



USAID Alumni Association

May 2025 Newsletter

Note from the UAA Board

It is hard to believe the tumult, disruption, and chaos that have affected our beloved Agency over the past 100 days. As USAID officers, we have served under multiple administrations and have gone through many reforms, reorganizations, and a major RIF. But none of us thought that it would come to this: the dissolution of USAID.

Stunned at the beginning, you, our members, have stepped up with actions--writing letters, giving interviews, engaging with policy makers. You have also volunteered to support our staff as they return to the U.S. A heartfelt thank you to all of you. And there is much more work to do. In the coming months, USAID's FSO staff will be returning from the field and skeleton GS staff will be emptying the agency's remaining offices in Washington. Some will have places to land with family, friends, and community. Others may not.

We have heard that one of the heartfelt needs is to "stay in touch." To this end we are putting in place a **Buddy Mentoring Program**. We are also putting in place a network of alumni who have volunteered to support field staff as they return, from meeting at airports to short-term lodging. Our team has expanded across the U.S., including California, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. We continue to work on a **Financial Support Fund** for urgent needs.

One of the deepest concerns of all of us is the loss of skill and knowledge as programs end and USAID staff depart. Our **Knowledge Management** efforts to preserve the agency's vast development knowledge and experience focus on collecting documents and possibly developing an "oral vignettes" variation on oral histories, especially with our FSN colleagues.

In this extraordinary time, it is especially important that we come together to celebrate our community. UAA's **Annual Spring Reception, scheduled for May 29**, will be a special event this year as we hear from some of the most highly respected development experts about the future of foreign assistance. Please see below for details. You can join in person or virtually. Also please plan on joining us at DACOR for a conversation with **George Ingram**, who will be retiring from Brookings, after a remarkable career in development. This event is also both in-person and virtual. More details on both events are below.

Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

New! ! [Please note date change.] On Monday, May 19, from 11:45 to 2:00, there will be a **UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue** (hybrid) luncheon at DACOR featuring **George Ingram**, retiring Senior Fellow at the Brookings' Center for Sustainable Development. **The program is entitled "A Conversation with George Ingram – Where is Development Going?– Learning from Experience."** Note that George would like this to be a conversation with active audience participation. [Click here](#) for more details and the registration link.

New! Spring Reception – May 29, 2025, 3-5:30 at DACOR Bacon. We're planning a hybrid event, and we are seeking a few volunteers to facilitate the discussion. Please reach out to Karen Freeman at ugandakaren@hotmail.com if you can serve as moderator. This is a free event for UAA members. RSVP: Please send acceptances no later than May 20 so that we can place orders and plan accordingly. Please [click here](#) to register if you plan to attend in person and indicate guests. Please [click here](#) to register if you plan to join virtually.

New! Save the date for the Annual "Development Wallahs" picnic. The picnic will take place on Wednesday, July 23, 2025, in Rochester, Vermont. Everyone is welcome and we are looking for a great turnout! For more information, please contact Ann Van Dusen (avandusen4@gmail.com), Anne Aarnes (ahaarnes@hotmail.com), or Connie Carrino (cacarrino@gmail.com).

New! Save the date for the annual picnic that will take place on Sept 7 at Ft Hunt Park. This year we will open the event to UAA members as well as USAID former FSNs here in the U.S.

Informal Gatherings. Several concerts this summer at Wolf Trap caught our interest: Chicago will be playing on July 23. Pink Martini plays on July 29 and Emmylou Harris & Graham Nash on July 31. Please reach out to Karen Freeman (ugandakaren123@gmail.com) or Margot Ellis (ellismargot@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining us for any of the events.

