



# USAID Alumni Association

## August-September 2023 Newsletter

### Note from the UAA Board

The summer was busy as you can see from the reports, below, of numerous conversations, a museum visit, and get-togethers. The season wraps-up with two picnics: our Vermont colleagues' well-attended 'development wallahs' picnic held in August and UAA's Annual Summer Picnic just held on September 9 at Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria, Virginia. We hope you enjoyed many of these events and more and that you're rested and ready for a busy autumn!

September is a busy month as we prepare for one of our biggest events of the year: the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup> at the Center for Global Development. Below you'll see information about the AGM, including topics and speakers and the elections -- candidates, voting instructions, and membership deadlines for voter eligibility. As a special treat this year, the Social Committee is 'bookending' the AGM with two separate events: to a museum and a winery visit! Check out the details below and sign-up early! Our most active program, the Mentoring Program, concludes its current cohort this month and will soon be seeking new volunteers for this important and rewarding activity. If you're interested in exploring the Program, talk to colleagues at the Picnic and AGM – USAID's recent hiring successes make the Mentoring Program especially important now! Finally, in late September, we'll have our quarterly meeting with USAID's senior leadership.

We hope you enjoyed your summer and look forward to seeing you at one, or more, of our many autumn events!

## Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

- **NEW! Wednesday, September 13**, there will be a hybrid lunch program at DACOR featuring **Lawrence MacDonald**, author of the forthcoming book, *Am I Too Old to Save the Planet? A Boomer's Guide to Climate Action*. MacDonald is a writer, policy communications expert, and Boomer climate activist. He worked as a journalist for 15 years in Asia and then as a communications officer at the World Bank and as vice president for communications at both the Center for Global Development and the World Resources Institute. During this time, he became increasingly active in the U.S. climate movement and was arrested three times in civil disobedience actions to draw attention to the climate emergency. He said, "*I wrote this book because I believe it is morally unacceptable for the generation that did the most to create the problem to sit back and leave it to the kids to deal with it...If you are a boomer who gives a damn but isn't sure how you can make a difference, this book is for you.*" Even if you are not a boomer, please come and hear MacDonald's imaginative and forceful recommendations which are relevant for all of us, whatever our generation! Click [here](#) to register.
- **New! For October:** The UAA plans two events to bookend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for members to spend social time with alumni friends.
  - On **Thursday, October 26th at 12 noon**, UAA will visit the new Rubell Museum in DC on the Wharf and follow with a no-host lunch. The Rubell is one of the largest private collections of contemporary art. The unguided tour should take about an hour to an hour and a half to view 50 exhibitions of paintings, sculptures, photographs, videos, and installations. Please RSVP [here](#) by **September 15<sup>th</sup>**.
  - On **Saturday, October 28th** we'll head for nearby wine country in Delaplane, VA, for a "Wine and Wagyu" day outing. We will depart from Tysons Corner Mall in group transport at 9:30 a.m. to visit Blue Valley Vineyard and Winery and Three Fox Vineyards, both with award winning varieties and idyllic landscapes. We'll stop in at Ovoka Farm, a female-owned Wagyu beef farm where you can purchase prime cuts of beef. For additional information on

the cost, etc. of this fun event click [here](#). Please RSVP [here](#) by **September 15<sup>th</sup>**.

- **NEW! Friday, October 27, 2023, the UAA's Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will be held in-person at the Center for Global Development. Members who prefer to attend virtually, and those who live outside the Washington, DC area, will be able to join via Zoom. See further information in the AGM article below.

## **New! USAIDAlumni.org**

**In Memoriam:** Michelle Dominique Laxalt, James M. Kelly, Maryanne Yerkes, James Louis Walker, Douglas Leslie Tinsler, Helen Marie Rupp Eaton, and Sally Ursula Robinson Sharp

### **Bulletin Board:**

- An upcoming **USC breakfast forum on Africa** is scheduled for **September 25**, Business and Trade, at the USC Washington building, 1771 N Street, NW, Washington, DC. RSVP to Judy Kang at [junghwak@usc.edu](mailto:junghwak@usc.edu)
- A Memorial Service for Douglas Tinsler, who passed away on June 20, 2023, is planned for **October 15, 2023, at 2:30 pm** at the Clifton Institute, 6712 Blantyre Rd., Warrenton, VA 20187.
- The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) Welcomes New Co-Chair, Executive Director and Members to its Coalition, MFAN, Sept. 6, 2023.

