

U.S. universities and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) have had along history of collaboration in development assistance, and of frustration with aspects of their relationship. Collaboration has been based on mutual recognition of the need to access a broad range of U.S. intellectual resources to help mitigate developing-country problems; the shared frustration has been based on mutually perceived lack of success in collaborative efforts. Numerous factors have contributed to that frustration, including different approaches to development aid (AID customarily emphasizes short-term project implementation, universities excel at long-term institution building and research), different bureaucratic styles (centralized universities v. a decentralized, hierarchical AID), distrust in each other's commitment and/or technical capabilities, and the intrusion of politics into some aspects of development aid.

U.S. university participation in AID development assistance ventures has declined since passage of the Title XII program in 1975 such that U.S. university entitlement effectively is ended. That program authorized AID to direct resources to building U.S. university capacity to support and carry out AID agriculture projects. The decline in Title XII projects is commonly attributed to:

- decline in AID involvement in large institution-building activities,
- decline in the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Nutrition budget, much of which initially was directed to U.S. agricultural university project collaboration, and earmarking of those funds for other purposes,
- growing Mission management of programs involving private sector development and marketing elements for which private sector contractors tend to be preferred, and
- growing preference by AID and host country project leadership for fully open competition in procurement of services.

Additional factors constrain increasing university involvement in development assistance through current AID/university collaborative activities. Declining international development assistance budgets are curbing AID programs in general and university involvement in particular. AID's decentralized bureaucracy, frequent policy shifts, and rapid staff turnovers hinder university involvement,

whereas university tenure and reward policies are commonly incompatible with AID priorities, such as applied research. Some domestic constituents of land-grant colleges continue to resist faculty participation in foreign aid projects. Time frames are mismatched: the academic year does not conform to AID's open, flexible schedules. Perhaps the most important factors hindering U.S. university involvement in AID programs today are the new trends toward fewer projects, increased project size, and increased reliance on nonuniversity players.

New opportunities for U.S. university involvement in foreign development assistance, however, are arising from new initiatives in AID, and in other development assistance organizations. Reorganization and redirection of AID's programs was announced by AID Administrator Ronald W. Roskens in early 1991, citing concerns with the U.S. budget deficit, increasing scarcity of foreign assistance funds, and proliferating legislative objectives. The new mission is to "do fewer things, and do them very well." To achieve this, four strategic initiatives were proposed to focus AID activities:

1. *The Democracy Initiative*: "to help promote and consolidate democracy as the legitimate organizing principle for political systems throughout the world."
2. *The Partnership for Business and Development*: "to engage American private sector participation in the effort to develop and sustain free-market principles and broad-based economic growth in developing countries."
3. *Family and Development*: "to use the family . . . as a starting point for analysis of what people need, how they use the resources they have, and as an organizing principle for mobilizing the energy of people to create progress."
4. *Environment*: "to guide the Agency's environmental and natural resource interventions to areas where . . . assistance will have the greatest impact."

A new AID emphasis on sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, and maintenance or improvement of environmental quality differs from the historical focus of U.S. agricultural (land-grant) universities largely on increasing food production and, thus, offers them new areas of specialization. New efforts to achieve mutual benefits from devel-

opment assistance for developing countries and the United States also open U.S. universities to involvement in “second generation” development projects that direct new assistance to lesser developed country (LDC) organizations from which AID assistance had formerly been withdrawn.

In addition, AID is focusing its affiliations with development assistance organizations, including U.S. universities, to encourage multi-institutional collaborative relationships. Benefits of collaboration include potential for increased university participation in development assistance, economic and strategic advantages of pooling knowledge and resources and of sharing risks and costs, the possibility of garnering increased political support for university involvement in development assistance,

and broadening educational opportunities for U.S. and LDC students. LDCs have reacted favorably to past collaborative efforts.

U.S. universities have long collaborated with each other, commonly in university consortia. Potential exists, however, for additional collaboration among universities and between universities and other actors in development assistance community (e.g., International Agricultural Research Centers, private sector organizations). Further, U.S. universities may tap into the growing international efforts of other Federal agencies, such as those of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Realizing the full potential for U.S. university participation in U.S. development assistance will require systematic collaboration among all those involved.