

# Global Training in the World Today

*An overview of international initiatives and programs that the US government and nonprofit organizations undertake to assist nations in achieving a democratic structure and economic health.*

ELLEN BATES

Since the waning days of World War II, the United States government and many nonprofit organizations have embarked on a series of initiatives to help war-torn governments and developing countries everywhere get back on their feet. The United States directed its initial efforts toward Europe via the very successful Marshall Plan. Later, in the sixties, our government created the Peace Corps and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Many other agencies and organizations have launched global training programs; at the federal level, the US Department of the Treasury and the Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) are examples, and the American Bar Association, the International Law Institute (ILI), and East-West Management Institute (EWMI) are among the professional and nonprofit organizations that have provided assistance. Some programs help governments directly in building legal and financial infrastructures; others provide aid to economic ventures. Many, such as the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, stress leadership development. The common thread in all these programs has been well-targeted training.

## Legal Training

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the resulting new governments had little experience with the rule of law and therefore had to begin a legal reform process. Since 1990 the American Bar Association, through its Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI), has recruited volunteer lawyers to help those Eastern Bloc countries create independent legal systems. CEELI currently has lawyer liaisons serving for one or two years in countries such as Albania, Belarus, Latvia, Georgia, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan on various projects, including constitutional drafting, court administration, white-collar crime, and legislative procedures. Technical legal assistance projects and training programs are held throughout these countries. CEELI lawyers have provided expert assessments of more than 450 draft laws addressing antitrust, tax, foreign

investment, and criminal law, as well as the constitutions of 15 countries.

Since 1971, the ILI, a nonprofit organization, has brought more than 8,000 lawyers and other professionals from 180 countries to its training program at its Washington, DC headquarters. Through a series of seminars, participants learn to “lead their nations toward improved legal regimes, sound economic policy, and effective capital markets.”

## Financial Management

USAID has funded training in financial management worldwide. In 2002 it directed a study in Indonesia that focused on how local governments could effectively exercise their newly decentralized borrowing powers. The emphasis was on developing a strategy for establishing a project financing system for local governments.

In other areas, the USDA Graduate School’s International Institute has developed several courses for USAID. It delivered a financial management overview course to USAID’s finance and program staff in Washington and to its missions in Hungary, El Salvador, South Africa, Egypt, Kazakhstan, and Nigeria. Two groups of health administrators from Bangladesh visited the Institute to benchmark operational and management techniques and other best practices in the health care industry in the United States and Canada. Presentations and discussions centered on hospital structure, management, services, patient admissions and care, and research and training.

## Graduate School’s International Institute

The Graduate School’s International Institute has been active in many global training programs. Recently, it

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**Ellen Bates** is editor of the *USDA Graduate School’s newsletter*. This four-part series will highlight other public management training initiatives that continue to adapt and respond to changing times and circumstances.

focused on legal training and conducted several innovative programs that blended observational study activities with intensive classroom learning. Collaborating with the Asia Pacific Legal Institute and George Washington University, the International Institute delivered a three-month program on intellectual property rights law to 26 officials from the Shanghai region of the People's Republic of China.

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Some of these initiatives have both economic and political components. For instance, in 2002 the Department of State and the America-Mideast Educational and Training Services awarded a bid to the Graduate School's International Institute and the University of Wisconsin's Babcock Center for International Dairy Research to conduct the Cyprus Dairy Industry Development Project. The purpose is to enhance relations and to build economic collaboration between the Greek and Turkish sides of Cyprus, which was partitioned in 1974, and to assist with the island's efforts to join the European Union (EU).

Furthering the goal of serving mutual development interests between Cyprus and Turkey, the program has produced three projects: translation of EU regulations into Turkish and the distribution of a farm management checklist detailing practices that meet EU and US import standards; farm surveys which note where improvements are necessary in infrastructure, sanitation, and feeding systems; and the establishment of two demonstration farms in each partition that demonstrate economically productive and sustainable practices.

The International Institute delivered courses to Beninese small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Cotonou, Benin, where the African Growth and Opportunity Act Training Center-Africa (ACTA) is located. The training was in trade and export development, quality and customer satisfaction, and modern textile design. On behalf of the US Embassy there, the Institute also held a trade seminar for high-level government officials and business leaders. The Institute is currently working with ACTA to develop a broader curriculum—workshops in business English and computer technology in business—and to link SMEs with small and medium-sized businesses in the United States.

In 2003, the International Institute hosted 200 Russian leaders who traveled to the United States for the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress to gain firsthand knowledge of American democratic and free-enterprise practices. In communities nationwide, the International Institute hosted learning programs for the

participants in economic development, education reform, federalism, health, rule of law, women as leaders, and youth issues. The Institute arranged a similar program for 15 Ukrainian leaders.

The International Institute also designed and launched an observational study and training program for officials from the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation in Egypt. In this case, participants enrolled in the Graduate School course "Managing Organizational Change and Management Development" and met with communications departments of USDA and its Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. The officials studied how the United States employs public awareness campaigns to create behavioral change in both the producers and consumers of agricultural products. Returning to Egypt, officials led a countrywide public relations effort to influence farmers to change their water usage practices in favor of safe, improved irrigation methods.

