



USAID Alumni Association

October 2026 Newsletter

Note from the UAA Board

We are getting ready for the AGM and we hope you are too!

The UAA Annual General Meeting takes place on **October 30, 2026**, at the Center for Global Development (CGD), 2055 L Street NW, Fifth Floor, Washington, D.C. — with a virtual option to join from wherever you are. If you've registered for in-person but need to change to virtual, please let us know as soon as possible. Register [here for in-person](#) participation and [here for virtual](#) participation

We have a [dynamic agenda](#) for you, starting with a "fireside chat" with **Henrietta Fore**, former USAID Administrator and founding member of UAA, and **Alice Albright**, former CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. These stalwart leaders in international development cooperation will talk about shaping the next chapter of foreign assistance. Next, the UAA Board takes the

stage to discuss [UAA's draft new strategy](#), with plenty of time for your questions and ideas. Next is lunch for in-person attendees and a chance to reconnect with old friends and welcome new members.

The afternoon kicks off with a panel of "sister" organizations, bringing together voices from [Aid On The Hill](#), [AID Transition Alliance](#), [OneAID Community](#), [Our USAID Community](#), and the [Alliance for American Leadership](#) to dig into complementarity, gaps, challenges, and opportunities for mutual support across our work. Then, we have an energizing panel featuring our **emerging Regional UAA Chapters** joining us virtually as they offer fresh perspectives from beyond the DMV on where the UAA's strategy and future should head. And we'll wrap up the AGM with the presentation of the "Alumni of the Year" awards!

Throughout the day, we want to hear from **you**: there will be dedicated time for comments and questions from both in-person and virtual participants during each session. If you're planning a remote **Watch Party**, please let us know.

Please remember to renew your membership (see new, wider eligibility requirements on the [UAA website](#)). To attend the AGM, participants will need to have paid their dues by October 16, 2026. **All hands on deck!** [Make your UAA 2026 Membership Contribution](#)

Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

New! October 29 (Possible) O Street Dinner, Washington, DC

New! October 30 UAA Annual General Meeting, Washington, DC.

[Click here](#) for a draft agenda.

New! December 6 UAA Friendsgiving (Alexandria, VA)

New! December 16 Meet-up event for Hamilton ([National Theater](#))

What's New on the Website

In Memoriam:

Michele Sumka, Donna Marie Ayerst, Tyler Chapman Holt, Mary Lee Lincoln McIntyre

News About USAID

Unless otherwise stated, the links below are for information purposes only and do not convey the endorsement of the UAA, its members, or its Board. See:

- 1) **Bulletin Board**, including **Statements from UAA about Current Events**
- 2) **Articles**
- 3) **Podcasts & Recorded Media**

Bulletin Board

- Wednesday, October 14, from 11:45 a.m. noon to 2:00 p.m., the next meeting of DACOR's Latin America and Caribbean Discussion Group with an in-depth conversation on the evolving security landscape across the Western Hemisphere. [Click here](#) for more information and registration.
- [URGENT ACTION NEEDED UPDATE – Battle Buddies at Camp As Sayliyah stays open.](#) From Shawn VanDiver, President and Founder, #AfghanEvac, 29 Sep 2026
- [URGENT ACTION NEEDED — Supporting Our Afghan Colleagues: Battle Buddies Suicide attempt at Camp As Sayliyah last night. Residents have been told nothing.](#) From Shawn VanDiver, President and Founder, #AfghanEvac, 25 Sept. 2026

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 articles.)

USAID News Story Tracker: USAID Media

- [Beyond the Funding Gap, A Global Assessment of the Loss of USAID’s Environmental and Climate Programming.](#) By Monica Bansal and Hadas Kushnir, One Earth Partners, Sept. 2026
- [Where does U.S. foreign assistance go from here?](#) By Chidozie Ezi-Ashi, George Ingram and Homi Kharas, MFAN, 2026
- [Blueprint for Effective International Assistance.](#) U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, Sept. 2026
- [Policy Commentary: One Year After USAID, the State Department Should Invest in Expert Local Staff and Partners.](#) By Susan Reichle, Co-Founder of Aid in Transition Alliance and Former USAID Official, MFAN, 17 Sept. 2026
- [American Foreign Service Association remembers USAID.](#) Randy Chester, AFSA USAID Vice President, 2 Sep 2026

Podcast & Recorded Media

- [After the Wood Chipper: The Case for Foreign Aid,](#) a conversation with Andrew Natsios and Nicholas Enrich, American Foreign Service Association, Sept. 10, 2026