### **Articles:**

- **USAID Administrator Samantha Power Visits Ukraine with New Commitments, USAID Strategic Communications, 7/28/2023.** Administrator Power traveled to Ukraine to reaffirm the United States' strong commitment to stand with Ukraine.
- **A \$6 Billion China-Built Railway Is on the Move with a Vast New Network Down the Track.** China's decade-old Belt and Road Initiative has been in retreat in many countries, but in Laos, it is alive and kicking. Felix Soloman, *Wall Street Journal*, 19 July 2023.
- **"Deep budget cuts in House State-Foreign Operations bill will undermine aid effectiveness,"** MFAN, 18 July 2023. MFAN is very concerned large budget cuts in House FY2024 State-Foreign Operations bill will undermine aid effectiveness.
- **"The Old Consensus on U.S. Foreign Policy is Dead," by Fareed Zakaria in The Washington Post, 15 July 2023,** about his interview with President Biden. "...for the first time since the World War II era, the basic issue of America's engagement with the world is becoming a partisan issue."

## **Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities:**

- **ADST Office Manager.** The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), a small nonprofit with a mission to capture, preserve, and share diplomatic oral histories, is hiring an office manager to join our team. (Check us out at [adst.org](http://adst.org)) (**[Office Manager Position Description \(PDF\)](#)**) The Officer Manager is responsible for managing the administrative and membership operations of this small but growing NGO. This includes financial management, payroll, reporting taxes, and overall administrative functions, including membership accounts and relations. The 30-hour, flexible work week can be largely remote, but the office manager typically will spend on average 10-15 hours a week in the office, with flexibility in distributing hours. The salary range is \$30-40K, depending on experience and skills. **[Click here](#)** for further information. To apply for this position, send a resume and letter of interest to Oral History Program Assistant, Monica Johnson at [monica.johnson@adst.org](mailto:monica.johnson@adst.org) by September 13, 2023.
- **International Deaf Education Association (IDEA Philippines) Seeks a U.S.-Based Executive Director.** The International Deaf Education Association (IDEA Philippines) is seeking an individual to serve as a U.S.-based Executive Director. IDEA is a faith-based NGO which works in Bohol and Leyte, Philippines. It has approximately 500 deaf children enrolled in primary and secondary school. The primary language of instruction is sign language. IDEA also provides technical/vocational training for its students and has a number of enterprises that provide employment for graduates. IDEA is supported by a U. S. 501(c)3 non-profit foundation. Information about the job responsibilities, required job qualifications, and salary may be found **[here](#)**. [Posted 7/21/2023 for 45 days]
- **Off-Shore USPSC Senior Development Program Specialist.** Sean Hofmann, the EXO Frankfurt is looking for support for the program office that covers Libya, based in Tunis. See contact info and position details below:  
Contact: **Sean D. Hofmann Regional Executive Officer Frankfurt, Germany (6 hours ahead of Washington, D.C.)** U.S. Agency for International Development **Middle East Regional Platform**  
USAID: **[shofmann@usaid.gov](mailto:shofmann@usaid.gov)** Office: **+49-69-7535-2584** Cell: **+49-151-270-00678**  
Position Title: USPSC Senior Development Program Specialist, GS-15 equivalent  
Organizational Unit: USAID/Libya  
Location: Libya External Office, Tunis, Tunisia

Position Title and Grade of Supervisor: USAID/Libya Country Representative, FE-00  
Dates: September 1, 2023 to February 31, 2024 - flexible  
See job description [here](#).

## Award Winning Book

Mark Wentling's coming of age novel, *Kansas Kaleidoscope*, has just won the Peace Corps Award for Best Book for a Young Reader. If you have teenage children or grandchildren, we suggest you take another look at this book - Mark's 8th book - all in the bibliography. 11-year old Marky is a typical kid in 1950s Kansas until his parents' divorce and he and his brothers are stranded at a foster farm. But an indelible figure from his past makes a surprise return and offers him a momentous choice. This novel offers a stirring portrait of a youth, a place and an era.

## Additions to the Bibliography of USAID Authors

Another interesting book has recently been added to the [Bibliography](#): Aaron Williams recent book, *A Life Unimagined: The Rewards of Mission Driven Service in the Peace Corps and Beyond* has been added to the Bibliography of USAID Authors. Aaron's excellent memoir includes his 24 years with USAID and his service as Peace Corps Director. Aaron is also a "founding parent" of UAA. Read more [HERE](#).

