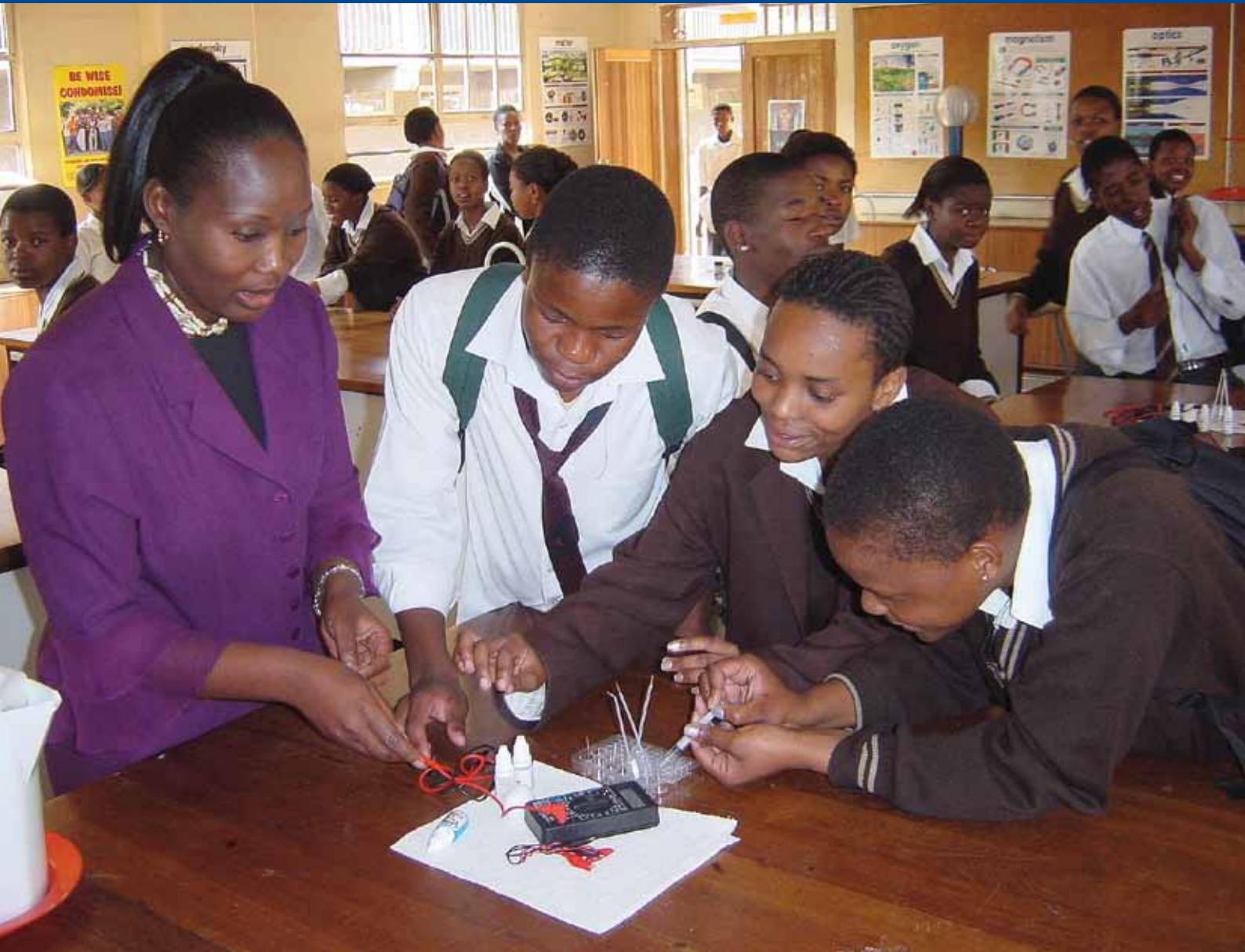




USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PARTNERSHIP TO TRANSFORM SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION: American Support 1986–2009

Executive Summary



September 2009

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Hillary Rodham Clinton was the First Lady of the U.S. when she visited Entandweni Primary School in Soweto in 1996. She taught part of an English in Action radio learning class, engaging students in the subject, in keeping with techniques of the Open Learning Systems Education Trust (OLSET) program. Ms. Primrose Sishi (left) was the Principal. Ms. Clinton is now the Secretary of State of the U.S. (Photo: OLSET)

Cover: USAID supports South Africa's Department of Education national strategy to improve math, science and technology education in schools dedicated to these subjects. The program is called "Dinaledi", which means "stars" in the Northern Sotho language, lighting the way as centers of teaching and learning excellence. (Photo: Reverie Zurba)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PARTNERSHIP TO TRANSFORM SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION:

American Support 1986 – 2009

This is a review of a remarkable partnership of nearly three decades between the United States (U.S.) Government and South Africa (S.A.)—first with individual citizens and then with the legitimate government—to transform education from the universally deployed apartheid system to one befitting a democratic and equitable society.

