



USAID Alumni Association Annual General Meeting

REPORT ON THE USAID ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The USAID Alumni Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on October 28, 2022, with both in-person attendance, for the first time since 2019, and via Zoom Webinar. Those who were able to attend in-person appreciated the opportunity to see friends and colleagues from UAA. Those not able to do so were happy that the virtual connection enabled UAA members across the United States and in other countries to participate. The meeting was attended in-person by 69 USAID Alumni and 19 guests and speakers, and virtually by 63 Alumni, guests, and speakers. This report summarizes the presentations and discussions conducted during the meeting. A video of the entire AGM can be viewed by clicking [here](#)

The following were the meeting's principal agenda items:

- Keynote message from USAID Deputy Administrator, Paloma Adams-Allen
- Lifetime Achievement Recognition – Former USAID Administrator Peter McPherson
- Panel discussion on Localization and Sustainable Development: A Global Perspective
- Panel discussion on Localization and Sustainable Development: A Field Perspective
- Annual Report by UAA Co-chairs
- Panel discussion on Partnerships for Public Education on Foreign Assistance
- UAA Alumni of the Year awards for international and domestic service

The AGM was held at the Center for Global Development (CGD) in Washington, DC. The President of the CGD, Masood Ahmed, welcomed UAA's return to CGD for the first time since the pandemic, and praised UAA for its engagement and participation with the Center. He noted some major changes in global development challenges, including the impact of COVID and the increasing importance of cross-border issues. He also emphasized the enhanced focus on localization and decolonization, the main topic of discussion of the day's meeting. He noted the need to distill what these issues mean and how we organize ourselves to respond.

The following will summarize what transpired during the meeting.

Keynote message from USAID Deputy Administrator Paloma Adams-Allen

The Deputy USAID Administrator for Management and Resources, Paloma Adams-Allen, expressed appreciation to UAA for continued support of USAID's mission, noting the Agency



Paloma Adams-Allen

needs and values UAA’s “support, counsel, and wisdom”. She highlighted its assistance to Afghan FSNs, and the on-going mentoring program. She said the Agency has recruited over 500 new career employees and is working on recruitment efforts at HBCUs and other predominantly minority institutions. Adams-Allen commented on the Agency’s emphasis on localization, using evidence-based decision-making, leveraging investments, and supporting local small businesses. She reminded participants of USAID’s localization goals and noted that, working with Congress, the Agency is now implementing the Centroamérica Local

Initiative and has recently announced a similar initiative in Africa. USAID will launch a new policy framework which will emphasize locally led development, evidence-based decision making, and a focus on progress beyond projects and budget. Regarding the need to rely on local staff, USAID is working to improve FSN leadership opportunities, professional growth, and training opportunities; and the Agency is working with State on compensation issues. USAID also seeks to address staff burdens across the agency, reducing low value work. This will free up 3 million hours spent on unproductive work, the equivalent of an hour a day for every employee.

In answering questions from the audience, Deputy Administrator Adams-Allen made the following points:

- USAID is working to create career ladders for FSNs, as well as for all backstops.
- USAID expertise is in great demand within the USG, including at the NSC. There is more attention now on development issues, such as global health security. USAID is recruiting to fill more positions to meet this demand.
- To address the demands on staff, especially those required by localization, USAID is also working to free up staff from administrative and reporting tasks. A list of 45 items has been compiled that can be eliminated or moved to Washington to allow field staff to spend more time in local communities.
- Localization will also require more contract officers, and the Agency is working on ways to improve and reduce the length of training, train FSNs, and retain officers who have been trained in the contracts backstop. The Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance is also currently digging in on localization of its functions and staffing.

USAID is working on ways to address the space shortage in embassies by procuring its own space and reorganizing allocated space through hoteling, where office space is used by different officers on different days, and through telework.

Lifetime Achievement Recognition – Former USAID Administrator Peter McPherson

Former Administrator McPherson recalled what his predecessor, Administrator John Hanna, had told him: to remember that USAID is about the people; building and working with people. McPherson stated it had been the pinnacle of his career to work with USAID staff, and he never worked with a more dedicated and focused group of people. He said he continues to think about USAID constantly and suggested ways to address the current critical issues of authoritarianism, particularly the influence of China, and the issue of climate change. McPherson pointed out the comparative advantage the US has in participant training and the importance of investing in selective areas of research on climate change, noting the important contribution USAID had made in research that sparked the green revolution and reduced child mortality due to diarrheal diseases through oral rehydration therapy.

