

SUDAN: Participatory Urban Planning in Rumbek Using Satellite Imaging

Under its first agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Creative Associates International Inc., will help the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) create a master plan for expansion of the newly designated southern capital of Rumbek.

After a series of meetings and discussions with officials of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Creative was asked to assist the GoSS Secretariat of Physical Infrastructure and Town Planning in building their capacity to create Master Plans for the expansion and growth of key southern towns.

The project takes on added significance after rebels and the government in Khartoum signed a final peace agreement in Kenya in January. The accord ended Africa's longest conflict that had claimed at least 1.5 million lives and displaced four million others over the past 21 years.

The pilot for this project has been Rumbek town. In its capacity as the interim GoSS capital, Rumbek will be the seat of GoSS secretariats, international agencies, international and indigenous NGOs, and commerce. In addition to refugees originally from the area, Rumbek's expected growth into an economic hub of southern Sudan will surely boost its population.

Town planning - with its cross-cutting elements of resource identification, allocation and management; land distribution and

boundaries and need for consensus - has a direct impact on citizens' lives. When done properly, town planning is participative in nature and offers an invaluable, visible, accountable and transparent social contract between civil authorities and citizens. A town's master plan and the urban planning that comes with it is a community action plan, a resource map, and a document that protects and promotes rights of all citizens. Finally, it is a road map of community priorities and a way to visualize future development.

Using land satellite imagery and ground surveys, Creative Associates has produced a highly accurate map of Rumbek, the town's first map since 1928. This map will be the centerpiece for continued work on the location of government buildings, roads, schools, hospitals, clinics, parks and neighborhoods. The map will also document existing building, water points and latrines.

The master plan is a cornerstone of effective local governance. The process will strengthen the capacity of the local governments to work with civil society and in raising awareness that the government is acting in fair and reasonable ways that are in the best interests of the nation. In partnership with Creative Associates, the GoSS has plans to apply this methodology to at least seven other towns in southern Sudan in the next year.

— Sandra Shuster and Alexandra Pratt



Photo by Michael Freeman

Two Girls Pursue their Studies in Sudan.

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Happy New Year!

新年
快樂

PANAMA: Creative, Dept. of Labor Tackle Child Labor

Many of Panama's poor and indigenous children must help their families by working in agriculture, limiting their educational development and lifelong opportunities. To combat these effects, Creative Associates International Inc. is teaming with three Panamanian organizations—Casa Esperanza, Fundamujer and Fundación Tierra Nueva—to provide nonformal and flexible education opportunities for 2,400 child laborers and 4,275 children at risk of becoming child laborers.

Despite Panama's compulsory-education laws, tens of thousands of children between ages 5 and 17—nearly 58,000 in 2002—were working. Of this group, only 42 percent attended school.

The four-part collaboration stems from a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) newly funded project called *Disminuyendo y Erradicando el Trabajo Infantil para Nuevas Oportunidades (DESTINO)*. The project is targeting poor and indigenous children in the central Panamanian provinces of Chiriquí, Coclé, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Comarca Gnobé Bugle and Darien who are working on family or commercial farms. Long work hours and seasonal harvests keep these children out of school, prompting many to drop out.

The three local organizations will work to fulfill DESTINO's goals through a multifaceted effort, including a national awareness campaign, teacher training,

accelerated learning and scholarships to secondary-school students.

Casa Esperanza, for example, will work with farm and plantation owners to raise awareness of child labor issues and increase the number of farm schools, so that children can continue their education during harvest and planting periods. About 1,300 will be enrolled in 10 new farm schools and receive academic instruction, thus avoiding involvement in agricultural labor.

In Darien, Fundación Tierra Nueva will study seasonal migration patterns and attitudes toward education ultimately to develop a campaign to promote school retention. As a result of these activities, 2,800 parents will participate in community presentations on the dangers of child labor and the importance of education.

Vocational training will be provided by Fundamujer in Darien and Veraguas for parents of at-risk children and older youths. Scholarships for the last three years of secondary school at the new Colegio Agro Forestal will offer youths income-generating skills, enabling them to move out of subsistence farming and break the child labor chain.

