left nearly 50 percent of the region's schools destroyed and forced nearly two million people from their villages into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Although, since 2007, there has been the decongestion of IDP camps and the slow return of communities to their villages of origin, UNICEF estimates that 80 percent of children have never been to school.

The Gulu meeting was remarkable because it fostered a dialogue on accountability, analysis of data, and reports on the education sector among the 280 participants, including many district officials from across party lines.

"It is the responsibility of local governments first and foremost to ensure that their constituencies' needs are met, thus ensuring that leaders become accountable to their people. The time for portioning blame has ended, the time for reconstruction has begun, and one of the sectors where reconstruction is paramount, is in education," said Richard Andama Ferua, Vice President of the ULGA. "After all, what greater responsibility exists other than ensuring the future of the nation: the children are given a fighting chance to become the future leaders of the country."

REPLICA – which stands for Revitalization of Education Participation and Learning in Conflict Areas – is a component of Creative's UNITY program and was showcased at the summit. The REPLICA program provides services to schools in peace education, school management, leadership and governance, psychosocial

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# AFGHANISTAN: TRAINERS RECEIVE NEW SKILLS IN SAFER CONDITIONS

By mid-2008, more than 49,000 teachers and principals had been trained in teaching methodology, including nearly 2,000 head teachers and principals who were also trained in school management strategies under the Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project.

Despite a fragile security environment, BESST has successfully and safely been engaged in supporting teachers and principals from the insecure districts of Wardak, Ghazni, and Kandahar, by holding additional trainings in secure, neighboring communities and districts, or in the provincial capital.

“I have come back to Kabul, for ITSA [In-Service Teacher Support Activities] training... to continue learning how to help and support Afghan teachers,” said Hafizullah, a trainer who lives and works in Wardak, one of the more insecure provinces in which BESST is managing face-to-face trainings for educators.

In Wardak, BESST implementing partner, Coordination of Afghanistan Relief (CoAR), has trained more than 3,600 teachers and school managers in the Ministry of Education’s In-Service (INSET) I curriculum. As a CoAR trainer, Hafiz led several two-week INSET I trainings in Wardak throughout the winter and spring of 2008. In mid-June, he traveled to Kabul to undergo the next round of training, which will further improve his skills as a trainer in supporting teachers and principals through ITSA activities.

Hafiz recalled his first training under BESST at Sayed Jamaludin in Kabul, in October 2007. For two weeks, Hafiz along with 24 other Senior Trainers underwent an intensive training in INSET I curriculum delivery.

“I wondered whether this would actually help the teachers who work out in the provinces or not. But [the trainings] have gone very good and [the teachers] like this program,” Hafiz said. “Teachers now feel more responsible and the students are learning more easily now,” he paused and with a



SENIOR TRAINER, HAFIZULLAH, IN WARDAK PROVINCE.

PHOTO BY: SAMIM YAQUBY, EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER

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support and guidance and counseling, educating and mentoring girls, community integration and participation, and performing arts as tools for effective communication, education mobilization, sensitization, and behavior change.

REPLICA is implemented in partnership with the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda’s north and northeast. UNITY is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The REPLICA program was developed as a response to a rigorous assessment conducted by Creative in 2003 of the north’s education sector needs. Currently, operating in 13 districts in the north and northeast, REPLICA is the first program in the region that specifically targets post-conflict recovery from an education perspective. The program was created with the optimum participation of local stakeholders during all phases of research, program design and piloting. Today, the program, which operates in 1,800 schools and includes 707 model schools reaches 1,184,032 children, and is so successful that both Uganda’s Ministry of Education and USAID plan to expand the program to all 40 districts in the north and northeast.

After this expansion, REPLICA will reach 4,215 schools and more than 3 million children.

Uniquely, the Gulu summit meeting gathered education technocrats as well as administrators and politicians. “The summit structure was a healthy mixture of tough and intensive reflection on issues, advocacy, and exhibits,” said Pillay, adding that the presence of President Museveni and Prime Minister Apolo Nsibambi, including four ministers and other high-level government officials and the Ambassador of Ireland, at a technical Education Summit had been heretofore unheard of.

During the summit, education practitioners and experts presented highlights of their programs and best practices. Discussions addressed the severe gaps in education and proposed measures for improving the sector and concluded with a blueprint for addressing northern Uganda’s education needs. The blueprint, presented to President Museveni during the summit’s closing ceremony, detailed education goals and provided a framework for context-specific action to close the gap between the PRDP region and the rest of Uganda.

President Museveni’s attendance along with his promise of a response to the blueprint within two months also bodes well for the future of children in northern Uganda, many of whom live in camps for Internally Displaced Persons. The Gulu meeting participants also set in motion plans to create a hall of fame honoring famous northern and northeastern Ugandans, as a way to inspire children of the region.