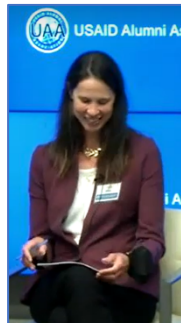


Peter McPherson

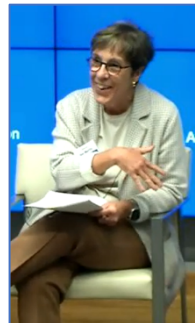
Localization and Sustainable Development: A Global Perspective



Carol Peasley



Sarah Rose



Tessie San Martin



Caroline Kisia

Carol Peasley moderated the first session on Localization and Sustainable Development: A Global Perspective. Panelists included Sarah Rose, Senior Advisor in the Office of the USAID Administrator; Tessie San Martin, CEO of FHI 360 and co-chair of MFAN; and Caroline Kisia, Chief Operating Officer of Shining Hope for Communities based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Sarah Rose initiated her comments by posing and then answering the question “What is Localization?”. She described it as a set of reforms, behaviors, and actions on the role of local organizations. She also noted that, for a number of reasons, the “cards were stacked against local organizations”, but she outlined four components of USAID’s new approach:

1. Reaching a target of 25% (from a current number of 7%) of USAID funding provided directly to local organizations by 2025, and 50% of funding locally led by 2030.
2. Securing what she called “a seat at the table”, i.e., developing the capacity to listen to all local actors, including marginal communities.
3. Adapting planning processes for following through on localization.
4. USAID being a global public advocate for localization.

Ms. Rose acknowledged the need to build a broader consensus on the meaning of localization, and on the need to be more equitable in the provision of resources to local organizations. She discussed the new policy framework on localization recently released by USAID, and she noted that revisions to acquisition and assistance policies and procedures will be needed, with emphasis on more flexible mechanisms. A re-thinking of “risk appetite” in this context is necessary.

Caroline Kisia welcomed the new localization policy as a step in the right direction. BUT she wondered how it was going to be implemented, and how it was going to be measured. She said local organizations require sustained funding, particularly in times when unexpected events affect their operations. She emphasized the need to build trust between USAID and local organizations.

Tessie San Martin also questioned how the new policy would work, noting that the “devil was in the details,” particularly since USAID seems to be stretched thin as it is. She concurred with the new emphasis on “risk appetite” recognizing the need to balance program risk vs. fiduciary risk. Ms. San Martin also identified a key question: the difference between localization and locally led development, pointing out that locally led development was more than just a shift of resources. She stated that localization, as USAID seems to be defining it, will not necessarily achieve locally led development, which she described as community driven change.

Carol Peasley posed the question of what locally led development means, and how to measure it. Both Caroline Kisia and Tessie San Martin emphasized the need for a roadmap and for metrics in addressing the issue of locally led development. They didn’t quite have an answer as to what it is except that it is a much longer process and will require some shift in “power relations” between the donors and the beneficiaries. Sarah Rose mentioned that a proxy for measurement could be “incorporating local voices” but that there was no indicator for that at this time.

Finally, the question came up of the role of government-to-government resources/relationships in this process, but the discussion around the topic was brief.

Several observations and questions came from the audience. These included observations of success with localization in Mexico and Nepal, although the question of too much money going to large contractors remains. Another observation was that there is a need for qualitative indicators as well as quantitative measures. Finally, one question from the audience was how success, or lack thereof, would play out in the annual personnel evaluations of USAID employees.

Final observations from the panelists included the need for USAID to work more closely with the IG in debunking the idea that local actors are more risky than some of our traditional counterparts; that the issue of “elite capture” of donor resources is very real, with some elite local organizations re-branding themselves to acquire more donor resources than they already receive; and the need to examine how localization can work in non-permissive environments.

Localization and Sustainable Development: A Field Perspective



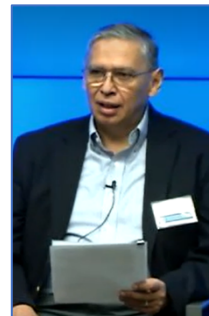
Steve Wingert



Ken MacLean



Rolando Bogan



Carlos Cuellar

Steve Wingert remotely moderated the session from California; Ken MacLean, Acting Mission Director of USAID/Honduras, and Rolando Bogan, Executive Director of the National Foundation for the Development of Honduras (FUNADEH), also participated remotely. Carlos Cuellar, the co-founder, and former Executive Director of PROSALUD in Bolivia and currently a Vice-President at URC, participated in person at CDG, accompanied by Nancy Pielemeier.