Recognizing that a successful nation is built on its people, their skills, and its education system, the U.S. Congress enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) of 1986. This marked the beginning of a new era in U.S. relations with South Africa, from the compromise and accommodation of a policy of “constructive engagement” with apartheid (Congress overrode the veto of the President) to an overtly political purpose: “the empowerment of the ‘disadvantaged’ population.”

This led to the opening of the United States Agency for International Development Mission in South Africa (USAID/S.A.), which was quite different from most other USAID programs because it worked unilaterally with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), rather than bilaterally with a host government; the CAAA precluded USAID from funding any government entity. USAID’s entry into S.A. in 1986 came at a time when state repression and mass resistance were intense; USAID staff had to work hard to gain trust. USAID in South Africa thus conducted its work in a difficult political and social environment that sometimes affected its staff and the organizations it funded. For example, in 1988 an estimated 3 million black workers participated in a three day nationwide strike to protest anti-labor legislation and government’s prohibition on organizations from engaging in political activities.

The government-to-government partnership began with the watershed 1994 elections and by 2009, the U.S. continued as one of the few international partners in education with South Africa, having made the largest bilateral contributions (the European Union has been the largest funder overall) to both basic and tertiary education in the new democracy. USAID has remained the largest development aid donor to South African education, amounting to \$400 million as of 2009. Of the total \$400 million funding to South Africa \$153 million was direct bilateral support to the South African Department of Education. An additional \$111 million in unilateral USAID funding has flowed to South Africa through regional programs bringing the total contributions to the education sector to \$411 million.

Thus, the year 2009 marks 15 years of bilateral cooperation between the United States and South Africa to transform South Africa’s apartheid education system to an

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egalitarian one appropriate to the largest economy of the 54 countries comprising Africa (Nigeria and Egypt follow in terms of gross domestic product). Before democratic elections in 1994, USAID unilaterally funded tertiary-level scholarships and later, the work of NGOs preparing for the transition to democracy.

From the beginning of its operations in South Africa following the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, USAID made strategic decisions to focus its limited resources on the education sector. This was later broadened to democracy and governance including voter education, economic development, and health. Ongoing strategic planning processes with the post-1994 South African Government (SAG) kept education as a focus.

Now in 2009, the USAID budget mainly supports the education sector in combating HIV and AIDS and strengthening programs at Further Education and Training (FET) colleges. This report depicts this unusual period in U.S. developmental aid history, as a record for ongoing dialogue and cooperation.

USAID mainly supports the education sector in combating HIV and AIDS and strengthening Further Education and Training

Apartheid Education to World Class: Bridging the Gap

South Africa is “first world” in some respects: it is the country that produced the first heart transplant, oil from coal, and numerous scientific innovations. The head of the University of the Western Cape, Prof. Brian O’Connell, describes it as the “inheritance” that the new South Africa received from the apartheid regime in 1994: the most technologically and commercially developed country in Sub-Saharan Africa. The formidable goal for the first democratic government was to claim that inheritance for the majority of South Africans rather than the few – a target yet to be achieved.

This challenge is illustrated in the *Global Competitiveness Report 2008-2009* of the World Economic Forum (WEF). South Africa was ranked 45th overall out of 134 countries, in the company of Puerto Rico (four ratings ahead), and four and five rankings ahead of Italy and India, respectively. Consistently it is the highest ranked country in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Yet, the report cited an “inadequately educated workforce” as the number one most problematic factor for doing business in South Africa. The country’s anomalous economic competitiveness ratings in the WEF report illustrate the difficult human resource development challenges – including education – which South Africa faces. At odds with good marks in financial market sophistication (24th), intellectual property protection (23rd), and market size (23rd), a major concern was the health of the workforce, ranked 129th out of 134 countries, due to high rates of communicable diseases and poor health indicators generally.

Also, while rating well on research and development spending accompanied by strong collaboration between universities and the business sector in innovation (both ranked 28th), the report cautioned that the country’s innovative potential could be at risk with a university enrollment rate of only 15 percent, or 93rd overall.