"All three NGOs will join efforts communicating the needs and human rights of working children and children at risk of becoming workers—to the families, school communities, and regional and



national authorities,"

said Melinda West de Anguizola, DESTINO's project director.

DESTINO will fill gaps in Panama's education system by working with different elements of civil society. Project personnel also will collaborate with counterparts in the Panamanian Ministries of Education and Youth to ensure that the various programs continue after DESTINO ends. Also, the project will be used to create a network of organizations that will develop a policy agenda for child labor and education.

Creative Associates, which has been contracted by DOL, will provide overall management and coordination of DESTINO's activities as well as technical-assistance needs under the direction of Project Manager Archer Heinzen, Ph.D. Heinzen has 30 years of education and project management experience, including 12 years in Latin America. DESTINO is Creative's first project in Panama.

— Alexandra Pratt

DESTINO

Asia & Near East

Afghanistan

AFGHANISTAN: A Word with the Former Minister of Higher Education

Q & A

What role does higher education play in Afghanistan's future?

Investing in higher education is investing in human resources. It is investing in the new Afghan generation and building the future of Afghanistan. You cannot make a hospital unless you invest in the faculty of medicine. [So] you cannot make Afghanistan's higher education system unless you invest in the faculties of pedagogy and education.

What are the ministry's achievements so far?

When the Islamic Transitional Government was established, we had 4,000 students enrolled in institutions of higher education. Now we have 40,000. At that time we had 400 professors, currently we have 2,000.

Most of our buildings were destroyed, but now many of them have been rebuilt. At that time, there was not even a single computer anywhere in higher education; now we have more than 1,000 computers in the central higher institutions. There are five computer centers at Kabul University and Kabul Polytechnic Institute.

We have heard that the ministry does not favor the establishment of provincial universities. What plans do you have for delivering university services beyond Kabul?

We now have 18 institutions of higher education. We are trying to decrease the number of universities. The idea of establishing one university per each province is not practical. We simply lack the funds. The ministry's [annual] budget is less than \$7 million. We hope the government will increase this, especially its development budget. But we must be realistic. We cannot establish a university only by creating its campus and erecting buildings. Universities need professors, libraries and educational resources.

Still, I am very pleased to receive people from Paktia province who come asking for a university to be established there. This shows the maturity of the Afghan nation, as the first thing they request is a university. So, I have told them to start their work with a faculty of education or a faculty of agriculture. These two are the professions that the country needs most. Many students choose the faculties of medicine and political sci-

ences. The country does not need so many doctors or judges.

Fortunately there are about 15,000 students studying to be teachers, professors, administrators, advisors and officials of the Ministry of Education, meaning that from a total of 40,000 of our current students, 15,000 of them will be working in the education sector. The country needs more than 100,000 teachers.

Another field the Ministry of Higher Education is developing is technical training through the Faculty of Engineering, the Polytechnic Institute and the Technical Institute. Technical training is not well organized in Afghanistan-no ministry is taking charge of it, and there is no coordination among the ministries to pursue it.

Personally, I prefer establishing community colleges in Afghanistan. These are two-year colleges offering training in many professional fields. Those who do well and graduate with high marks can continue their education in universities. Others can enter

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Mohammed Sharif Fayezi, Afghanistan's Former Minister of Higher Education

As Afghanistan's former Minister of Higher Education, Mohammed Sharif Fayezi's job was a difficult one, fraught with hard choices and very limited resources. But he says the desire of Afghans to seek higher education gives him hope. He advised newly elected President Hamid Karzai on policies involving universities and technical institutes but also on foreign assistance in higher education.

One such project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, is the Afghan Primary Education Program (APEP), which helps prepare young Afghans for higher education studies. APEP, managed by Creative Associates International Inc., was started in 2003 to help Afghans rebuild their education system after years of war and hardship.

Mr. Fayezi spoke to APEP's Halim Fidai in Kabul.