Ken MacLean started off the discussion by explaining how the new Centroamérica Local Initiative is different from earlier USAID efforts. First, it has significant dedicated funding for the region that can be used to address a broad array of issues. Secondly, co-creation, where local organizations submit concept papers and then work with USAID to jointly define an activity USAID can fund, is at the heart of the initiative. He personally now spends more time with local partners than traditional implementers. A Civil Society Advisory Council is helping guide the Mission's strategy, as well as raising issues that impede local organizations. The Mission also recognizes that it will require real changes in how staff thinks and works, especially given its long history of working through contracts rather than grants. The Mission has issued an Annual Program Statement (APS) to implement the Centroamérica Local Initiative and obligate its funds. The first tranche was for education activities. Simple concept notes were submitted; some were then selected to move forward as co-creations with USAID. Other sectors will also be run through the APS process, and the mission will additionally support local organizations beyond what is done via the APS.

Carlos Cuellar then discussed the history of PROSALUD in Bolivia. The initial USAID project on Self-Financing Health Care was approved in 1984 and was originally designed to work through three cooperatives. They unfortunately withdrew from the agreement in 1985. Jerry Bowers, head of the USAID Health Office, had two options: terminate the project or redesign it. He took the latter route, using a "co-creation" process, although no one was using that term at the time. That process established the close relationship with USAID and the joint effort to create a sustainable organization. USAID recognized it would be a long-term process – and the effort was supported by a continuing line of Health Officers and Mission Directors. After five years, USAID began direct funding to PROSALUD with complementary TA coming from another mechanism. Over the first 17 years, USAID invested \$14 million in the project; this was supplemented with a \$5 million endowment and \$4 million in the later years. Today (37 years

later) PROSALUD is the largest health NGO in the country serving hundreds of thousands of Bolivians (even after USAID's departure from Bolivia in 2013). It has 1100 employees and is fully self-sustaining.

Rolando Bogran spoke of FUNADEH's 40-year history working with USAID. Honduran private sector leaders created and guide the Foundation. Its current program focuses on creating Youth Outreach Centers to prevent youth violence by providing alternative activities in communities severely affected by gang violence. It evolved out of a program begun under a project being implemented by Counterpart International. This, too, was done in a highly collaborative way in the spirit of "co-creation". Sixty-five Youth Outreach Centers now exist and are mostly self-sustaining through fees and volunteer participation from the private sector. They've benefited 75,000 youth since the program began. FUNADEH has received direct grants from USAID for this initiative since 2015. Considerable attention has been given to strengthening the organization, culminating in the recent ISO 9001:2015 recertification on the quality of management systems, as well as in re-opening their funding development office. They now receive funds from multiple international organizations and are viewed as strong implementers. Most of the current challenges they face relate to bureaucracy within the Government of Honduras and banking institutions.

In response to a question on the role of national governments, Ken MacLean noted that it would be ideal for the government itself to be listening to and working with local partners. Regardless, USAID is working directly with local partners and not working through or coordinating with government. Carlos Cuellar recommended that national governments focus on creating a good policy environment for local organizations, including being a buyer of services and working on public-private partnerships. Rolando Bogran agreed on the importance of the policy environment and encouraged USAID to engage with the government on ways to improve it.

In response to a question on how best to do local capacity strengthening, Carlos Cuellar suggested that organizations do their own self-assessments, perhaps with the help of an external consultant. He noted that the governance of the organization is a key factor that is too often neglected. Rolando Bogran agreed that organizations do know their own weaknesses, but also argued that outsiders can help identify issues. He noted that they have bi-monthly meetings with USAID, and these sessions are useful in identifying areas for improvement; the USAID staff themselves are an important resource. Ken noted his preference for independent assessments, but with the local organization then taking the lead in prioritizing corrective actions. He also suggested the need to phase support, especially for new organizations. He commented that capacity strengthening is a two-way street: USAID is also learning.