Anticipation of the challenges that a democratic South Africa would face—managing the most developed economy in Africa while redressing decades of inequality—has shaped American support of a democratic South Africa, even when the signs of change were only hopeful glimmerings.

USAID/S.A. worked in partnership with the National Department of Education from the 1994 elections to 2009 to jointly implement a series of projects in primary, further, higher and adult education. Bilateral projects were used to develop policies and systems, and to enhance capacity in the areas of curriculum, governance, school-funding norms, quality assurance, and HIV and AIDS prevention and mitigation.

Equipping More Disenfranchised South Africans with Skills



Mandela Economics Scholars Program awardees meet with their icon before they depart for their studies in the United States. Scholars were required to return to South Africa and work within the Public Service. (Photo: Reverie Zurba)

The USAID scholarships component is perhaps most widely recognized for its continuing impact on South Africa in empowering its black citizens and enhancing their leadership skills. Through 1994, the education sector received the lion's share of the USAID/S.A. program budget. American colleges, universities and corporations also made laudable contributions to enable South Africans to study in the U.S., supplying an enormous amount in scholarships and tuition waivers to complement USAID funding between 1979 and 1992. By 1994, nearly 6,000 black South Africans received tertiary-level training under USAID scholarship programs; by 1993, more than 2,000 alumni were working in middle- and senior-level positions in S.A. related to policies, programs, and budgets. After the 1994 elections, instead of overseas studies it was more cost-effective to provide scholarships at South African universities, resulting in a shift from overseas bursaries except for graduate studies.

After 1994 more specialized training programs phased in, including the Mandela Economics Scholars Program (MESP) and targeted in-service short term training, such as for math and science teachers. Another program was established for parliamentarians to acquire degrees in economics. Altogether the U.S. Government has funded tertiary-level studies for over 14,000 previously disadvantaged South Africans, probably more than any single donor.

The Mandela Economics Scholars Program funded by USAID responded to the need to boost the capacity of government departments, universities, and policy research groups or think tanks, to generate information and analyses to advance South Africa's macro-economic agenda; 117 Mandela Scholars upgraded their economics credentials to the masters or PhD degree level.

In a bid to enhance faculty research skills of historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), 223 faculty members at 17 participating institutions were sponsored to pursue masters or doctoral degree studies at American and South African universities in the period leading up to and just after the rationalization of higher education that began in 2004.

Americans can be proud of the many scholarship programs which improved the skills of previously disadvantaged South Africans

Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB) was formed to provide financial aid and other support for the education, training, and development of black healthcare professionals. It was a collaborative partnership of South Africans and Americans, which became the largest single source of private funds for black students preparing for healthcare careers in South Africa. USAID provided funding up to 2004 to support 475 deserving students to become health care professionals.

Leading up to 1994, USAID/S.A. also funded education-related NGOs whose work involved a range of activities in anticipation of a new democratic dispensation. This included formulating policy options for a future democratic government, designing curricula in line with the new society and addressing apartheid ills, promoting adult literacy, supporting early childhood development, and seeking alternative education models for formal and informal education.

Most administrators of USAID scholarship funds for South Africans said in their reports that the demand always outstripped the supply. Long term study opportunities for South Africans evolved to specialized programs in areas not available in South Africa. Americans can be proud of the many scholarship programs for South Africans to which USAID provided significant funding. They made a strategic contribution to improving the skills of previously disadvantaged South Africans to lead their nation.

Imparting and upgrading skills has continued to be an important element of all USAID funded programs up to today. A total of 37,000 South Africans have participated in short-term and long-term training programs in the United States and South Africa. Approximately two thousand more South Africans have pursued masters and doctoral degree programs, research and career development programs in America through the J. William Fulbright Program, the Hubert H. Humphrey Program, and the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Program.

Improving Education Delivery at the School Level

A 2008 review of South African education since 1994 by a team of experts from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) determined that "...there was an underestimation of the time, resources and qualitative teaching force required to make operational the policy aspirations in the schoolrooms throughout the country. Experience has shown that sustained, multifaceted resourcing and supportive action are also required and the timescale for transformation is much longer than was initially anticipated." USAID has been a partner to the Department of Education, providing the type of resources and support called for by the OECD.

From the Bottom Up, Improving Education Quality at the School and District Level.

The District Development Support Program (DDSP) was a comprehensive whole-school improvement strategy that supplied trainers, materials, and organizational skills to promote effective teaching and learning practices, and better school organization, governance, and management in four under-resourced provinces: Limpopo, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The heart of education reform in S.A. was the comprehensive curriculum change to a progressive model of education based on the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) to improve students' critical thinking skills through student-centered learning. The DDSP provided a large injection of resources to help make the necessary shifts to the new curriculum.