“The blueprint is addressing the recovery and restructure of the education sector in a comprehensive manner. If implemented even at 40 percent, the region will show vast improvements in education,” Pillay said. “The implications are that the government of Uganda, NGOs and donors need to work within the priorities identified in the blueprint to deliver education in a coordinated manner, so that funds can be targeted, duplication reduced and a framework for accountability put in place. This will contribute greatly to enhance education service delivery to the children and to give them HOPE for the future.”

— Alexandra Pratt with assistance from Jon Silverstone and Roseline Tekeu.



# LIBERIA: LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EFFICIENT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

PHOTO BY: ALPP STAFF



COUNTY AND DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS MEET WITH ALPP STAFF AT THE MARYLAND COUNTY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER.

At the Maryland Learning Resource Center (LRC), staff members are helping make it easier for Liberia Ministry of Education County Officers to respond to the needs of Maryland County public schools.

The LRC is one of six in six counties that grew out of a memorandum of understanding between the Accelerated Learning Program Plus (ALPP) and the Minister of Education, Dr. Joseph D. Z. Korto, in 2006. Under the agreement, the centers were to be renovated and staffed by ALPP and ultimately transition to being managed by the Ministry of Education.

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### AFGHANISTAN: TRAINERS RECEIVE NEW SKILLS IN SAFER CONDITIONS

smile, added, “The students certainly are asking a lot of questions from their teachers now.”

BESST, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development in Afghanistan and managed by Creative Associates International, Inc., developed the ITSA training to help reinforce the lessons teachers gained through the INSET I trainings and emphasize the respective roles of the community and school manager in strengthening teaching within a school. All of BESST’s trainers will learn how to observe and provide teachers with constructive feedback, help educators set up Teacher-Learning Circles (TLCs), and support school managers to establish School Improvement Plans (SIP).

“The LRC helps us complete our tasks more efficiently, which helps us to better train teachers in the area,” said James Barti, Maryland County Education Officer.

ALPP is a four-year collaboration between the Liberia Ministry of Education, Creative Associates International, Inc., and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As the follow-on project to the Liberia Transitional Initiative also implemented by Creative, ALPP provides training for 1,500 teachers and implements accelerated learning classes for more than 22,000 over-age and out-of-school learners in six counties.

When ALPP began, the creation of the Learning Resource Centers in Gbarnga (Bong County), Sannequille (Nimba County), Voinjama (Lofa County), Zwedru (Grand Gedeh County) and Harper (Maryland County) and Monrovia (Montserrado county) was both innovative and challenging. Services once provided by the former Curriculum Resource Centers that operated at the county level before Liberia’s nearly two decades of civil unrest, had to be re-established.

The LRC in Harper provides Maryland County’s District Education Officers the space to conduct meetings, send documents, print reports and access education-

al resources using the internet. Services provided to teachers and students include reading and research, distribution of resource materials and computer literacy exercises.

“We have benefited immensely from using the Maryland LRC as our office alongside Creative’s staff,” said Joel Jackson, District Education Officer. “We enjoy the Learning Resource Center and will continue to work alongside its staff to better educate the citizens of Maryland County.”

The working relationship allows for both parties to share solutions to the challenges that arise in the schools of Maryland County – whether dealing with impassable roads when trying to deliver materials to schools or meeting the challenges of a severely under-qualified cadre of teachers.

“The closeness of the two staffs creates a cordial working environment, an open door,” said Varney Kollie, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the Maryland LRC. “We strive to help each other in every way possible to solve problems.”

— ALPP Program Assistant Justus Anderson and Senior Program Manager Gail von Hahmann in Liberia.

“I think having a meeting before and after the class with a teacher and talking about his lesson plan, the strong and weak points of the class, and the materials used – I really think that will help the teacher learn how to organize the class better,” Hafiz said.

Hafiz and the other Senior Trainers returned to their respective provincial capitals in late June and began the next tier of training for the 180 District Teacher Training Team (DT3) Leaders in INSET I delivery. By early August, BESST’s Team Leaders had trained their Team Members and, by mid-August, BESST’s DT3 trainers were carrying out ITSA activities at the school-level in all 11 provinces.

Although teacher training and support is the main component of BESST, the project is also developing and broadcasting

educational radio programs to complement face-to-face trainings. In addition, the team is working with the Ministry of Education to develop national competency and credentialing systems for teachers and school managers and is strengthening MoE systems and policies that support quality teaching.

On his last day of training in Kabul, Hafiz expressed optimism: “It’s true that many teachers in Afghanistan are not even familiar with the most basic classroom management skills,” he said. “But I do think our work – these trainings – they are making a difference. More than just changing teacher behaviors, teachers in the provinces they are starting to love teaching.”

—Alison Long, BESST External Relations Manager, in Afghanistan.