During the Q&A portion, when asked if the successful PROSALUD model had been adopted elsewhere, Carlos Cuellar noted some efforts, including in Nicaragua post-hurricane Mitch, but that USAID's A&A policies have made it difficult. When asked if there were a list or process to identify local organizations ready to receive direct funding, Ken MacLean stated some efforts have been made to do this, but it varies. Also, they do not want to focus only on "already

strong” organizations and miss the chance to work with emergent ones. Rolando Bogran added that strong local organizations should become mentors to newer ones; USAID should help to facilitate this. Regarding capacity strengthening and a question about participant training, Carlos Cuellar noted that organizations are sometimes not ready for returned participants; Ken MacLean added that there should be a suite of training options available. When asked the degree to which USAID is looking in a systemic way at the operating environment for local organizations, Ken acknowledged that they should probably do more. But there are risks – e.g., if USAID advocates with the host government on issues of interest to an anti-corruption NGO, the government could too easily then cast that NGO as a puppet of the USG. Carlos added that a SID-like network in Bolivia has been helpful in representing and advocating as a united front for local organizations with the government. When asked about the feasibility of having candid discussions about governance, panelists highlighted the importance of building relationships of trust and honest discussions. These are possible, but they take time to develop.

UAA Co-chair Report

Margaret Neuse began the session by announcing the results of this year’s Board of Director’s election. She congratulated Miles Toder, Chris Milligan, and Joy Riggs-Perla on their first term



Margaret Neuse



Roberta Mahoney

serving on the Board. She also noted that Denise Rollins, Roberta Mahoney, Carol Dabbs, and herself will continue their current terms on the Board. Finally, she expressed sorrow that Jim Bever, Anne Aarnes, and Terry Brown, who have done yeomen’s work for the UAA, are leaving the Board. She commented that the Board is expecting to call on them for various activities over the next years.

She then noted that the results of UAA activities last year and plans for next year would be reported differently this year, by 1) emphasizing concrete results and plans, and 2) not reporting by Committees but by Strategic Objectives. She stated, however, that results are accomplished by and planned for by the Committees, which are the backbone of UAA’s work, and urged members to volunteer to work on the Committees.

Finally, she thanked all the UAA members who have come forward to support the Ukrainian FSNs and continue to support the Afghan FSNs.

Roberta Mahoney then reported on the results achieved in 2022 and plans for next year by Strategic Objective.

SO 1: Developing an inclusive community of USAID former employees.

- Contributing membership increased by 5%.

- Committee for Regional Activities established to extend UAA reach outside the DC Metropolitan area, with chapters in target pilot regions Florida and New England underway and exploring a chapter in New Mexico.
- Discussions with AFSA, USGLC, and USAID's LPA are yielding some joint outreach efforts.
- Future plans: further increase UAA recruitment efforts, and its greater diversity; finalize outreach materials; and launch up to 2 regional chapters.

SO 2: Improve USAID professional development and capacity.

- Established 65 mentor/mentee pairs, a highly regarded and valued program by USAID.
- Development Issues Committee (DIC) is piloting a "coaching" program with the Timor L'este Mission to assist it in re-assessing its program.
- Future plans: focus on more limited numbers of mentor/mentees, as program goes through management transition for both USAID and UAA, and focus on Africa Bureau and GH as well as SLG needs.

SO 3: Support for understanding of international development by the public.

- DIC, Book Club, and DACOR Development Dialogues have had more than 20 meetings with diverse audiences on topics of relevance to this objective.
- UAA supported the preparation and launch of a book on the history of USAID, The Enduring Struggle, by John Norris, which has received very positive reviews. USAID has made it available as an e-book to all employees through its library.
- Future plans: continue with programming DIC and DACOR sessions; promote The Enduring Struggle book through various mechanisms.

SO 4: Organizing and sustaining UAA's structure and operations.

- The foundation for all UAA's operations is the Finance and Administration Committee, handling finance, contracting, tax submissions, insurance, curating the website and monitoring mail. The UAA treasurer, Carol Dabbs, has transformed UAA's financial systems to a professional level.
- We owe thanks to Tish Butler for maintaining our website and to Systems Manager Ven Suresh who keeps us running.
- Much has been accomplished in standardizing UAA operations and assuring good stewardship of our limited resources. All issues with the IRS have been resolved. We now have written and approved procedures regarding what requires Board approval and other matters.
- Future plans: Continue to standardize and assure good governance.
- Finally, many thanks to the entire AGM committee and its leaders, Nancy Pielemeier and Joy Riggs-Perla, for creating and expertly managing this year's Annual General Meeting yet again.