AFGHANISTAN: A Word with the Former Minister of Higher Education

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professional fields. Those who do well and graduate with high marks can continue their education in universities. Others can enter directly into their professions. The purpose of community college is to prepare the students, answering the



needs of the job market. These colleges have proven very useful and effective in the United States and Canada, as well as in many developing countries.

Germany has helped us in economics and the geosciences, and the curriculum for

these faculties is ready for both the capital and provinces, and lecturers' training will be conducted soon. This field was being assisted by Germany even before the war in Afghanistan.

What are some of the challenges you confront?

Each year there is a university entrance exam for more than 20,000 high-school graduates, and about 1,000 professors are involved in conducting it.

The former Ministry of Higher Education has become aware that each year a number of those sitting for the entrance exam have not actually graduated from high school. There also have been cases of people writing the exam for others to gain entry to various faculties.

I would hereby like to ask high-school gradu-

ates to help the Ministry of Higher Education by honestly using their own talent and ability in the entrance exam. Those who attempt to enter the higher-education institutions illegally only create problems for themselves. For instance, only about 8,000 medical students are remaining from a total of 12,000 who entered the medical program after widespread falsification of entrance documents was discovered. Using illegal documents may be an easy way to enter a program, but in the end those who use them will have to endure the disgrace of being expelled.

What is your message to young Afghans?

I applaud those young Afghans who are willing to take these risks to educate themselves and to help build a new Afghanistan. But it is always better to do these things the right way. Otherwise, the foundations we are laying for the future will be weak.

— Halim Fidai and Joe Boris

Creative Learning



Los Angeles Students Donate Supplies to Peers in Kabul

Creative Learning, the nonprofit sister organization of Creative Associates International Inc., has been busy procuring school supplies, art materials and sports equipment for Zarghona girls high school in Kabul, Afghanistan, with funds donated by students at the Brentwood School in Los Angeles and La Paz Fund, a member of the Greater Washington D.C. Community Foundation. The fund, which specializes in education and development projects, matched the donation made by the Brentwood students.

All of the donated money was used for the procurement of supplies for the Afghan students. Creative Learning

thanks the high school students at Brentwood for their generous contributions and for their volunteerism toward this initiative's success. Brentwood students financed the purchase of supplies through a fundraising rally at the school.

The supplies were successfully delivered early this year; we'd like to extend a special thanks to our volunteers in Kabul, who helped with the procurement and delivery!

Creative Learning also thanks the students at Brentwood and Zarghona for the kind letters and photos they have exchanged. All involved hope this will be the beginning of a long relationship

between students and the teachers at both schools.

At Creative Learning, we believe such exchanges enrich the lives of students around the world. For more information, or to make a donation to Creative Learning, please visit www.creativelearning.org.



Caribbean

Haiti



Radio SOS Helped Gonaives Recover.

"We all agreed that radio was vital to the relief efforts in order to disseminate information on emergency assistance"

Kim Mahling Clark

HAITI: In Flood's Wake, Radio SOS Lives Up to its Name

Before the tsunami, there was Tropical Storm Jeanne.

Jeanne sent floods raging through Gonaives, a historic city about 60 miles northwest of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and left nearly 3,000 people dead and thousands more homeless.

Throughout the ordeal, radio news and information was never more badly needed. But most communication links had been knocked out.

As flood waters made roads impassable, contaminated food and water supplies and sent families searching for missing loved ones, Radio SOS was born to serve a vital need as area residents collected what remained of their lives.

Creative Associates International Inc., partnered with the U.S. Embassy, the interim government of Haiti and local cellphone provider Comcel, to reestablish radio broadcasts and help journalists resume their daily activities. Creative Associates also provided journalists with a training workshop during the crisis.

True to its name, Radio SOS came through as a life preserver with news,

information, and entertainment for the suffering population of Gonaives.

Though bureaucratic hurdles and transportation hazards delayed the launch of Radio SOS, as the new station came to be known, its purpose was clear from the start: To broadcast news and information about missing persons, food and water distributions and health tips. It also tried to entertain listeners with music.