What's New

In Memoriam: Hannah Maxine Baldwin

NOTE: Bulletin Board and Article entries during the last month have been too numerous to list all of them here, so only a few that deserve special mention and did not receive wide distribution follow. For those interested in seeing more, please follow these links:

- 1) [Bulletin Board](#)
- 2) [Articles](#)

Bulletin Board

- [Message for USAID FSN Staff from the USAID Alumni Association. April 25, 2025](#)
- [Current Critical Gaps on the concerns the Rwanda USAID Mission is facing regarding the lack of priority given to the off-boarding process of employees. By Keisha Effiom, USAID/Rwanda Mission Director, April 2025](#)
- [Stand Up for Aid Situation Report #11 05.01.2025](#)
- [OneAID Community: Call or Write Congress 30 Apr 2025](#)
- [OneAID Community Update, 29 Apr 2025](#)
- [Congressman Meeks Strong Opening Remarks at Full Committee Hearing on Authorizing the State Department. Press Release, House Foreign Affairs Committee, 30 Apr 2025](#)
- [Building an America First State Department, Press Statement from Marco Rubio, Sec'y of State, 22 Apr 2025](#)
- [AFSA on State Reorganization Plans, Legal Wins, and More, 25 Apr 2025](#)
- [Join AFSA on Friday, May 9, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at AFSA Headquarters in Foggy Bottom for our Service Disrupted solidarity walk and campaign kickoff.](#)

- [USAID SHUTDOWN PART 14, April 24: Dispatch from the Field, from Scott Radloff, 24 Apr 2025](#)
 - [AFSA Response to the Secretary's Reorganization Plan, 22 Apr 2025](#)
 - [Rise Up: Federal Workers Legal Defense Network](#)
 - [Ranking Members Meeks, Frankel, Shaheen, Schatz Send Letter Objecting to Trump Administration's Proposed Reorganization of USAID, 11 Apr 2025](#)
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Articles

(Click on the "Articles" link above for more articles posted on our website. Click on the boldface item headings there and below for a hyperlink to the full article or video.)

- [DOGE targets US foreign aid agency created under first Trump administration.](#) By Robbie Gramer and Sophia Cai, *Politico*, 28 Apr 2025
 - [MFAN Statement on Possible Closure of Millennium Challenge Corporation \(MCC\).](#) MFAN, 29 Apr 2025
 - [In Memoriam: USAID \(1948–2025\).](#) By Steven E. Hendrix, *Diplomatic Courier*, 23 Apr 2025
 - [HIV Deaths due to AID cuts.](#) Devex, 24 Apr 2025
 - [USAID went into the woodchipper, and we're all paying a price.](#) By Jim Kunder, opinion contributor, *The Hill*, 23 Apr 2025
 - [What We Hold Onto.](#) Friends of USAID's *Substack*, 23 Apr 2025
 - [We Americans are losing our national soul.](#) My View by Victor K. Barbiero, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 31 Mar 2025
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Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities

[Find Your Next Calling: State and Local Opportunities for Former Feds Join us virtually on May 15th at our nationwide public service career expo for former federal employees.](#)

Georgetown University resource kit for federal workers in transition.
[Federal Workforce Transition Resources](#)

[Ex-feds launch websites to help unemployed civil servants find new jobs](#)
By Sean Michael Newhouse, *Government Executive*, 24 April 2025

Join Us For Our Annual Spring Reception at DACOR Bacon House

The USAID Alumni Association is pleased to announce the 2025 Spring Reception. Even in these difficult times, we will gather in the garden of the Dacor Bacon House. Please bring your partner or a guest and join us on May 29 from 3 – 5:30 for this great opportunity to see former colleagues and old friends. spend some time catching up on what everyone is doing, and discuss the future of the Agency.

In lieu of a keynote speaker, this year we have invited a dynamic panel representing various voices of the development community. Our panelists include Jim Kunder, former Deputy Administrator of USAID, Raj Kumar of Devex, and Richard Parker, former Assistant Administrator for LPA and now on the leadership team of USGLC. We're very fortunate to have Susan Reichle, former USAID Counselor and CEO of the International Youth Foundation serving as moderator. We also look forward to sharing information on UAA and other organizations' actions to defend, support and preserve important aspects of foreign assistance and development practice.

Once again, this will be a hybrid event. We plan to share the program and allow for interaction from 3:30 – 4:15 PM EDT to connect with our colleagues from across the country. This is a free event for UAA members.

As always, we're on a drive to increase the membership of UAA so we encourage you to bring or invite those eligible to become new members.