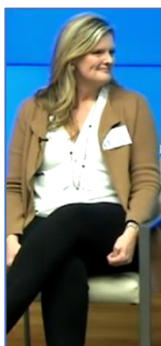
Partnerships for Public Education on Foreign Assistance



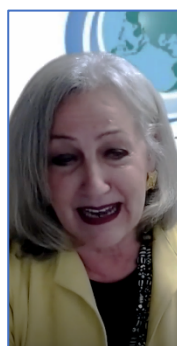
Beth Hogan



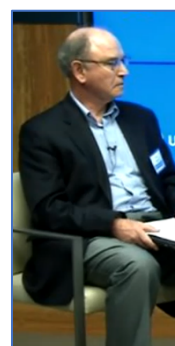
Ambassador Rubin



Michelle
Bekkering



Christine Sheckler



Miles Toder

Beth Hogan moderated the panel consisting of Ambassador Eric Rubin, President of AFSA; Michelle Bekkering, National Engagement Director of USGLC; Christine Sheckler, President, World Affairs Council of San Diego; and Miles Toder, UAA Florida Chapter.

Beth Hogan began the conversation by noting that UAA needs to coordinate with like-minded organizations to educate the US public on foreign assistance, its importance, who we are and what we do. A key theme from speakers and the audience emphasized the lack of knowledge among most US citizens about US foreign assistance and its importance. A "Speakers Kits with flyers and videos" will be a valuable contribution from UAA.

Ambassador Rubin asked UAA members to Join AFSA as we want to work together to improve the career of Foreign Service (FS) officers and rescue the FS at difficult times. He believes that the US agencies working on international development (six altogether), have the least representation in Congress. Lobbying Congress is necessary for the FS to get support to address many issues such as lack of FS positions in the field. The fact that 40 countries have no ambassadors is a big issue. One problem that affects retirees is the suspension of pension if they decide to go back and work with the US Government. In his comments, Ambassador Rubin said very little about coordinating foreign assistance education efforts with UAA.

Michele Bekkering emphasized that USGLC is a coalition with nationwide representation in all states and is bipartisan. They have a wide membership from all sectors including military, business, faith-based organizations, etc. They join town hall meetings across the country with congressmen and others to talk about the importance of foreign affairs, including foreign assistance. The business world is very interested in overseas issues given that many of their customers are overseas. Advocacy is a big part of USGLC's work and she would welcome working with UAA members.

Christine Sheckler shared a list of outreach activities and groups with which she is connected. The objective of the Council includes educating US organizations, groups and communities about USAID's work. They have increased engagement with Hispanic communities to talk about USAID. This may help recruit more diverse applicants for USAID positions. They

would appreciate having a speaker's kit with flyers and videos and coordinating efforts with UAA.

Miles Toder noted the UAA Florida Chapter is one of the newly emerging regional chapters of UAA Alumni. It includes 42 members, and he thinks at least 3 times this number of retired USAID Foreign Service Officers live in Florida but are not UAA members. He plans outreach activities to educate communities of USAID's work and how it affects them. Florida is much like a developing country in many ways, but interest in foreign assistance is not high and the message on public education needs to be carefully crafted. He suggested emphasizing economic engagement and environmental issues.

Much of the discussion among the panel focused on how to appeal to the US public when we talk about foreign assistance, as most people have little understanding and less interest. Speaking on how foreign assistance contributes to life in the US is one important strategy. Another is writing op-eds in local papers. Working with the military is also a great idea as they have a mandate to collaborate with USAID to talk about the value of overseas engagement, and they have an enormous budget to educate the US public. An audience member mentioned that short clips by FSOs have been posted on TikTok and they have drawn 3.5 million views. An audience member also praised the usefulness of AFSA's daily media briefs.

UAA Alumni of the Year Awards



UAA Alumni of the Year

Bette Cook, chair of the UAA Awards Committee, as in past years managed and hosted the annual Alumni of the Year Awards. This has been an annual UAA event since its inception in 2014. It recognizes and celebrates USAID Alumni who choose new paths to provide services to their communities and make lasting contributions to others, both at home and abroad, after they retire from their careers with USAID. Bette thanked the Awards Committee members who devoted time to the task of selecting the awardees, and to those who submitted nominations of accomplished UAA members for these awards.