# NORTH AFRICA: ALGERIA-UNITED STATES SCHOOL LINKAGES PROGRAM REVEALS STUDENTS HAVE MUCH IN COMMON

Given the opportunity to engage in personal one-on-one conversation, today's youth realize that they have more in common with their global counterparts than they ever knew. The U.S.-Algeria School Linkages program (Linkages) has provided such a forum to approximately 1,000 Algerian and American students, most of whom have reported that the program has allowed them to create virtual friendships with students they otherwise might never have met.

Supported by the U.S. Department of State and implemented by Creative Associates International, in partnership with Michigan State University, the Linkages Program uses innovative technology to connect high school students and teachers in Michigan and Nevada with their counterparts in nine states across Algeria.

Students communicated through an interactive website, participating in online discussion forums and exchanging PowerPoint community profiles during the 2007-2008 academic year. By sharing stories about their lives and their communities, students were able to not only see the similarities that exist between the two cultures, but learned to appreciate the differences as well. As one Algerian student said, "We got closer and appreciated each other much more. We also became more tolerant." An American student also noted that the program helped them discover new ways to enrich their own lives: "We all learned that there are many things we can learn from Algerians about time and family and values to improve our own way of life in the U.S."

The program drew a very positive reaction from both American and Algerian teachers and students alike. Eighty-five percent of the students and teachers who responded to a survey said they would strongly recommend the program to others. Teachers were also very satisfied that the program met its goals and provided them with an opportunity to communicate with their colleagues on important pedagogical issues and classroom strategies. Many noted that the program improved students' ability to communicate cross-culturally.

Katie Mitchell, a teacher involved in Linkages from East Grand Rapids High School in Michigan said: "The most positive part of this project is watching the students read some of the comments, and reading their thoughtful comments. It's a nice break, and because my kids are honors kids, and sometimes want to see the purpose, it is a great opportunity to teach them that communication – particularly cross-cultural – is going to be one of the most important skills they have in the future, and they need to start thinking about how their ideas are being interpreted by a global audience."

In addition to facilitating cultural understanding, the Linkages program also responded to two educational reform goals set by the Ministry of National Education in Algeria: making students the center of the classroom and utilizing technology to improve English language instruction. Because many students' technology skills greatly surpassed those of their teachers, students were able to take the lead in preparing their community profiles. Linkages succeeded in bridging the gap between the traditional teacher and student relationship, helping them to work together. One Algerian teacher noted, "I think we learn much from our students, from other colleagues and we get closer to our students."

Having weekly access to native American speakers through the website also improved the Algerian students' ability to use English as a communicative tool. Teachers noted that by the end of the program, their students were expressing themselves more freely and using new vocabulary learned from their American counterparts. For 80 percent of students and 72 percent of teachers written English skills improved "quite a bit" or more. "By participating in this project, I learned many things. First, I feel very changed in my English, my pronunciation, my grammar and my vocabulary, and I really know more about how Americans live and specifically how students live, and more than that I know more about American culture," said one of a number of Algerian students who said "they learned a lot of English" through Linkages.



PHOTO BY: SARAH HAVEKOST, ALGERIA FIELD MANAGER

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE LINKAGES PROGRAM FROM BLIDA, ALGERIA FOUND THEY HAD A LOT IN COMMON WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN MICHIGAN AND NEVADA.

Survey findings also showed the Linkages program improved students' group work skills and a teachers' abilities to facilitate group work. Teachers also found that the program helped students organize and present information better.

"They learned how to work in groups. For example, they learned to better complete each other's work, to make suggestions, to think how to (better) other's output, in one word how to make a collective production," said one Algerian teacher.

By bridging the geographical barrier between Algeria and the United States through technology, the Linkages program was able to bring a diverse group of students together to explore issues that are important to them and today's global society. "The School Linkages program is a great opportunity for citizen-to-citizen exchange (even without leaving one's country). Thanks to this program, Algerian and American high school students have been able to learn a great deal about each other's culture, history and daily reality," said Rafik Mansour, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Algiers. "They were better able to understand and appreciate their differences but they were also reminded of how much they have in common."



# LATIN AMERICA: CREATIVE LAUNCHES NEW EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR EX-GANG MEMBERS IN HONDURAS AND CONVENES JUVENILE JUSTICE WORKSHOPS

One hundred former gang members in Honduras will be paired with employers and mentors in the latest implementation of Desafío 100, or Challenge 100, a signature approach of Creative Associates International's efforts in Latin America that help youth acquire the job skills they need to assimilate into society and advance in life.

Desafío 100 is being implemented in selected neighborhoods where cycles of poverty make youth vulnerable to gang recruitment. Creative's Alianza Joven Regional (AJR), in partnership with Paz y Convivencia Ciudadana (P&C), plans to open four outreach centers for vulnerable communities to reinsert youth into civic life.