The major achievement of the Integrated Education Project (IEP), successor to the DDSP, was a 21 percent improvement in learner performance across all learning areas (except science) and provinces, reaching 513,000 learners in over 1,250 participating schools. IEP used lessons learned from the DDSP for a more focused approach, capitalizing and improving on successful methods in the two major implementation tracks:

- **Teacher training** focused on improving teacher content knowledge, the ability to develop and apply continuous assessment, and teaching according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) of 2002 that had streamlined and strengthened Curriculum 2005 (introduced in 1998), using regular school-based support.
- **School management and governance** centered on regular training and on-site support of school principals and school management team (SMT) members by project personnel and district officials.

IEP demonstrated how the poor content skills of many teachers could be improved with substantial inputs of training and follow-up support. The sustainability of the impressive gains and important lessons learned through IEP depend to a large extent on the ability of the DOE and participating provinces, districts, and schools, to both continue to support the systems and teachers' newly acquired skills and behaviors.

Dinaledi & the National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (NSMSTE). The NSMSTE is the flagship strategy of the DOE to increase the number of mathematics, science, and technology graduates in response to the socioeconomic needs of South Africa and to build human resources. Responding to a DOE request,

IEP demonstrated how the poor content skills of many teachers could be improved

USAID participated in a consortium of public and private sector partners that provided the training, equipment, baseline research, and other resources to help the DOE to launch Dinaledi in 2001. Dinaledi had three major thrusts:

- Raise participation and performance of historically disadvantaged learners, especially girls, in Senior Certificate Mathematics and Physical Science;
- Provide high-quality mathematics, science, and technology education for all learners taking the first General Education and Training (GET) Certificate and Further Education and Training (FET) Certificate examinations; and
- Increase and enhance human resource capacity to deliver quality mathematics, science, and technology education (recruitment, retention, pre- and in-service training).

Now in 2009, Dinaledi has succeeded in its objective of increasing the pool of learners taking mathematics and physical science and improving performance in these subjects; in turn, meeting goals for the percentages of national targets for passing to be achieved by Dinaledi schools. The number of Dinaledi schools grew from the initial 102 in 2002 to 500 in 2008. A growing critical mass of schools is being upgraded in equipment, teaching skills, and other supports. At the same time, a body of knowledge is deepening about how to improve underperforming schools and to use a differentiated approach to school improvement.

Dinaledi is a good example of a South African education solution where donors and the private sector assisted the DOE

South Africa Sustains What Works. Dinaledi is a good example of a South African education solution where donors and the private sector were invited to lend assistance to accelerate progress, from which point the DOE has injected its own resources, continuing to build student and teacher capacity in mathematics, science and technology education.

“Many aspects of the DDSP and IEP migrated to the Foundations of Learning Campaign of the DOE,” was the observation of a senior DOE manager commenting on the lessons learned from DDSP and IEP. Many elements of the two pilots reverberate in major quality improvement measures taken by the DOE in 2008-09 including focusing on time spent on literacy/language and numeracy/mathematics, minimal contact teaching time requirements, and assessment feedback.

DOE senior personnel said that a major value of USAID, beyond funding, has been USAID’s willingness to manage pilot projects, modeling the importance of reliable before-and-after data and analysis, and helping to distill lessons learned that the DOE could then utilize as it sees fit. It also provided “intellectual” inputs, as one DOE official put it, “bringing energy to government.”

Dinaledi, the National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, and other DOE campaigns are evidence of how South Africans are devising thoughtful ways to channel resources and support to work within the prevailing conditions and how partners like USAID can work with them. A major advantage of education partnerships

with the DOE is the ability of the SAG to institutionalize successful interventions through policies, procedures and budgets.

School Infrastructure Backlogs Affect Quality and Equity. School backlogs are worse in rural communities, usually already subject to lack of infrastructure generally. Despite SAG progress in electrifying schools, backlogs persist for school buildings, sanitation and water facilities, and communications systems. The DOE asked for USAID assistance after severe flooding destroyed schools in rural areas. USAID contributed to school rehabilitation from 2000-2002, including installing bore-holes and communications systems for schools in disadvantaged areas to help reduce the large infrastructure backlog and to improve capacity to deliver quality education programs.