Please forward notice of any new books to [Jpielemeie@aol.com](mailto:Jpielemeie@aol.com)

## UAA Annual General Meeting, October 27, 2023

On Friday, October 27, an in-person Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at the Center for Global Development. Members who prefer to attend virtually and those who live outside the Washington, DC, area will be able to join via Zoom. The meeting will begin at 9:00 am, with in-person attendees provided coffee and snacks at 8:30. The meeting will end at 1:15 followed by lunch for in-person attendees.

USAID Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman will deliver the keynote address this year, followed by a Q&A session. We will have two panel discussions about the new USAID Policy Framework initiative, Progress Beyond Programs, which emphasizes "Development Diplomacy." The first panel will focus on USAID's role in broad policy dialog with partner countries, how this initiative differs from past practice, what role the Country Team will play, and other concerns. The second panel will focus on implementation challenges the

Agency will face in reorienting its operations and workforce to this initiative.

The UAA Co-Chairs Roberta Mahoney and Joy Riggs-Perla will present the Association's Annual Report, and the 2023 Alumni of the Year awardees will be honored.

Please click [here](#) for the agenda.

Contributing UAA members are welcome to participate, but to do so their UAA membership contributions for 2023 must be received by September 30.

In October, all UAA members whose 2023 membership contributions have been received by September 30 will be able to vote for four Board members: two for second terms, two for first terms, with Board members to be announced at the AGM on October 27.

## **UAA Membership Contributions**

If you forgot to make your 2023 UAA contribution, it's still not too late to contribute and become a dues-paying member for the 2023 calendar year. However, your dues must be received by September 30 to be eligible to vote in October for the new UAA Board members, and to receive an invitation to the Annual General Meeting of October 27, 2023.

Can't recall if you have paid for 2023? Just press this link [here](#). If you have not, there is information on how to pay your 2023 dues on the left-hand side of the home page of the UAA website. Or, just press the [MEMBER2023](#) icon and follow the prompts.

If you contribute by mail, send the check to: 1801 F St, NW, Washington, DC 20006. We no longer use the PO box in Alexandria, VA.

## **UAA-USAID Mentoring Program: Seeking Mentors for Cohort 13**

The UAA congratulates the Mentoring Committee and thanks the Cohort 12 mentors for their participation and completion of the 2022-2023 UAA Mentoring Program, that supports career and professional development of foreign service officers at all levels. The end-of-program evaluation, which will help inform the continued success of this valued program, is currently underway. The survey has been sent to all participating mentors for their needed input.

We are also launching Cohort 13 during September. We urge more UAA members to join this exciting opportunity to help address

USAID's priorities for strengthening foreign service leaders. If you have mentored with UAA previously, you only need to send us a confirmation email that you want to participate again. If you have not been a mentor in the program before, please complete the Google Mentor Profile form by clicking [here](#). We have attached the FAQ Mentoring Program sheet [here](#) and the Mentoring Program Flyer [here](#).

Expressions of interest are due to the UAA Mentoring Committee by Friday, September 15th. Please send an email to the committee co-chairs, Denise Rollins (<https://denise.rollins52@gmail.com>) and Sharon Pauling ([sharonpauling1@gmail.com](mailto:sharonpauling1@gmail.com)) to let them know that you are on the Cohort 13 team.

## **Doused But Undaunted! The UAA Eleventh Annual Picnic**



The UAA eleventh annual summer picnic went off as planned on Saturday, September 9, 2022, from 2 o'clock until 5:00 p.m. at Fort Hunt Park, despite the rain and wind

(which, to be honest, our region really needed!).

Joy Riggs Perla, UAA co-chair welcomed all and roundly thanked the Social Committee organizers — Karen Freeman, Margot Ellis, Denise Rollins, Sharon Pauling and Melissa Williams. Everyone, over 80 at best count, joined in good humor and grand camaraderie. Tables hummed with laughter and stories and iPhones were out with the latest pics of the kids and grands, weddings and trips. Some of the kids played a bit of soccer. The food tables were full with a wonderful mix of new and old favorites.



We were very honored to have former Administrator, Brian Atwood and his wife Susan there with us as well as several former FSNs, now new UAA members. It rained and the wind blew but folks just hunkered down, laughed and caught up with each other's lives. Many thanks to everyone for being such incredibly good sports!!! Please click [click](#) to view more picnic photos.

## **Fireside Chat with USAID Mission Directors: Oral Histories of U.S. Diplomacy in Afghanistan, 2001–2021**



While Afghanistan turned out to be America's longest-running war, the demands on USAID in Afghanistan since early 2002 pushed it well outside its traditional boundaries. Expectations were high that USAID would provide development to match the major U.S. diplomatic and military effort: delivering enduring development results in a war zone and with billions of dollars of assistance in the face of ever-changing priorities and urgency in a country torn apart by decades of civil war.