Developed by Creative, the outreach center model provides a safe haven for youths to learn basic vocational skills and use their free time in positive ways, such as computer literacy. For long-term sustainability, P&C will finance 50 percent of the cost of the outreach centers so that operations can continue after AJR ends.

Creative developed Desafío 100 for a predecessor USAID-funded project in Guatemala, Programa Alianza Joven. AJR's implementation of this approach will also be replicated in El Salvador and in Guatemala. Now that the first Desafío 100 participants in Guatemala have been successfully reintegrated, another group of former gang members will begin the program in that country.

A former Guatemalan employer along with a former gang member who received an opportunity under AJR, have been invited by UNESCO to present on their experiences at an international seminar to be held in Bahrain.

In its first few months of implementation, AJR has also held three juvenile justice workshops in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Workshop participants discussed the current situation of juvenile justice in their respective countries, as well as identified problems, weaknesses and challenges. All three workshops revealed similar challenges, including: the lack of integrated approaches toward improving juvenile justice, the challenges of coordination and collaboration between juvenile justice sector operators and institutions, and the lack of investment in the development of policies and programs for youth.

AJR is a direct response to the public security, investment and development challenges caused by gangs in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The project is implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The impressive turnout at the workshops, whose participants included Supreme Court Magistrates, high government officials, juvenile judges and recognized civil society experts and leaders, signals the deep need in the three countries to discuss in-depth the situation of juvenile justice in the region," said Salvador Stadthagen, AJR's

Project Director. "The fact that the results of this workshop process will eventually be brought to the platform of the Central American Integration System (SICA), through

the organization of a Regional Forum sponsored by the major regional integration institutions, will be a major contribution to helping form consensus toward a legal framework for juvenile justice in Central America."

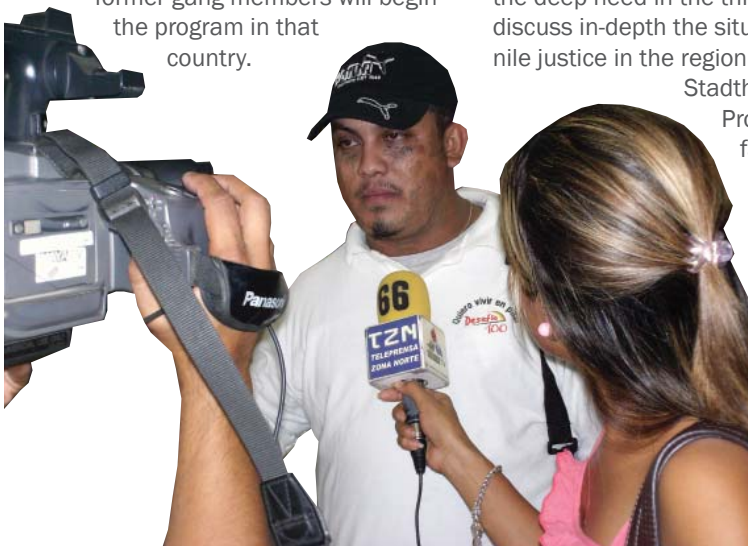
In El Salvador, the participants agreed that the Juvenile Criminal Law is one of the best in the region but its application is uneven. After an extensive discussion, the group identified the central problem of juvenile justice in El Salvador as, "the incoherence between formal recognition and effectiveness in fulfilling youth and children's rights."

Similarly, in Guatemala, participants discussed what should be the country's priorities regarding juvenile justice and agreed that even if there was an adequate legal framework, still lacking are prevention policies, targeted programs and investment.

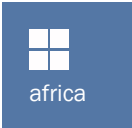
In Honduras, the conversation focused on the lack of adequate rehabilitation programs for youth who run afoul of the law. A major problem for Honduras is the current over-capacity of youth correction centers. As in Guatemala, participants agreed that even if there is an existing legal framework, its application of the law remains at issue. They also point to the lack of consistent public policies on youth issues, the lack of investment and the lack of coordination among juvenile justice sector institutions including prosecutors, public defenders, judges, police, and correction facilities officers as major challenges.

The three workshops will lead to an AJR analysis of the status of juvenile justice, leading to a more concrete vision of the specific needs and problems facing each country and the region. Over the long-term, AJR's analyses of juvenile justice issues will enable governments and civil society to better address the issues of youth-and-justice in an effort to reduce the numbers of youths who join gangs.

PHOTO BY: JUAN JOSE HERNANDEZ



A FORMER GANG MEMBER TAKES QUESTIONS FROM THE MEDIA ABOUT JOINING DESAFIO 100, OR CHALLENGE 100, A CREATIVE-DESIGNED JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM BEING IMPLEMENTED IN HONDURAS.



# NIGERIA: DIGNITARIES HELP COMPASS' DE-WORMING EFFORTS

The COMPASS gathering that drew 500 people in June from the Gwarzo local government area in Nigeria's Kano state was no small feat. They included dignitaries who came to witness the administration of de-worming medications to primary students in public and Islamiyya schools, lending the effort legitimacy amid false rumors the medications are harmful to children.