"We all agreed that radio was vital to the relief efforts in order to disseminate information on emergency assistance," said Kim Mahling Clark, Creative's Washington-based manager of the Haitian Media Assistance and Civic Education Program, also known in Creole as RAMAK. The program's activities focus on strengthening community radio stations, journalist associations and expanding public awareness on civic rights and responsibilities.

During the crisis, Creative furnished Radio SOS with loaned radio equipment while the interim government supplied the power generating equipment and covered operating costs. The Public Diplomacy Section contributed \$5,000 for tape recorders and microphones for local journalists who lost

their equipment in the flood. Comcel gave journalists calling cards. Radio SOS is an example of how RAMAK responds to community radio needs in a crisis through partnerships. "We have six radio spots that we produced about the security of the hospitals, two about water and sanitation," said Clarel Pedre of the World Health Organization. "We have to take this opportunity to focus our messages about the reality in Gonaives."

Fritzlaine Douge of Haiti's Ministry of Culture and Communication, which is managing Radio SOS, said the ministry is seeking ways to extend Radio SOS's life beyond its February 2005 closing date. Radio SOS's 30-watt transmitter covers Gonaives and surrounding neighborhoods.

"The urgency is still there, several months later," Douge said. Some people lost all their papers, birthday certificates, property papers, and they need to be replaced. The radio can serve to guide people in the right direction."

— Alexandra Pratt and Yves Colon



Safer Streets with APREDE's Help.

GUATEMALA: Former Gang Members Now Fight Crime

Guatemala faces its most urgent challenge since the end of its 36-year civil war. Limited opportunities in education, job training and employment have left an estimated 5 million or more young people disenfranchised. To fill the void, more than 150,000 youths across Guatemala have turned to gangs, wreaking havoc on social, economic and traditional family structures, contributing to a rise in crime.

With the August 2001 launch of the Civil Society Program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Creative Associates International Inc., intervened to help reintegrate former gang members into the community, and to provide education and job training for at-risk youths. When the program ended in September 2004, Creative was awarded a USAID cooperative agreement through the agency's public-private Global Development Alliance to continue working with vulnerable youths.

In fall 2004, USAID awarded Creative the nearly \$800,000 agreement and the Youth Alliance Program was formed.

Under the terms of the agreement, it will leverage \$1.3 million from private interests in Guatemala and abroad.

The Alliance will provide technical assistance to local crime prevention councils and other grant partners. Major partners, such as the Alliance for Crime Prevention (APREDE), will develop and strengthen centers that provide training and income-generating opportunities for vulnerable youths. Expected results from these activities include fewer crime victims in selected areas and implementation of effective, sustainable crime-prevention programs.

"It's a bleak situation and the only way that the Central Americans are going to get out of this is to have international support and local private sector support, and this is the social-responsibility theme that has been developing in Latin America over the last few years," said Lynn Sheldon, Creative Associates' senior associate who monitors the program.

Drawing on local and international support, in the public and private sectors

alike, the USAID project will promote expansion of the APREDE model to five departments of Guatemala that have high levels of vulnerable youths, high crime rates and existing USAID-funded justice centers. Creative will coordinate with other U.S. government-supported activities, particularly those related to justice and decentralization, over the life of the Youth Alliance Program, to ensure effective, consistent approaches to crime prevention in these communities. Creative will promote close coordination with U.S.-backed efforts to help Guatemalan police prevent crime.

The rise in gang membership jeopardizes public safety and is complicated by long-standing tensions between Guatemalans and law enforcement agencies. Guatemala's history of repressive practices by law enforcement causes many citizens to distrust the police. Tensions are particularly strained for gang members, whose encounters with police are often confrontational even when no crime has been committed. Overall, the traditional approach to law enforcement has not led to a significant decline in crime, and any success has been compromised by widespread corruption of public officials with direct links to drug trafficking, kidnapping, assassination and extortion. Because gang members are often drawn into these criminal activities, they are widely viewed with suspicion by law enforcement.

