



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**BUREAU FOR DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY, AND INNOVATION
LOCAL, FAITH, AND TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS HUB**

American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) September 2021

*The Balancing Act: Sharing, Learning and Thriving Through
Community at the 2021 ASHA/LEPP Partners Meeting and Beyond*



A Message From Gordon Weynand, ASHA Partnership Initiative Senior Leader



Dear Colleagues,

Thanks to all of you who were able to virtually join the 2021 ASHA/LEPP Partners Meeting. I hope you were able to leave more informed about the new USAID Development, Democracy, & Innovation (DDI) Bureau as well as our sister initiatives within the new Local, Faith, & Transformative (LFT) Partnerships Hub. The event also highlighted the resilience and creativity of the ASHA and LEPP partners as they dealt with the challenge of the COVID-19 global pandemic. I found their stories both awe-inspiring and inspirational, and the ASHA/LEPP teams are proud and humbled that we are able to contribute to these efforts to maintain vital health, education, and library services to communities in need.

I want to thank all of our participants for their active engagement and willingness to share their experiences with each other. I also want to thank the ASHA and LEPP staff, as well as the Training Resources Group (TRG) team, for their strenuous efforts to make this virtual meeting a success. Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our partners, their staff, and my USAID Mission colleagues for their commitment to public diplomacy and international development.

As I mentioned on day one of the Partners Meeting, the events of the last year were painful and challenging for us all. But I believe that 2021 holds the promise of better times, as we continue working together to make the world a better place for everyone.

Stay safe and stay well.

Gordon Weynand
ASHA Partnerships Initiative Senior Leader



Source: :American Leprosy Missions

The Balancing Act:

Sharing, Learning, and Thriving

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. But as the pandemic has shown us, necessity is also the mother of adaptability, and ingenuity, as well as learning, collaboration, and resourcefulness. These are all things that both our USAID staff and our partners have had to balance as we work to find our “new norm.” If nothing else, the pandemic has shown us that we are more adaptable than ever, and that despite the endless curveballs that life may throw, we will thrive. In this edition, we are highlighting all the ways that ASHA partners unified, adapted, and thrived in the face of adversity during the past year.



Source: :Training Resources Group

Photo from the 2020 ASHA Partners Meeting -- this year, due to the pandemic, we convened for this meeting virtually for the first time ever

PARTNERS MEETING 2021

Recap

For the first time, our Partners Meeting was held in a virtual format in February and March. What was once a three-day in-person event was transformed into six half-days of programming, including speaker sessions, networking events, and the opportunity to share success stories. Looking at it from the planning stages, we could have never predicted the success it turned into. We found inspiration in stories, and connections in innovation, even in this virtual format.

We also experienced a number of unanticipated benefits of convening virtually. For example, an overwhelming number of partners and their staff were able to attend for the first time because of the remote platform, including Overseas Institutions (OSIs), small partner organizations with fewer than five members, and various other new participants from USAID and the ASHA/LEPP team. It was an incredible opportunity to bring people together from all over the world to strengthen our community and help one another achieve and succeed despite the myriad challenges we have all faced over the last year.



Source: newsroom.aua.am

ARMENIA: American University of Armenia

Resilience and Perseverance Through Community

Throughout everything that AUA has overcome, they have epitomized thriving. First, COVID-19 forced the university to rapidly transition to an entirely online learning platform. Then, the Port of Beirut blast affected hundreds of thousands of people in Lebanon, including many Lebanese-Armenian students. As if that wasn't enough, conflict then broke out and took thousands of lives throughout the region, including those of six AUA students. Through it all, the AUA community stepped up and came through to rebuild the school — and the community — one staff member and one student at a time. In their own words: “in our unity, we find strength. And in our strength, we find solutions” (Staff of American University of Armenia (AUA)).

In June 2021, AUA opened up a student residence that epitomizes the ability to come together and thrive. The LFT Hub Director, Adam Phillips, provided pre-recorded video remarks at the building's opening: “AUA — and all our friends and partners in Armenia — had to navigate a very challenging year. But the fact that we're celebrating the unveiling of this beautiful building today is a testament to the resilience, innovation, and strength of your university — and especially of the students, faculty, administrators, and everyone who makes the institution what it is.” The new dorm represents a community coming together, and a bright future for all those students who will soon call the new residence home. Despite the many challenges of the past year, AUA's new dorm proves that better times are possible if we work together as a community.