In all, 25 girls and 25 boys from the area's 37 COMPASS supported schools received de-worming medications from local dignitaries. The symbolism was important in the effort to de-worm an additional 434,560 students in this community.

The dignitaries who attended included Gwarzo's district head, Alhaji Shehu Kabiru Bayero, the secretary of the Local Government Education Area, Alhaji Garba Sarki, the Local Government Area Community Coalition Forum Chairman, Mallam Abdullahi Sani, and a representative from the Kano State Universal Basic Education Board, as well as the Chairman of the Gwarzo Local Governance Area council, Alhaji Sunusi Muhammad.

Intestinal worms are a scourge on children in developing countries; they cause unimaginable physical pain and are a source of school absenteeism and set backs in learning gains. Yet providing de-worming medications to children in the north of Ni-

geria requires winning consent from local officials and religious leaders. In the past, efforts to inoculate children have resulted in widespread rumors that children were being sterilized.

"Allowing the dignitaries to give the children the de-worming drugs signaled to the community that local leaders had bestowed their blessing on COMPASS' de-worming activities," said Semere Solomon, the project's director.

COMPASS – the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector project – is designed to provide interventions to schools that promise the greatest returns for expanding access to basic education for Nigerian students across the three states of Lagos, Kano and Nasarawa. The COMPASS basic education strategy also includes a school health and nutrition component that provides Nigerian students with de-worming and micro-nutrients which promote their physical wellbeing and make intellectual development possible.

Creative Associates International, Inc. of Washington, D.C. implements the basic education component of the COMPASS project along with the Nigerian government and four Nigerian and four international partner organizations. The nine-partner COMPASS project is led by Pathfinder International and supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The de-worming initiative has so far treated all 31,100 children in Gwarzo's COMPASS schools (17,200 males and 13,900 females). Because the health interventions have been so successful, schools that have not been integrated into the COMPASS network are requesting these benefits as well and COMPASS is meeting those requests.

So far, 6,525 pupils from non-COMPASS supported schools (4,300 males and 2,225 females) have also been treated. Now the Gwarzo Local Governance Authority – LGA - has directed the Primary Health Care Department to submit a proposal to the Gwarzo LGA for the purchase of albendazole to treat the rest of Gwarzo's school children. The goal is to have over 95 percent of children in the area treated by the end of this school year.

Winning the cooperation of local dignitaries to administer de-worming medications to Gwarzo's children helped COMPASS kick off the de-worming exercise on a large scale. The de-worming drugs were leveraged from UNICEF, another major development in donor-to-donor collaboration.

"COMPASS and UNICEF have been working on similar areas of interventions in Nigeria," said Solomon. "It was found essential for the two to coordinate their efforts and complement each other to better impact those who benefit from those interventions." UNICEF has provided COMPASS with 1.2 million tablets, he said.

COMPASS' network of health workers, PTAs, and community coalitions were indispensable in getting the medications to students and winning the community's trust. To date, 311,460 pupils have been de-wormed. An additional 124,700 are expected to be de-wormed soon.

"The de-worming activity in [Gwarzo] Kano is a clear indication of the community sustaining the project's intervention," said Nafisa Ado, COMPASS State Education Specialist.

— Nafisa Ado, Education Specialist, Kano Field Office, COMPASS and Alexandra Pratt in Washington, D.C.

PHOTO BY: NAFISA ADO, COMPASS STATE EDUCATION SPECIALIST, KANO STATE, NIGERIA.



KANO STATE DIGNITARIES DISTRIBUTE DE-WORMING MEDICATIONS TO PUPILS AT GWARZO'S YUSUF TAMBAL ISLAMIYYA SCHOOL.



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# SRI LANKA: UNILEVER SEEKS CREATIVE'S ASAP TRAINING OF TRAINERS METHODOLOGY

PHOTO BY: UNILEVER STAFF



A DEMONSTRATION OF PRACTICAL CONCEPTS DURING ASAP'S TRAINING-OF-TRAINERS' WORKSHOP FOR UNILEVER

Unilever, a leading supplier of the world's best known consumer brands, sought out the Creative Associates International-implemented Accelerated Skills Acquisition Program (ASAP) program to provide employment training as part of its corporate social responsibility efforts.

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), ASAP works with the private sector and government and NGO training centers to develop workforce readiness for Sri Lankan youths ages 15 to 25.

The ASAP team also provides workforce skills training in order to improve employment opportunities for these young people. Course work focuses on job search strategies and building employability through Career Success Skills, English and computer literacy, and how to seek multiple job opportunities.