Date: Thursday, May 29, 2025

Time: 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. (Please note that UAA members may stay and continue to enjoy the company of friends and colleagues but there will be a cash bar beginning at 5:30 when the DACOR Happy Hour begins.)

Location: DACOR Bacon House
1801 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

A link for our out-of-town participants will be provided in advance of the event.

[Click here to register to attend in person and indicate guests](#)

[Click here to register to join virtually](#)

Dress: Smart Casual

RSVP: Please send acceptances no later than **May 20** so that we can place orders and plan accordingly.

UAA - California Chapter Inaugural Zoom

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: FORMER USAID DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR JIM KUNDER
"THE VIEW FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.:
THE CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE"
Wednesday, 23 April 2025



Former USAID Deputy Administrator Jim Kunder discussing US foreign assistance with the UAA California Chapter from San Diego, California. 23 April 2025

The USAID Alumni Association – California Chapter hosted the first “all-California” USAID Zoom from San Diego. The keynote speaker, former USAID Deputy Administrator Jim Kunder, visited San Diego and briefed the online participants about the current situation and future of foreign

assistance from a Washington, D.C. perspective. The hour-and-a-half online event included a Question & Answer session. The participants included many USAID retirees already living in California and some USAID personnel planning to move to California within the next few months in response to their Reduction in Force notices. UAA Outreach Committee Co-Chair Christine Sheckler (San Diego) and UAA member Jim Stein (Sacramento) co-hosted the event. UAA Jim Bever and Miles Toder also substantively briefed the participants.

100 USAID Californians are listed - those already living in California and those planning to move here in the next few months from overseas assignments and Washington, D.C. The list is rapidly growing. Approximately 40 of the 100 already reside in California. The UAA California Chapter plans to meet, greet, and support each of our returning USAID colleagues and friends from the field (and D.C.). (N.B. For those USAIDers already residing in California or planning to move here in the next few months who would like to join this initiative, please email Christine Sheckler: cmtsheckler@gmail.com.)

Exciting Opportunity for UAA Members - Elections to UAA Board 2025

The UAA Board has four positions available opening in October 2025 and we need your participation. This is an opportunity to help guide the organization and options for the future of international development, and to support USAID staff. You are a key element to make this happen. Your vast development and organizational experience are critically needed at this time.

We are asking you to nominate yourself or to nominate someone else who would be an excellent board member. You only need to be a UAA member in good standing to nominate yourself or someone else.

- Nominations - June 1st, 2025 to July 15th, 2025
- Ballots will be distributed and voting begins September 1-30, 2025
- The election announcement will take place at the Annual General Meeting on Friday, October 31st, 2025

Ms. Dorothy Rayburn, Ms. Sharon Pauling, and UAA Co-Chair Anthony Chan are the members of the Nomination Committee 2025 to oversee

the nominating process and the elections. Instructions for nominations will be provided in the June 2025 Newsletter.

Addition to the Bibliography of USAID Authors

One new book has been added to the [Bibliography of USAID Authors](#). In *Not Far from the Tree: Vignettes from Lives Well Lived*, Paul E. White has written a memoir that includes his life story in addition to stories from his multi-racial family. Paul is a retired USAID senior foreign service officer, now living in Barcelona, Spain. He grew up in the small town of Brazil, Indiana. After college at Valparaiso University and the East-West Center, he was an International Voluntary Service (IVS) volunteer in Laos. He then joined USAID and served in South Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Panama, Peru, Guatemala (as Deputy Director), Washington, Tokyo (as Development Counselor), and Mexico (as Mission Director).

Please send info on any new books written by USAID foreign service and GS officers, their family members, and FSNs to JPielemeie@aol.com

Development Dialogues

Prof. Danny Leipziger spoke on Industrial Policy



On Friday, April 4, 2025, GWU Professor and long-time World Bank economist **Danny Leipziger** spoke at a UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue (hybrid) luncheon session at DACOR. His engaging and thought-provoking topic was ***"Is Industrial Policy Still a Dirty Word?"*** He provided an excellent synthesis of evolving views on industrial policy, with useful references to history, to contributions of eminent researchers, and to World Bank

thinking and policy as well. To access the full session video [click here](#).