As part of a multiyear initiative to promote agribusiness development, policy reform, and regulatory improvement in Bangladesh, the International Institute developed and conducted a program, funded by USAID, for the secretary of agriculture. The International Institute also has hosted groups from the Bangladesh Agricultural Council.

## **East-West Management Institute**

The EWMI is a nonprofit organization that is active globally. It has played a major role in the development of many countries in central and eastern Europe. By offering training and shared experience EWMI has achieved notable improvements in banking, accounting, and other financial areas, and also in land use reform.

Established in 1992, EWMI's Banking and Finance Assistance Center has provided a forum for developing and exchanging knowledge on bank privatization, banking supervision, bad-loan workouts, deposit insurance, and pension reform. Further, leaders in venture capital have added their expertise with a view to stimulating investment and development in small and medium-sized businesses.

In the context of government activities as well as private enterprise, EWMI has provided extensive training in accounting, auditing, and financial and cost management. EWMI has stressed computer-based interactive learning in the transition from accounting principles used in centralized economies to those followed in market-based economies. This has included teaching basic concepts needed in international trade, like foreign exchange translation and accounting for value-added taxes.

## **Partners for Financial Stability**

To further regional development EWMI has created a program known as Partners for Financial Stability. The insight behind this program is that the experience of the more mature newly independent states in the financial

sector can be shared usefully with southeastern European countries that have not progressed as far.

One of the clearest needs and most intractable problems in leaving the centralized economy involves the collectivized farm. As one official in Moldova observed: "What Stalin did in one day will take us years to undo." But EWMI successfully has encouraged land privatization and the creation of land rights for those who previously worked on collective farms. The new entrepreneurs then need to gain knowledge about their options: farming the land themselves, or with partners; or selling the land in a viable real estate market.

### **Office of Technical Assistance**

In 1990, the US Department of the Treasury created an Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) to assist governments in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the transformation of public and commercial financial systems from state-directed operations to market-based systems. The program has since expanded to include nations in Africa and Latin America. The program addresses five core areas: budget policy and management; financial institutions policy and regulation; government debt issuance and management; enforcement policy and administration; and tax policy and administration.

Typically, Treasury consultants work in the relevant ministry of the foreign country. For example, consultants may work on tax policy and tax administration matters in conjunction with the ministry of finance. A unified tax system may be proposed and, if adopted, modern tax collection procedures may then be established. The objective is to have tax provisions that are consistent with internationally accepted tax rules and that can be applied easily, as by withholding of tax from wages and certain other payments. For those subject to taxation, the use of taxpayer identification numbers is encouraged. It is not surprising, however, that individuals may be reluctant to be assigned such numbers if their country has had a history of central control through registration of citizens. As the various countries implement new tax systems, their representatives often seek further training from the Treasury and learn, for example, the pitfalls of broad tax exemptions and tax shelter plans.

Many countries have received and utilized tax policy advice. A major program in Russia resulted in formal tax reform proposals being submitted to the Duma during the summer of 1996. Successful countries now have functional systems in place that include the value-added tax, excise, corporate, and personal income taxes and customs duties plus social insurance contributions. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine all have received advice on tax modeling. There are now several pilot programs to demonstrate functional administration, and OTA has participated in the development of national tax administration centers abroad.

### **Peace Corps**

That bright light of American volunteerism, the Peace Corps, continues to serve in developing countries, where governments and local communities face many impediments to economic growth such as high unemployment, rapidly increasing populations, unskilled workforces, and a lack of private sector investment. The Peace Corps has a

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long history of working with individuals and communities to promote economic opportunities at the grass-roots level.

The volunteers focus on increasing family income, improving the environment for business, educating young people, and helping business find markets for traditional or value-added products. They participate at many levels, whether helping artisan cooperatives in rural Africa market their handmade goods or training people in eastern Europe to take advantage of new free-market opportunities. Some volunteers work with development banks, non-governmental organizations, and municipalities to support local development projects. They also help women to gain access to credit and find new markets for their products.

### **International Fellowships Program**

The International Fellowships Program (IFP) is the largest single program ever supported by the Ford Foundation. IFP provides opportunities for advanced study to exceptional individuals who will use the education to become leaders in their respective fields, furthering development in their own countries and greater economic and social justice worldwide. To ensure that Fellows are drawn from diverse backgrounds, IFP actively seeks candidates from social groups and communities that lack systematic access to higher education. Fellowship recipients have returned to their home countries to become institutional leaders and have helped build global knowledge in fields ranging from the natural and social sciences to the humanities and arts.

### **Conclusion**

These international initiatives and programs are a small sample of the positive effort of US citizens helping abroad. Daily our government and nonprofit organizations work to assist nations in achieving a democratic structure and economic health. The difficulties are overwhelming, and the gains are measured in small ways—not always dramatic, but well worth the commitment. ■