New UAA Inaugural Front Line Conversation Series

On September 2, 2026, Mary Alice Kleinjan welcomed participants to the first USAID Alumni Association (UAA) Front Line Conversation Series session which focused on the future of foreign assistance. She introduced the panelists, including Chris Milligan, Dottie Rayburn, Narine Sargsyan, and Ani Manukyan, who were tasked with updating meeting participants on the current discussions in Washington and perspectives from Armenia as one country example. The two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the evening U.S. eastern time, were structured to allow for a total of 30 minutes of presentations by the panel, followed by an hour of open dialogue, with an emphasis on hearing from Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) and prioritizing their contributions. Nearly 80 people joined the sessions, representing countries from Asia, Africa, Europe/Eurasia and Latin America as well as the U.S. [Read the Summary Report here.](#)

Further Discussions with FSNs

The first Front Line Conversation helped spur further interest and demand for additional input from the FSN community on the future of foreign assistance. In early October, UAA will host some discussion sessions with FSNs to capture their perspectives and ensure their experience and local perspectives are given voice in shaping the conversation about what comes next in foreign assistance. These discussions will be led by George Ingram, who has a lengthy career in international development including service at USAID. He will synthesize the discussions in a report that will contribute to the broader debate currently underway on the future of foreign assistance.

Regional Gatherings

Boston

Former USAID colleagues, implementing partners, artists, family members, and friends gathered together to reconnect, share stories, and reflect on a journey that has shaped so many of our lives. We came together not only to celebrate a book, *Global Rhythms: Remembering USAID through the Arts*, but also to honor a shared legacy of service and the relationships forged through decades of working together. There was pride, gratitude, and, at times, sadness. But above all, there was hope for a continued future of foreign assistance. Our deepest thanks to Ambassador Power and to everyone who helped make this evening so meaningful.



Our art book, *Global Rhythms: Remembering USAID through the Arts*, is available through the publisher's website. The book features more than 100 artworks and poems created by nearly 50 former USAID staff, implementing partners, family members, and friends

that celebrate over 60 years of global service. Any modest proceeds from book sales will be used to support ongoing efforts to honor USAID's legacy and raise awareness of its impact around the world. Thank you for helping us keep these stories alive. Read further details [here](#).

USAIDers in California Voices of USAID's 2025 Alumni



USAID San Jose Alumni meetup August 2026

This summer, UAA Board Secretary Christine Sheckler traveled across California to meet former USAID staff and implementing partners face-to-face. The purpose of the trip was to listen—especially to colleagues whose USAID careers ended abruptly last year. Alumni candidly described ongoing challenges, assessed whether the draft UAA Strategic Plan reflects their needs, and explored how UAA can build stronger ties within our organization, as well as across the broader international development community.

One message came through unmistakably from the 2025 alumni: they are still navigating the consequences of the destruction of

USAID, and they need help finding jobs.



USAID Bay Area Alumni meetup in San Francisco 10 Sept. 2026



USAID San Jose Alumni Meetup 30 Sept 2026

The information and feedback provided by alumni in these gatherings are invaluable to UAA in providing members with practical, timely support. Meeting today's challenges and seizing tomorrow's opportunities requires the voices, ideas and guidance of the 2025 alumni. Thank you to the many USAID alumni who have made the time to share their personal stories and valuable ideas. UAA welcomes every level of participation, whether it is a single idea, a few hours of activity, or a larger leadership role.

Virginia

On the occasion of a visit from Steve and Nancy Silcox to D.C., a gathering was held of USAID Alumni and colleagues who served in

USAID/Ukraine in the late 1990's The late September event was hosted at the McLean residence of Nancy Tumavick and Gary Waxmonsky.



The gathering included Sherry Grossman, Rebecca Latoracca and Jean Piero, Steve Hadley and Irina, Marilyn Schmidt, Pam Mandel, Judy Hansen and John, Hugh Haworth, Paul Mulligan, as well as State Department colleagues.

UAA Announcements

Updated Information on Board Elections

We have a rich field of strong and talented candidates for the upcoming election for new Board members. Elections will take place by on-line ballot through October 16. All current members of the

USAID Alumni Association are eligible to vote. An E-mail message with a link to the ballot was sent to all members in mid-September. Since there are eight candidates, (listed below) running for two positions, we held a virtual candidates forum ([see here](#)) on September 15. Each candidate was given approximately five minutes for self-introduction and to respond to prepared questions.

UAA Board Candidates (2026) [[link to candidate statements](#)]

- Alexious Butler
- Lela Kerashvili
- Cheryl “Cherie” Klein
- Nitin Madhav
- Andrew Plitt
- Jeanne Pryor
- William (Bill) Schaedla
- Curt Wolters

Questions and comments may be directed to Nominating Committee Members [Jeanne Briggs](#), [Christine Sheckler](#) and [Stephen Haykin](#).