During the first months of its implementation, the Youth Alliance Program established working relationships with governors, mayors, police commissioners and other leaders. In Escuintla and Villa Nueva, where crime prevention

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GUATEMALA: Former Gang Members Now Fight Crime

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councils exist, Creative is designing a training module that will allow for development of crime-prevention activities and employment training opportunities for vulnerable youth. At the national level, the program has begun efforts with the vice minister of government, who is encouraging the involvement of governors in crime prevention. Despite the serious challenges facing

Guatemalan youths, Creative's program draws its strength from the shared commitment of local communities and Guatemala's government to develop sustainable crime-prevention efforts.

— Alexandra Pratt

Conference in Gang Violence

A conference on Central American youth gang violence will be held in Washington, D.C. on **February 23, 2005** at the Pan American Health Organization. Called "Voices from the Field: Local Initiatives and New Research on Youth Gang Violence in Central America," it will feature speakers from the Americas, including Emilio Goubaud, director of APREDE for Creative Associates. Goubaud will discuss USAID-financed and Creative Associates-implemented efforts in the Program for Youth Alliance in Guatemala. The Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence (IACPV) is the conference organizer.

Washington, DC



Creative's Open House Welcomes the Development Community.

"It will be a hard-working year, a year of real opportunity," Ms. Tse said.

Over the years, the Open House has served as a recruiting event for prospective Creative staff and development specialists seeking new horizons. "I have met people at the Chinese New Year's party who have gone on to work at Creative," said Kay Bailey, Creative's associate counsel and herself, an Open House veteran.

Of course, the Chinese culinary feast is also enticing—noodles, dumplings, egg rolls and other delicacies. In keeping with Chinese tradition, each guest is given a red envelope carrying a penny for good luck.

Red is also the color of the evening. "Everyone is asked to wear red because red is the color of happiness and celebration," said Ms. Tse.

— Alexandra Pratt

Year of the Rooster: Tenacity and Dedication



Each winter, Creative Associates International Inc., opens its doors to welcome the development community to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Celebrated by Chinese and many others this time of year, Creative's celebration gathers staff and guests from the region and beyond to network among colleagues and competitors. This year's celebration will be February 17 from 4:00 to 8 p.m. at Creative's Washington D.C. headquarters. Members of the development community are welcome to attend.

The annual celebration has been a Creative tradition since the mid-1990s, said Mimi Tse, Creative's vice president, chief financial officer and founding partner. And it has become an annual draw for development specialists seeking new opportunities in a relaxed setting.

According to Chinese tradition, each new year is represented by one of 12 animals. This year, it's the rooster, known to be a symbol of dedication, tenacity and loyalty, attributes that might characterize Creative staff and what lies ahead in 2005.

新年快樂

IRAQ: Ed II Provides Needed Supplies

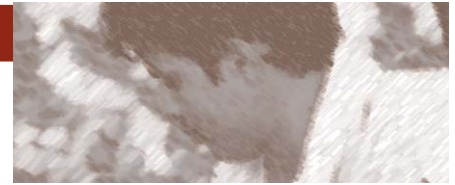
The U.S. Agency for International Development-funded Ed II project, which Creative Associates International Inc. is implementing to upgrade Iraq's school system, progressed on a number of fronts.

One of Ed II's key mandates is the creation of 84 model schools, which will be "centers of excellence" and are expected to showcase reforms by the Ministry of Education to improve access to and quality of education in primary and secondary schools. With the goal of establishing these "centers of excellence," Ed II staff and Ministry of Education officials met in January to strategize on the criteria for selecting school sites.

Ed II is also targeting early childhood learning. A team of 14 Iraqis and 24 Jordanians are working on production and guidelines for educational television programs for preschool children. A script has been written, narration

and music have been completed along with storyboards for two episodes. School supplies are also arriving. More than 114,000 educational kits containing school supplies landed at the southern Iraq port of Umm Al-Qasr in January for distribution to schools and students. The shipment is among the more than half million kits Iraqi students will receive.

The project's other objectives include strengthening the ministry of education, teacher training, refurbishing and equipping schools and establishing within the ministry of education a computing and communications infrastructure. Ed II is a follow-on to the USAID-funded and Creative-managed Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education (RISE) project, which set out to meet Iraq's most urgent needs after years of neglect under former President Saddam Hussein.