"We receive five to six CVs a day and most of them are not worth following up on...they lack focus and don't reflect what we are looking for," said Unilever's Administrative Manager David Muller. "ASAP fills this gap in young people's skills; the ability to focus themselves and market themselves to us. We at Unilever are committed to bring about this change, too."

Following its introduction to ASAP staff at a meeting organized by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Unilever enlisted ASAP's help in training the children of the beneficiaries of its Saubaghya project. Unilever places strong emphasis on its corporate

social responsibility (CSR) initiatives by opening economic opportunities for those who would otherwise have none.

Unilever's Saubaghya project is designed to empower Sri Lankan women through an innovative partnership that trains rural women to become entrepreneurs and increase their living standards. In the end, by increasing their business acumen, Unilever gains a pool of new saleswomen for its products in rural areas.

Though the majority of Saubaghya beneficiaries are older than ASAP's target age group, Unilever decided to focus on their children for training. "We must do some service to the people we work with. What better way to do so than to help their kids?" asked Unilever Corporate Relations Manager, Charmika Hettiarachchi.

After adapting the training to Unilever's needs, the ASAP training was conducted for 18 Unilever headquarters and field-based upper and middle management staff drawn from the company's western, central and north central provinces offices. These newly qualified trainers will, in turn, train 800 youths of the Saubaghya beneficiaries. The course provided an introduction to ASAP's objectives, its target groups and methodology, an introduction to the uniqueness of the curriculum (integration of subject matter and soft skills focus), general facilitation skills (including listening, hygiene and dress), a deeper understanding of lesson structures and expected teaching methods. Lastly, a practicum session allows each participant to teach a part of a selected lesson.

Commenting on the high standards and dedication of the Unilever team, ASAP trainer Gamini Hettiarachchi, said all trainees worked hard and their efforts were demonstrated through the practice sessions. Other team members agreed.

"This [ASAP curriculum] is a program that gives the focus that young people today lack. The training of trainers itself is an exceptional model that can be used for other types of training we conduct for people who work with us," said Dushantha Bogahalande, a Unilever Territory Manager in Kekirawa in the North Central Province. "It [the ASAP training] can be used to enhance skills of persons outside this age category as well."

Unilever has been so impressed with the ASAP training that it is considering plans to provide in-house trainings with its newly qualified trainers in order to benefit the company's own employees. Further, Unilever has indicated that it may also provide the training to the surrounding low-income community near its Colombo facility.

"A program's success rests on conducting it ourselves. Getting outside trainers to conduct training for groups we work with, is not as half as successful as carrying it out ourselves," said Indunil Weerasinghe, Territory Manager of 15 years serving Welleriya in the Colombo suburbs. "We are known to the community and we can have a stronger impact."

— ASAP Local Program Specialist Samudrika Gayani Sylva in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Alexandra Pratt in Washington, D.C.



# AFGHANISTAN: BUILDING NGO CAPACITIES TO DELIVER VITAL SERVICES

Last spring, the Afghanistan Women Activities and Social Services Association’s senior staff received training in the essentials of strategic planning and governance for the first time since it was founded in 2002.

This summer, the organization known by its acronym WASSA, had its senior staff train other staff members in management and leadership skills, to help lead the NGO to higher levels of professionalism and service delivery to its communities.

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Capacity Development Program (USAID CDP), WASSA and many other NGOs are growing and thriving. Creative Associates International, Inc. is implementing the CDP’s NGO component as part of the BearingPoint consortium.

“The method of training taught by CDP in May in Herat was perfectly replicated by WASSA management in its June training of its staff, said Nassir Anwari, Program Coordinator and Trainer for the CDP team. “It’s good to mention too, that it was the first time WASSA senior staff received training in strategic planning, fundraising and governance. The training was really effective for the organization. Before the CDP training, WASSA had not received training in organizational governance. The training helped WASSA revise its strategic plan to accommodate new circumstances.”

Creative’s CDP Director of NGO and Private Sector Programs, Carla Rosa Borges, said: “The WASSA training was a complete success. This is the second time an Afghan NGO has taken a training we have delivered to them and recreated it in their NGO. They are absorbing what we taught them.”

WASSA was founded by a group of women in Herat, Afghanistan with a mission to change the inequality women confront in society. A grassroots development agency that focuses on advocacy training in legal and protective services for women, income generation and vocational training, WASSA needed the expertise to reach its potential. Under CDP, WASSA staff received the training they needed to overcome organizational challenges.

The training, which fostered brainstorming and open communication among staff, led WASSA’s management committee to propose a new more transparent organizational structure.

“A leader sees the big picture and leads the people toward that vision,” said Wase Saedi, a WASSA staff member. “But that leader needs to have a manager to achieve his objectives. Understanding the governing body within an NGO in detail, was important to understand WASSA’s structure and the way an NGO should exist in a logical manner.”