Development Dialogues

"What Does America Want From Its Foreign Assistance Program? Strategic Options and Policy-Leader Priorities in a Time of Peer Competition and Partisan Discord."

On September 9 the webinar was co-hosted by Aid on the Hill (AOH) and the USAID Alumni Association (UAA). This conversation examined how U.S. foreign assistance can be realigned to meet today’s national security and foreign policy challenges.

Key Event Highlights:

- **Featured Speakers:** Former USAID Deputy Administrator Jim Kunder and former USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator Laura Pavlovic presented findings from their landmark study (funded by the Smith Richardson Foundation and hosted by the Institute for Indo-Pacific Security).
- **The Core Question:** The study tackled the foundational *what*: What is the primary purpose of U.S. foreign assistance in today's global environment?
- **8 Strategic Models Explored:**
 1. **Journey to Self-Reliance: Graduating countries out of aid dependency.**
 2. **Regional Stability and Prosperity: Concentrating resources on critical regions.**
 3. **Quantum Leap: Investing in high-visibility, transformative global projects.**
 4. **21st Century Global Threats: Addressing root causes of global problems like pandemics and migration.**
 5. **Technical Innovation & Connectivity: Leveraging U.S. technological advantages.**
 6. **Global Conflict Reduction: Building on the Global Fragility Act.**
 7. **Challenge Peer Competitors: Blunting Chinese and Russian influence.**
 8. **Economic Investment & Growth: Leveraging**
- **Key Findings:** All 32 study experts agreed on the necessity of a vibrant U.S. foreign assistance program, showing cross-party alignment on these core operational models.
- **Congressional Action:** Speakers recommended Congress hold comprehensive hearings to reform the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, arguing that defining these primary purposes can bypass partisan stalemates and build a sustained, bipartisan foundation for future aid.

Watch the Recording Catch the presentation recording [here](#).
(Note: The recording is intended only for our members. Under Chatham House rules, the live Q&A was not recorded to foster candid discussion).

If you haven't read the report yet, you can do so [here](#).

Profile: Sarah-Ann Lynch



In 1986, Sarah-Ann Lynch arrived in Morocco for a two-year Peace Corps tour, changing her life forever. Assigned to teach English in Taroudant – a small village nestled in Morocco's Sous Valley with extraordinary views of the High Atlas Mountains – she fell in love with Morocco's beauty, depth, and complexity. That transformative experience sparked a career in global service, prompting her to earn a graduate degree in International Law and Diplomacy and work in international business before joining USAID as a Foreign Service Officer in 1993.

Alongside her dentist husband, Dr. Kevin Healy, who shared her passion for global work, Sarah-Ann served in high-impact roles across Bangladesh, Peru, Afghanistan, and Iraq where she was the USAID Mission Director during the rise of ISIS in the

region. Although it was a frightening time to be in Baghdad, Sarah-Ann was extraordinarily proud that she was able to lead her team to not only keep USAID/Iraq open but also to pivot the program to assist the growing number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Iraq. Sarah-Ann also completed multiple Washington assignments, including serving as the Acting Assistant Administrator for the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau (LAC).

In 2019, Sarah-Ann reached a career pinnacle with her Senate confirmation as the U.S. Ambassador to Guyana. Among her proudest achievements as Ambassador was helping ensure democracy prevailed during Guyana's high-stakes 2020 elections. While Ambassador to Guyana, Sarah-Ann served concurrently as the Secretary of State's Representative to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). She was thrilled that Secretary of State Blinken responded favorably to her suggestion that he travel to a high-level CARICOM meeting in Trinidad and Tobago with a follow-on visit to Guyana. What an impactful visit!

She concluded her distinguished government career at U.S. Southern Command as the Civilian Deputy to the Commander and Senior Foreign Policy Advisor. Frequently traveling "down range" alongside command leadership, she delivered strategic counsel that deepened key diplomatic and defense partnerships across the LAC region.

Today, Sarah-Ann consults on regional issues in LAC and other parts of the globe. She sits on a few boards and is a Senior Advisor to the World Wildlife Fund's Oceans Team. She frequently speaks to D.C. think tank audiences about issues facing the Western Hemisphere. When not consulting, she loves to read, travel, and visit family and friends. She and Kevin currently live in Potomac, MD but look forward to eventual retirement in their home state of Massachusetts. Above all, they are proudest of their three children: Mariah (an accomplished D.C. lobbyist), Garrett (a vascular surgery resident at NYU), and Dylan (a 3rd year law student at American University).

Sarah-Ann always looks forward to connecting with former USAID colleagues via LinkedIn or by email (salynch619@gmail.com).

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USAID Alumni Association

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