Profile

(Please note that our monthly Profile has been temporarily suspended.)

In its place we offer a recent OpEd penned by former Mission Director and UAA member Jim Bednar and published in *Valley News* of West Lebanon, NH, 28 Mar 2025

Trump gets it wrong on foreign aid

I served my country for almost 40 years. Not in uniform but with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the agency that managed 60% of our humanitarian and development assistance. I have hundreds of on-the-ground examples of how USAID employees served America's interests. (Over the agency's six decades of work, 99 USAID staff gave their lives in service to their country.)

The Trump Administration's abrupt and uninformed assault on foreign aid is making America less safe, less prosperous and weaker in the eyes of the world. Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently announced his decision to cancel 83% of USAID's programs, saying they did not serve US national interests.

As a retired career Foreign Service Officer who has lived and worked across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, I know from experience that Rubio is wrong.

The Trump Administration seems to filter every decision by asking "What's in it for us?" The answer for foreign aid is "plenty." And the US taxpayer gets a big bang for a few bucks. In fact, foreign aid accounts for less than 1% of the federal budget.

And what do we get? Let's look at just the direct and economic benefits. The direct impact: at least 50,000 American jobs in business, universities and nonprofits; some \$2 billion dollars of food purchased from American farmers and shipped on American vessels. Second, and more importantly, our aid helps create business climates friendly to US trade and investment and gives US businesses valuable entry points to new markets.

For instance, in Rwanda, a US firm was awarded a small USAID contract to conduct a feasibility study for upgrading Kigali's water system. The city awarded the same firm a \$28 million contract to design and build

the system. The American firm now works in over 10 African countries with over \$100 million in contracts.

Another example: Power Africa, a USAID-led public-private partnership to expand access to electricity in Africa, used \$1.2 billion to make deals in power generation and distribution for over 100 US firms worth \$29 billion. Another \$21 billion in deals were in the pipeline before the program was shuttered.

In losing USAID's ability to leverage such resources, we are leaving the playing field to China, Russia and others. The potential for American businesses is great. Africa's 49 countries imported \$32 billion of US goods in 2024, up 11% in one year. Twelve of the top 20 fastest-growing economies in the world are in Africa. It is in America's interest to spend a few bucks for huge economic benefits.

Foreign aid also makes us safer. Hunger, extreme poverty and insecurity make desperate people more susceptible to extremist ideologies and drive illegal migration. USAID's programs help people to feed themselves, create economic opportunities, and give people a chance for a normal life. Yet Secretary Rubio has terminated lifesaving aid for millions of people fleeing conflict and canceled law enforcement programs that help apprehend terrorists and protect civilians.

Controlling infectious diseases also makes us safer. As we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, diseases do not respect borders no matter how tightly controlled. When Ebola broke out in West Africa, USAID's investments in health systems and trusted relationships with health authorities stopped the spread within and between countries. Today, there is an Ebola outbreak in Uganda and, contrary to White House claims, US support for Uganda's control efforts was cut off and has not been reinstated. Further, USAID's work to curb the spread of highly contagious tuberculosis (TB) and monitor the rise of new diseases has been terminated.

If you don't believe me, believe the long list of US military leaders who understand that foreign aid is an essential — and cost-effective — complement to military might. Gen. Anthony Zinni stated "countering the threats to our nation requires comprehensive responses that utilize all our elements of national power — military and non-military. An indispensable part of the non-military toolkit is foreign aid — one of the least appreciated and yet vital means for advancing America's interests around the world."

What needs to be done? Tell your Congressional delegation that they must insist that the Trump administration restore the development and humanitarian programs that make America safer, stronger and more prosperous.

James Bednar is a retired USAID senior officer who served in Mauritania, Swaziland, and became country director of assistance programs in the Czech Republic, Morocco, Zambia and Sri Lanka. He also was country director in Ghana for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, another US government foreign assistance program created by President George W. Bush. Most recently, he worked in Jordan, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He lives in Springfield, N.H.

Make Your 2025 UAA Membership Contribution
USAID Alumni Association