Creative Learning Collects Tsunami Donations

By the end of a month-long campaign, Creative Learning – through generous support of our staff and friends – collected nearly \$12,000 for tsunami victims in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. A special thanks goes to the Kruvant family that matched the funds donated by the staff, by \$5,145.

The people of Banda Aceh suffered greatly under the wrath of the tsunami last December. Funds collected will be used to provide basic necessities to children and other vulnerable populations. Creative Learning, the nonprofit sister to Creative Associates, has partnered with an Indonesian organization that will channel the funds directly to those less fortunate.

More information about the partner, Yayasan Inovasi Pemerintahan Daerah Center for Local Government Innovation (YIPD/CLGI) can be found at www.clgi.or.id. To learn more about Creative Learning, visit www.creativelearning.org.

— Carola Mandelbaum



Educational kits bound for Iraq from China.

Africa

Liberia

SURVEY: Liberians Headed in Right Direction

Though traumatized by 14 years of war, most Liberians want their country to focus on the future, not dwell on the violent past. They also want those who led factions in the fighting held to account for their actions while granting leniency to rank-and-file combatants. The best way to resolve these war-related issues, they believe, is to create a special commission dedicated to revealing the truth and administering justice.

Those are the findings of a nationwide survey in the West African nation, convulsed by civil war since the 1990 overthrow of its repressive military regime. More than 1,000 citizens responded to the survey, the first of its kind in Liberia. It was carried out by Liberian and U.S. researchers under a grant provided by the Liberia Transition Initiative, a project of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Creative Associates International, Inc. manages the project under contract to OTI.

The Liberians who conducted interviews and focus groups with their fellow citizens for the survey mainly work for civil society organizations that make up the Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG). This 23-organization coalition is pressing Liberia's transitional government to carry out terms of a U.N.-backed peace accord. Though the accord encourages public officials and the citizenry to make moves toward stability, Liberia has continued to endure spasms of interethnic conflict since it was signed in 2003.

In a sign of optimism, 51 percent of the survey's respondents said Liberia is headed in "the right direction," while 69 percent said they approve of the job

their interim leader, Gyude Bryant, is doing.

"People are more concerned about accountability, before forgiveness, and that those responsible for the fighting should be held responsible. But they do want to forgive those [ex-combatants] who come forward and at least admit what they did," said Tornorlah Varpilah, an activist with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, a regional organization that is part of the TJWG.

Tornorlah, who worked on the survey, presented its findings November 10 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a think tank in Washington, D.C. He was joined by John Moreira of Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research Inc., a Washington-based firm that oversaw the design, implementation and analysis of the research in collaboration with Subah-Belleh Associates, a prominent Liberian consulting firm.

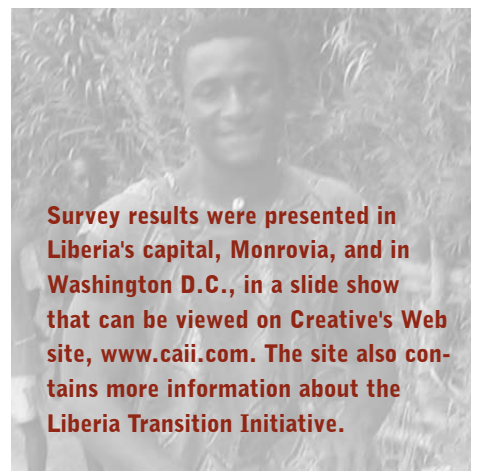
Tornorlah and Moreira also met with U.S. policymakers in Washington to convey that the majority opinion in Liberia believes that the country's transition from war to stability can be achieved only with the involvement of other countries, particularly the United States, and international bodies such as the United Nations.

The TJWG believes that the prime mechanism for such involvement would be the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which is one of the requirements under the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The transitional government has formed the TRC, but activists, including those from the TJWG, object to the transitional government's decision

to hand-pick the members. With a grant from USAID, the TJWG has presented draft legislation which is now pending before the National Assembly, that calls for commission nominations to be made by a separate panel of non-political community leaders, to earn the public's trust. The nominations would then be sent to the National Assembly for approval. Activists also are urging swift action on their bill so that the TRC could begin work well before national elections, scheduled for October 2005.