*“A leader sees the big picture and leads the people toward that vision...”*  
**Wase Saedi**  
**WASSA staff member**

Helping NGOs like WASSA deliver vital services and advocate on behalf of citizens is at the core of the USAID CDP in Afghanistan. Creative provides in-depth training and analysis enabling NGOs to build organizational capacities to better serve civil society over the long term.

The Capacity Development Program’s NGO component is designed to support Afghan efforts to build good governance and democratic practices by focusing on building NGO capacity to deliver services in education, health, women’s rights, human rights and vocational training, among others.



WASSA STAFF RECEIVE TRAINING IN GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS WITH SUPPORT FROM THE USAID CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

PHOTO BY: CDP STAFF





## **Creative's President and CEO, M. Charito Kruvant, Co-Authors New Book on Increasing the Competitiveness of Small Businesses**

This summer, Mrs. Kruvant along with Dr. Sharon T. Freeman, co-authored "Gems of Wisdom for Increasing the Competitiveness of 8 (a) Business Development Firms." The book offers insights from those who work with 8 (a) BD contractors and how to do business with the federal government.

It's a sequel to a book published last year, "Gems of Wisdom for Succeeding in the 8(a) Business Development Program and Beyond," offering guidance and lessons learned from successful SBA 8(a) entrepreneurs. For copies, visit: [www.aasbea.com](http://www.aasbea.com).

"The more the private sector and business got interested in the topic, the more information they needed from the government,"

Mrs. Kruvant said. "This sequel takes away the mystery and distills the basic rules of success within a complex process, along with integrity and commitment to our community, real technical expertise, perseverance and patience."

The "Gems of Wisdom" series is an effort to help "level the playing field" so that small business and government get the benefits of competition, Mrs. Kruvant said. "Everybody wins."

As a minority woman and a graduate of the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development program, Mrs. Kruvant makes sure her own firm supports small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses.

She has served as Chair of the Small Business Administration Washington Metropolitan District Office (SBA-WMDO) Advisory Council along with Creative's Director of External Relations, Stephen Horblitt, who has also served as member of the Advisory Council.

Over the course of her more than 31 years in international development, Mrs. Kruvant has been the recipient of numerous awards for her support of small, minority and women-owned business. They include the U.S. Small Business Administration's Washington Metropolitan Area District

Office Director's Award for 2007, and the Entrepreneurial Visionary Award (2003) from the Women's Business Center.

Creative's Procurement and Logistics Unit purchases all office products at less cost from small businesses, including those that are Small Business Administration 8 (a) firms or those owned by Service Disabled Veterans. Creative has also increased the firm's small business purchasing by requesting quotes from small business for the education and civil society programs Creative implements out of 17 offices worldwide, even when small businesses are not required under the procurement.

Creative has a firm practice of purchasing goods and services from small businesses in Washington, D.C., including International Procurement Services, Comtronics, Inc., IT Total Solutions, and Caddo Office Supplies.



## **Creative's Vice President of Stabilization and Development Addresses SID-Washington Working Group**

James Schmitt addressed the Society for International Development-Washington, D.C. Chapter's Working

Group for Security and Development on the emerging Stabilization and Development landscape. His remarks focused on how the role of civil-military cooperation was increasing, as seen through the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in support of the Department of Defense, Department of State and U. S. Agency for International Development requirements. He also provided a 15-minute presentation at the July 9 event followed by a 30-minute question and answer session.

## **Creative Attends the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign Annual Dinner**

Creative Associates senior staff attended the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign Annual Tribute Dinner on July 15 along with their special guests, including the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Washington, D.C., H.E. Said Tayeb Jawad.

The Tribute Dinner honored Defense Secretary Robert Gates. In addition to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Members of Congress and senior Administration officials, more than 700 business and NGO members of the USGLC recognized Secretary Gates for his leadership in support of the U.S. International Affairs Budget.

In his speech, Secretary Gates emphasized: "Broadly speaking, when it comes to America's engagement with the rest of the world, it is important that the military is - and is clearly seen to be - in a supporting role to civilian agencies."

## NEW FACES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND THE FIELD



**Lauren Di Silvio** joins the Communities in Transition division as a Program Specialist. Lauren's international development experience includes an internship position with the U.S. Department of State, where she independently prepared the 2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices on Malta, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Denmark.

Before Creative, she also interned at the Health, Environment and Development Consortium in Jaipur, India, where she interviewed sandstone mineworkers and documented cases on occupational lung disease for a comprehensive report. Lauren received a bachelor's degree in International Affairs with a concentration on Conflict and Security and International Development studies from The George Washington University, Elliot School of International Affairs. She is proficient in French.

**Jennifer Divis** joins the Communities in Transition division as a Technical Manager, following a yearlong consultancy with Creative's Business Development Unit. Before Creative, Jennifer was a Development Associate and Coordinator for the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, where she cultivated government and private support for domestic social service programs and international policy analysis and research related to refugees and migrants.