This year's awardees are **Taroub Harb Faramand** (in center of photo) for International Service, and **Mary Alice Kleinjan** (on left in photo) for Domestic Service.

Taroub Harb Faramand

Dr. Faramand was an FSN at the West Bank and Gaza Mission. As an educated Middle Eastern entrepreneur, physician, wife, daughter, and mother, Taroub faced obstacles and cultural complexities that impacted her path to success, and her experience at USAID shaped and propelled her career forward by providing her opportunities to grow, and the tools to focus on mentorship and building capacity of others.

Since leaving USAID, her career has focused on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the development sector both domestically and abroad, values she shares with USAID. She has served at HOPE, Emory University, and George Washington University, receiving awards for her service there.

In 2010, Taroub started WI-HER, a company which was a culmination of over 30 years of experience in international development, her firm belief in the potential of all persons, and a passion to lift marginalized people and their voices. As President and Founder of WI-HER, she has a team of over 40 diverse, dedicated professionals focusing on economic and social development. WI-HER supports local partners, communities, and individuals to identify and implement solutions to development challenges and has reached individuals of all ages and backgrounds in 56 countries. She takes pride in WI-HER's alumni now working for the Foreign Service at USAID and other agencies.

Taroub developed an innovative and results-based methodology called iDARE to address inequities by supporting individuals to design and deliver mutually inclusive, locally led solutions that *do no harm*. iDare has been implemented in over 35 countries, supporting governments, communities, USAID implementing partners, and civil society organizations to design and implement their own solutions. In 2020 at the beginning of COVID, five programs were implemented in three African countries despite lockdowns. In 2021, 21 local community gender equality and social inclusion gap programs were supported by iDARE, to improve health outcomes directly impacting over 56,000 individuals globally. Taroub currently is a member and serves on the Board of the Small Business Association for International Companies.

Mary Alice Kleinjan

Having retired from USAID a few years ago, Mary Alice continued to stay active in international development endeavors as a consultant for USAID and in other ways.

She is currently recognized by UAA for the exceptionally valuable use of her professional legal experience to benefit former USAID Foreign Service Nationals in navigating the labyrinthian gauntlet of U.S. Government immigration, resettlement, and legal challenges for them and their families when they arrived in the United States.

Beginning in the early Fall of 2021 and continuing to the present, this service became urgently and acutely in demand when USAID asked our immediate help for up to 150 USAID/Afghanistan FSNs who had been evacuated in the chaotic takeover of the country by the Taliban. The evacuated FSNs and their accompanying family members experienced harrowing and sometimes tragic incidents during their escape from the country. They often had little or no personal possessions or personal funds and often left family members behind to face an uncertain but frightening fate at the hands of the Taliban.

Mary Alice helped organize, mobilize, educate, and advise 50 UAA alumni who volunteered to aid a matching batch of 50 of these evacuated FSNs, being gradually resettled all over the United States. Not only did she take on her own evacuated FSNs, but she proactively initiated and shared highly valued counsel and legal referrals to fellow UAA Alumni using her own volunteer experience over the years with new immigrants and refugee seekers. She also counseled other evacuated Afghan FSNs to help with job search in such matters as resume polishing, interview practicing, and job networking. Often of equal value, she provided services to those who needed counsel and referrals for themselves or their family members on legal matters at the U.S. federal, state, county, or municipal levels.

Mary Alice provided such help selflessly and generously, with rigor and sustained dedication over the months since the evacuation from Afghanistan. The result was that dozens of evacuated FSNs and UAA alumni who were helping them were able to find onward legal help and make progress for themselves and their loved ones, while simultaneously searching for professional employment in the United States.

In addition to the Afghanistan related volunteer help, Mary Alice stepped forward to assist the UAA when again we were asked to assist with possible help for about 70 USAID/Ukraine FSNs, as Russia invaded Ukraine this year. Moreover, she was one of our cornerstone alumni who joined UAA leaders to coach the newly elected FSN Advocacy Council on leadership, communication, and the U.S. Government Interagency process at posts.

MEETING WRAP-UP

The two co-chairs of the UAA Annual General Meeting Committee, Nancy Pielemeier and Joy Riggs-Perla, concluded this year's virtual Annual General Meeting by thanking the participants and the UAA membership for their support.