"I felt like my dreams were burning together with the library."

Source: Lubuto Library Partners



ZAMBIA: Lubuto Library Partners

A Community Rising from the Ashes

When the Lubuto Library in Lusaka, Zambia burned down in April of 2020, the loss ravaged the community. After all, Lubuto was no ordinary library; for many it was a beacon of knowledge, hope, and prosperity in a community where quality resources and education are scarce. Not only did it have collections of books and technology, but it provided important services and programs (such as visual arts, drama, mentoring, family literacy, and support for children with disabilities), as well as outreach services for community members in need (including teaching young mothers to read and write in English while providing needed childcare).

Instead of giving into despair, the community of Lusaka chose hope. The fire triggered an inspiring community-wide response. Children rushed into the burning building and salvaged over 500 books. Some of the children remarked of the miracle of their favorite book being saved from the destruction — and this alone gave them hope. Following that, people from the community came together to determine what to do next. Thanks to this resilient mindset, accompanied by donations and the ability to make adjustments to an existing ASHA grant, the Lubuto Model Library is now being rebuilt stronger than before.



Source: :American Committee for Shaare Zedek

ISRAEL: Shaare Zedek

A Pathway Forward

In Hebrew, Shaare Zedek means “Path of Righteousness,” while in Arabic, it means “Path of Truth.” It is fitting that it is also the name of the Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem — and it is easy to understand why. With two often conflicting cultures coming together in respect of one another and the community, the Shaare Zedek Hospital epitomizes the meaning of humanity. Throughout the pandemic, Shaare Zedek’s community of doctors, nurses, and hospital staff have worked to ensure that every patient - both Israeli and Palestinian - is treated with care, dignity, and respect. For example, health care workers put their faces on their hazmat suits in order to show their patients that they are real people and not just a nameless/faceless person in a uniform. Despite sitting at the epicenter of one of the most conflicted regions in the Middle East, Shaare Zedek’s example of public diplomacy is a model for how people can work across different backgrounds and cultures to put patient and community care first.



COMMUNITY AND RESILIENCE

From ASHA, with Thanks

Amidst all the challenges that we have overcome, it is important to remember how we got there: community. Our partners represent a diverse group addressing a wide range of challenges. From the loss of a community library to the onslaught of a global pandemic, our partners have shown resilience beyond measure. Through it all, the common thread has been the community. It was the community that came together to personify humanity at Shaare Zedek. It was the community that came together to salvage what was left of the library in Lusaka. It was the community that came together to support a school so treasured that there was a need to build a new dorm. And it was the community — our community — that came together at the Partners Meeting to network and share experiences so they can continue to share, learn, and thrive.

Thank you for being our community and for helping us to thrive through supporting you.

The Passing of Former ASHA Director, David Santos

It is with great sadness that we are informing the community that David Santos, ASHA Office Director from 1978-1991, passed away on August 16, 2021. Mr. Santos was born in Plymouth, Massachusetts on November 25, 1935. After receiving his BS in Political Science from Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1957 and an MA in International Relations from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana in 1960, Mr. Santos joined the U.S. Civil Service Commission as a Management Intern and Personnel Management Specialist in 1961. In 1963, he joined USAID as a Management Analyst in the Office of Management planning.

In 1969, Mr. Santos joined the Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) as a Program Analyst and Grant Operations Officer. In 1974, he became Deputy Director of ASHA, and, in 1978, he became ASHA's Director, where he served until 1991. Mr. Santos attended the Leadership and Management Executive Training at the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) in Charlottesville, Virginia in 1985, and was certified for the Senior Executive Service in 1987 by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Washington, DC. After leaving USAID, Mr. Santos served from 1991-1995 as Director of the Partnerships in Health Care with Bulgaria, a USAID-sponsored program administered by Medical Services Corporation International.

Mr. Santos married Carol Connelly in 1965, and she predeceased Mr. Santos in January 2018. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his friends, family, and colleagues.



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