On August 16th, the USAID Alumni Association co-sponsored with the Association for

Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) a "fireside chat" at DACOR's historic Bacon House headquarters in Washington, DC for former USAID Senior Foreign Service Officers who served as Mission



Directors and/or as State Department Economic Assistance Coordinators in Kabul to share reflections on their service in Afghanistan. Key questions for the speakers included their lessons learned, what elements USAID should be sure to do--and to avoid, next time, how to better balance State/DOD's short-term immediate objectives vis a vis USAID's longer-term institutional development objectives, impacts they were most proud of, their most difficult challenges, and was it worth it?

The Fireside Chat speakers included Moderator Bill Hammink, Bambi Arellano, Jim Bever, Craig Buck, Tina Dooley-Jones, Earl Gast, Herbie Smith, and Ken Yamashita.

The interview transcripts collection of USAID officials has now gone live on ADST's website [adst.org](http://adst.org). The recording of the August 16th event at DACOR can also be reached via the following link [here](#).

## **Annual Vermont Development Wallah (USAID/UAA) Picnic**



*Seated (left to right): Ingrid Neuse, Margaret Healey, Margaret Neuse, Jeff Sharat, Sharon Epstein, Barbara Crane*  
*Standing (left to right): Tom Johnson, Jim Bonner, Linda Bonner, Larry Dolan, Jason Weisfeld, Mike Van Dusen, Time Harris, Anne Aarnes, David Sprague, Connie Carrino, Lloyd Feinberg*  
*Not pictured: Ellen Frost, Bill Pedersen, Ann Van Dusen (photographer)*

The 14th annual picnic was held on August 2, 2023 - a picture-perfect day —co-hosted by Anne Aarnes, David Sprague, Ann Van

Dusen and Mike Van Dusen. Alums came from as far away as Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Washington DC and New York. There were a number of absences, unfortunately, among the original cohort of picnickers; but our numbers were augmented by a number of first-time participants.

## UAA/DACOR Development Dialogues



*Liesbet Steer*

On Friday, July 21, 2023, a small but highly appreciative audience at a hybrid lunch program at DACOR was treated to a marvelous presentation on “The Vision of Universal Education: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It?” featuring Dr. Liesbet Steer. For the past seven years she was the Executive Director of the Education Commission, an international initiative driving progress on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #4 for inclusive and equitable quality education, and she is the newly appointed President and CEO of the Education Development Center.

Her Power-point presentation offers a very clear and forceful account of the current state of education globally and what must be done to strengthen it and its close ties to other key SDGs. See Liesbet’s slides and hear her talk by clicking [here](#).

## First UAA Casual Social Event



On July 11, the UAA Social Committee organized a summer group trip to the National Portrait Gallery. Seven UAA members participated in this inaugural event. The group in the photo was joined by Alfreda Brewer. The Gallery’s Director of Docents and Interns arranged for a knowledgeable docent to guide the group through the Gallery, providing a

*Robert Bianco, Jeff Cochrane, Denise Rollins,  
Antoinette Almageur, Sharon Pauling, and Karen  
Freeman*

comprehensive overview  
of the exhibitions.

Of particular interest were the exhibits "One Life: Frederick Douglas" and "I Dream a World: Selections from Brian Lanker's Portraits of Remarkable Black Women (Part II)." After the museum tour, the group, joined by UAA member Joan Johnson, gathered at Jaléo in Chinatown, where they enjoyed a fabulous tapas lunch and engaging conversations.

"I Dream a World" is a captivating exhibition showcasing photographs of African American women who have made significant contributions as writers, entertainers, athletes, activists, and politicians. For additional commentary on the exhibit with photos click [here](#).

## **UAA Representatives Meet with New Class of C3s**



*New USAID Career Candidate Corps class with UAA Terry  
Myers*

USAID's 36<sup>th</sup> class of the Career Candidate Corps (C3), with 21 dynamic new recruits, began its orientation on June 20, 2023. On July 6, UAA members Terry Myers, Stu Callison, Gail Spence and Steve Haykin along with Lynn Vega, who is still an active USAID Foreign Service Officer, met with this group at the DACOR Bacon House.

Class 36 includes 8 backstops. The C3s speak 21 languages, have worked or studied in 57 countries and have diverse work experience. It is a remarkable group with a wide diversity of experience. There are a number of first-generation Americans, several Payne fellows, many with internship experience in Missions as part of the program.