More than 200,000 people died in Liberia's civil war, with another 1.5 million displaced or forced to flee—startling figures for a population of barely 3 million. Across the country, every measure of economic, political and social well-being plummeted, as the government was unable to provide citizens even basic services. Despite these horrors, optimism and hope are alive in Liberia, as indicated by the comments of a woman interviewed for the survey in the north-central county of Nimba: "I appeal to the government to let this new Liberia be a new Liberia, and what has happened should be in the past. Everybody should be given rights and let us build a new Liberia."

— Joe Boris



Survey results were presented in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, and in Washington D.C., in a slide show that can be viewed on Creative's Web site, www.caii.com. The site also contains more information about the Liberia Transition Initiative.

BEPS: USAID Extends Successful Activity to Sixth Year



Building Primary Skills in Jamaica.

The Basic Education Policy Support (BEPS) Activity has been extended for a sixth year allowing for the continuation of programs around the world that help improve the quality, effectiveness and access to formal and nonformal education.

With the extension, the U.S. Agency for International Development-funded initiative will see the number of beneficiaries grow along with a budget that will have reached \$65 million.

Since March 2000, Creative Associates International Inc., and its partners—CARE, the George Washington University and GroundWork—have been providing short- and long-term assistance to USAID missions and regional bureaus in four program areas: basic education, educational policy analysis and reform, education in countries in crisis and education to combat abusive child labor.

The range of BEPS activities has been vast. "Part of the challenge has been keeping pace with the demand within USAID for technical assistance and support. We've been on a vertical launch since we opened the doors of the project," said Don Graybill, Creative Associates' BEPS director.

BEPS is also capable of responding rapidly to the needs of regional USAID missions in as little as two weeks. Creative and its partners provide assistance through a variety of services, including policy appraisals, sector assessments, investigative research, teacher training, institutional strengthening, and the design and implementation of pilot projects and feasibility studies. Since BEPS' inception, more than 65 activities have been completed in more than 40 countries.

"For each BEPS activity, we've had to analyze very clearly the situation, needs and design programs which are appropriate and finely tuned to the national, and local realities," Graybill said.

One of BEPS' shining moments has been the Zambia CHANGES project. Using an innovative methodology, CHANGES has worked to improve access to and the quality of basic education by improving children's health and nutrition. Teachers administer vitamins and nutrients to public school children. With a budget of \$10 million, the CHANGES program is BEPS' largest project so far and has helped more than 40,000 children. According to Graybill, CHANGES has been such a success, its program methodology—which builds on collaboration with the government,

education and health systems—is being expanded nationally in Zambia and beyond.

"CHANGES is a pilot that has succeeded and attracted attention beyond Zambia. It has attracted the attention of health and education professionals in Africa and in the international arena who are seeking to adopt and adapt some of the program's strategies to their own situations," Graybill said.

Other examples of BEPS' worldwide activities attest to the program's success. In the Philippines, the program has identified alternative education strategies for USAID. For Uganda's primary schools, BEPS has improved teacher effectiveness and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Most recently, a thorough examination of Bangladesh's education needs, including a study on the needs of disabled children, has been undertaken to help USAID identify needs and the best use of resources after an absence of more than 20 years in the country. In the Western Hemisphere, BEPS has launched and guided President George W. Bush's initiative to improve reading instruction in primary schools in Latin America and the Caribbean.

— Alexandra Pratt

New Faces



Mark Bidus joins Creative's Business Development Unit as its new Vice President. Mark is an international development veteran with more than twenty years of experience. Before joining Creative, he was vice president and director of development and planning at the Academy for Educational Development. Previously, he was the Director of International Programs at the International City/County Management Association. Overseas, he served as the Project Development Officer for USAID's national reconstruction efforts in El Salvador. He received a master's degree in international development from the American University in Washington, D.C. and a bachelor's degree in political science from Marquette University in Wisconsin. He is fluent in Spanish.