Jennifer received a master's degree in Public Administration from American University in Washington, D.C. and a bachelor's degree in Sociology/Anthropology and English Literature from Denison University in Granville, Ohio. She knows basic French.



**Terence Giles** joins Creative as Chief of Party for the Central Asian Republics (CAR) Quality Learning Project based in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

A 17-year veteran of development initiatives, Terry has managed and implemented regional and country programs with an emphasis on education involving representation and negotiation with governments, donors and international agencies as well as supporting and liaising with NGOs.

Between 2003 and 2007, Terry was Chief of Party for the Participation, Education and Knowledge Strengthening Project (PEAKS) in Tajikistan, a \$14 million basic education project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. PEAKS is the predecessor project to the CAR Quality Learning Project.

Terry received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the Cranfield Institute of Technology in Cranfield, Bedfordshire, U.K. He also speaks Russian, French and Spanish.

**Christopher McCall** joins Creative as a Program Associate following a six-month consultancy.

His time will be equally divided between Creative's Education, Mobilization and Communication division and the Creative Center for Stabilization and Development. Since joining Creative, he has been involved in research and development and supporting the efforts of Creative Learning, the firm's non-profit sister organization, in the development of several proposals focusing on anti-trafficking in persons.



Before Creative, Chris spent four and a half years with PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP., where he worked on projects in the areas of data analysis, database management, project management, software development, and information systems for clients including Freddie Mac, BellSouth, and Delta, among others. He also developed and was involved in numerous presentations for internal staff and external clients.

Chris received a bachelor of science degree in Management Science from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va. He is a native of Falls Church, Va.



**Jill Meeks** joins the Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project as a Teacher Education Advisor based in Afghanistan. She brings 15 years of education experience, with a particular focus on program and training design and gender and education, serving culturally diverse populations both in the United States and internationally. Before joining Creative, Jill served as a Senior Education Advisor for USAID’s Safe Schools Program. She also served as a Peace Corps representative at the Office for Global Relief for Tanzania and Uganda and as a Teacher Trainer in Guinea Bissau.

She received a master’s degree in International Training and Education from American University in Washington, D.C., and a bachelor of science in Education from the University of Georgia in Athens, Ga.

**Roseline Fodouop Tekeu** joins the Education, Mobilization and Communication division as a Program Associate. Before joining Creative, Roseline was a Program Assistant for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Africa Program, where she edited papers on Angola’s development and reconstruction and a post-election analysis of Nigeria. Roseline also co-founded ExcelAfrica, a website which provides information on African education issues, specifically concerning education issues for countries in crisis. In previous incarnations, Roseline worked in the financial services sector for Société Générale Investment Banking in Paris, France, among other financial institutions.



Roseline received a master’s degree in International Education Policy from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education, and a bachelor’s degree in Political Science with a minor in Business and Finance from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris. She is fluent in French and Bamileke, a language spoken in the grasslands of western Cameroon.



**Prasanna Vernenkar** joins Creative as a Proposal Coordinator in Business Development. He brings five years of technical and international proposal and contracting experience with the U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense. Before joining Creative, Prasanna was a Technical Writer and Proposals Manager for Desbuild, Inc., responsible for all company bid activities related to federal government contracts. Prasanna also served as a Technical Assistant and Project Manager for Thermal Processes in Mumbai, India.

He received a master’s degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the American Graduate School of International Relations and Diplomacy in Paris, France, and a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Conn. He is conversant in Dutch, French, German, Konkani and Spanish.

**Katherine Wall** joins the Creative Center for Stabilization and Development as a Technical Manager.

Before Creative, she served as a Proposal Manager in Business Development for ArmorGroup North America, based in McLean where she developed and delivered proposals, sought new business opportunities with the U.S. Government and industry partners, and responded to requests for information from the U.S. Congress. She also worked as a Defense Analyst for the Iraq Project and Contracting Office as part of BCP International, Ltd. in Washington, D.C.



Katherine received a master’s degree in International Security from Georgetown University and a bachelor’s degree in History with a Certificate in Latin American Studies from Princeton University. She is proficient in Spanish and speaks basic French.

# NEW FACES

PHOTOS: CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC.



## PHOTO OF THE SEASON:



PHOTO BY: SYLVIA ELLISON, PROJECT DIRECTOR

In Panama's Darien Province, language students use a fishing game designed to improve visual discrimination of syllables to develop vocabulary skills under Creative's DESTINO program. These students were pictured at Agua Fria Public School Number Two. Supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, one of Destino's objectives was to prevent and reduce child labor in Panama by increasing the quality of education and thereby improve school attendance among youth vulnerable to absenteeism.

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Creative Associates International Inc., is a private, professional services firm headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since its inception in 1977, Creative has assisted governments, communities, NGOs, and private companies worldwide to lead and to manage change.

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