Given the time already spent with USAID, it was striking to see how many questions they still had and how eager they were to ask questions of a retiree. The C3s were seated at four tables and the UAA members rotated among tables to field questions on the role of diplomacy in development and careers representing the US

government overseas, and realities that USAID FS officers must face as diplomats, not just development experts, in the field. Near the end of the meeting, participants were given an overview of DACOR and continued discussions during a happy hour. For further details [click here](#).

## UAA Development Issues

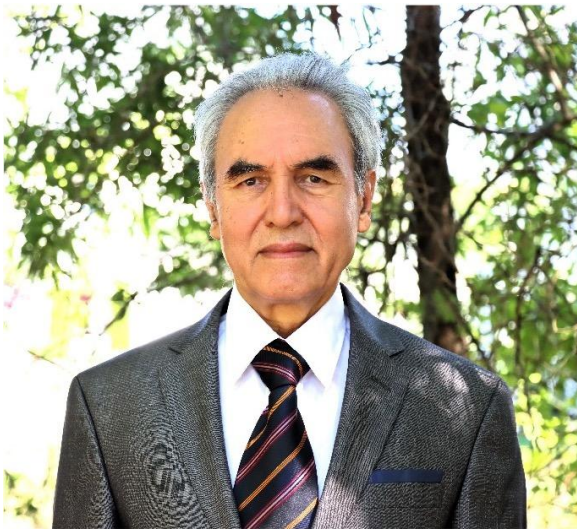


*Andrew Herscowitz*

On June 28, the Development Issues Committee, hosted **Andrew Herscowitz**, Chief Development Officer at the United States Development Finance Corporation, who presented a critical, yet optimistic assessment of the Development Finance Corporation.

We reported the discussion in the July UAA newsletter and agreed to provide access to the recording of the session when it became available. The recording can now be found [here](#).

## Alumni Profile: Gul A. Saleh



*Gul A Saleh*

Dr. Gul A Saleh and his family moved to the United States in 2014 from their home country Afghanistan. Prior to his arrival in the U.S., Dr. Saleh, an engineer, worked over ten years with USAID from 2003 to 2014 and with other international agencies on many construction projects. For example, he oversaw the USAID/Afghanistan \$1 billion infrastructure that featured reconstruction of over 300 miles of

Afghanistan's heavily land-mined highway from Kabul to the center of Taliban activity in Kandahar. This construction program not only

included road construction but also hundreds of new and rehabilitated schools and health clinics, all of which required in-person guidance and inspection. As a former USAID official recently said, “We respected Gul as a professional peer of ours, a man of demonstrated physical courage in the face of lethal situations and a patriot who loved his country and risked his life to see it develop.”

Dr. Saleh has been a key member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) for over eight years. He is a licensed Professional Engineer with a PhD in urban planning and design, a certified Project Management Professional, and has over 35 years of professional experience. Dr. Saleh has worked and/or studied in many countries, including Japan, Egypt, Thailand, India, Germany, Pakistan, and many more.

Before moving to the U.S., Dr. Saleh worked for over 30 years with international organizations, including USAID, but also the World Food Program and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Afghan Government. He also joined the United Nations Institute for Training and Research’s (UNITAR) Hiroshima Fellowship Afghanistan program as a Fellow and climbed his way up to becoming a Mentor, helping other Fellows from Iraq and Afghanistan. During these decades, he worked under many titles and with many organizations as he designed, developed, managed, and was consulted on countless engineering and environmental projects including much philanthropic work and humanitarian aid.

In the U.S., besides his regular work on building vital infrastructure benefiting millions of residents in the DMV area, he also continues his philanthropic and volunteer work and is currently not only a member of the ASCE, but also a Founding and Board Member of the Afghanistan Engineers’ Association. He is also an Executive Director for the Society of Afghan Engineers, a U.S.-based organization, and continues to serve as a volunteer U.N.-certified Trainer and Mentor for UNITAR/Afghanistan. Dr. Saleh continues his professional and personal endeavors as a Civil Engineer and an Afghan American.

Dr. Saleh and his wife Lailuma reside in Northern Virginia. Their seven children, who are completing or have completed their higher education, also reside in the area. He enjoys reading, walking, listening to music, home gardening, dining with friends, and playing with his children. They would welcome hearing from their friends and colleagues at [gulsaleh@gmail.com](mailto:gulsaleh@gmail.com).

**Make Your 2023 UAA Membership Contribution**  
**USAID Alumni Association**

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