John Stuart Blackton joins Creative as Senior Strategic Advisor. He works closely with Pablo Maldonado, Senior Vice President for Marketing and Operations, and will work on programmatic and intellectual themes that may represent strategic opportunities for Creative in the near term. John has advised the United Nations, The World Bank, The Asian Development Bank, and several international corporations on issues relating to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and the Middle East. He served as Chief of Party for the USAID-funded Administration of Justice Project in Egypt from 1998 until 2001. And from 1994 through 1998, he was a professor of national security policy at the National War College in Washington, D.C. He received a bachelor's degree and Ph.D. in political economy from Cornell University, a diploma from the University of Paris the Sorbonne, and a master's of science in international security policy from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. He speaks Arabic, Lao, Urdu, Sinhala, Hindi, Thai and French.



Nuran Kolan joins the Office of the President to introduce Creative programs and capabilities in the non-Arabic speaking Middle East. She also will research opportunities with international donor agencies such as The World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations. Nuran brings more than 25 years of experience in international project development in sub-Saharan Africa and the former Soviet Union. Most recently, she served as a program manager and business analyst for the Science Applications International Corp.'s Iraq Task Force developing projects for Iraq's reconstruction. Nuran also assists the White House and the Department of State as a senior Turkish simultaneous interpreter.

Erich Vogt joins Creative as a Senior Associate to assist in the exploration of opportunities in Media Development. Before joining Creative, he was Team Leader of Broadcasting and Creative Services at The World Bank. Erich also served as Lead Information Officer for the Bank's Developmental Gateway Portal and a Mass Media Advisor for the Global Information and Communications Technology Department. His experience is global and includes working for the Bonn-based Friedrich-Ebert Foundation as Head of Mass Media and Telecommunications, and Project Manager of the foundation's southern Asia portfolio. Earlier in his career, Erich was an editor and reporter. He received a Ph.D. in political economy from the Free University of Berlin, Germany and a master's degree in Political Science from Indiana University. He speaks German and French. He reports to Pablo Maldonado, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Operations and will collaborate closely with Jeff Ghannam, Director of the Communications and Media Development Unit, along with the EMC and CIT divisions.



Richard Wagner joins the Communities in Transition division as a Senior Associate to assist with Creative's endeavors in Sudan. He is slated to serve as the Start-Up Team Leader and Project Director for the recently submitted SWIFT II proposal for Sudan, and will also be working with the East Africa office on program development opportunities in Sudan and other locations in East Africa. Richard comes to Creative with 15 years of experience in international development and humanitarian relief with overseas experience in Sudan, Djibouti, Serbia, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Bulgaria and Nepal. His most recent experience was as the USAID Food for Peace Officer responsible for Sudan where he managed a budget of approximately \$280 million per year, served on the Darfur Response Management Team, and on the Darfur Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in the field. Richard received a bachelor's degree in political science, and a master's degree in public administration.

Michael Wilburn joins Creative as the new manager for Creative's Business Development Unit. Michael has vast professional experience as an academic and technical training specialist in more than twenty countries. Most recently, he served as a programming and training advisor for the Peace Corps' Inter-America and Pacific Region. Before that, he developed a comprehensive training plan for Emergency Corps members in Nairobi, Kenya during a consultancy for the Catholic Relief Services. He also provided assistance to the USAID-led National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in Kigali, Rwanda. Michael received a master's degree in international training and human resource development from Bircham International University in Miami, Florida and a bachelor's degree in sociology, philosophy and Spanish from Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. He is a published writer of several training manuals for development professionals. He also is fluent in Spanish.



Photo of the Season

photo by Jon Silverstone



School children from Mindanao, Philippines celebrate the launching of the TEAM (Television Education for the Advancement of Muslim) Mindanao Program. TEAM Mindanao is implemented by Knowledge Channel, one of 9 partners of USAID's EQuALLS Project in the Philippines. Creative Associates is the coordinator and co-implementer of EQuALLS. TEAM Mindanao provides public schools with distance learning through educational TV programs; it also broadcasts daily teaching modules in science, math and English for teachers.

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