HIV and AIDS: Multi-Faceted Strategies for Schools. HIV and AIDS information and prevention is a cross-cutting theme in all USAID education activities, included in curriculum design, teacher training, materials production, and mentoring for scholarship recipients. USAID supported publication of the report of the Conference on HIV and AIDS and the Education Sector, which put forth a plan of action emanating from a coalition of institutions, community-based organizations (CBOs) and the DOE.

The Mobile Task Team on the Impact of HIV and AIDS on Education (MTT) was a unique technical support network that operated Africa-wide, managed from the University of Natal in South Africa. MTT helped to empower African ministries of education and their development partners to expand sector-wide HIV and AIDS policy and prioritized implementation plans to systemically manage and mitigate impact. USAID supported its work from 2002 to 2005 in 20 African countries, including South Africa, where support is ongoing.

Education Technology Innovations

Redressing the Early Childhood Education Gap. Takalani Sesame Street, the award-winning television and radio program that premiered in 2000 is one of the most successful education innovations in South Africa. USAID supported development of a South African version of an American educational TV success, with an objective of reaching out to vulnerable children. In 2002, a five-year-old Muppet named Kami became South Africa's most popular AIDS orphan when the program joined the global fight against HIV and AIDS by developing the first HIV and AIDS curriculum for preschool children, also funded by USAID. Children from three to six years old improved their life skills grasp, such as positive self-esteem and self-image. Research found that older children and caregivers also increased their knowledge about HIV and AIDS. A public-private partnership sustains funding for the program beyond USAID involvement, to this day.

Technology Supplements Teacher Skills, Helps Students Learn. USAID also provided the development funds for Mindset

Kami is the world's first HIV-positive Sesame Street Muppet. She is a perky, fun-loving five-year-old with lots of information to share with her inquisitive friends. Kami – from a Tswana tribal word for “acceptance” – is happy although an orphan due to AIDS and promotes talking about issues like social ostracism and grief. (Photo: Takalani Sesame Street)



Cabanga, a dedicated Primary Education and Teacher Training Channel targeting primary schools (Grades R to 7). In 2002, Mindset Cabanga started delivering high-quality content in numeracy, literacy, early mathematics, science, and technology and was installed in 50 schools in South Africa. The content enriches and reinforces the existing South African national primary school curriculum, supplementing class instruction and serving as a support to learners and teachers.

Building Education Policy and Systems to Advance Equity and Quality

With the advent of the new democratic government in 1994, USAID provided short-term technical assistance to national and provincial governments through the Bilateral Agreement Program. Policy assistance continued through to 2009, using successive funding vehicles. Initially, this assistance was valuable for the interim period as provinces geared up for the first time, to access short-term skills in legal drafting, launching consultative workshops, reviewing systems, and a range of related tasks. Subsequently, USAID assistance funded local and international consultants on a task-order basis as requested by provincial and national governments. USAID supported the DOE's Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training: Umalusi is the statutory body that assures quality in the general and further education and training levels. Supporting Umalusi was key to building the capacity of the structures required to implement the National Qualifications Framework and to facilitate the implementation of the new curricula at all education levels.

Those currently not working in South Africa are predominantly young, black, poorly educated women

USAID also supported technical assistance to the national and provincial departments through the District Development Support and Integrated Education Projects. Services included research and analysis of policies for internal budget investment scrutinies, funding formulas, the FET bursary structure, teacher compensation, no-fee schools, and interpretation of drop-out rates. Services also included assisting with designing education systems, installation, and training, such as the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) in 2008.

South Africa's Future – Youth Development and Skills for Jobs

When apartheid ended and the Government of Nation Unity (GNU) came to power in 1994, they were keenly aware of the youthfulness of the population: about 40 percent was 19 years of age or younger. There is a direct correlation between the undereducation of youth and national social cohesion and economic performance. An analysis by a working group of Harvard University and South African economists advising the SAG put this relationship in perspective: "Those currently not working in South Africa are predominantly young, black, women, and are poorly educated. While over 85 percent of those with a university degree are working, fewer than 35 percent of those without a matriculation certificate [high school diploma] have jobs... While 60 percent of those between the ages of 35 and 50 are working, fewer than 25 percent of those between 20 and 25 are. While the unemployment rate of whites is less than 6 percent, it is above 30 percent for Africans."

A major challenge to tackling the youth education and employment problem has been the overlapping policies and implementation modalities related to multiple sectors, including youth, education (basic, adult, vocational and tertiary levels), labor, as well as skills training. Over the period from 1997 to 2009, USAID has made available research, technical assistance, and project implementation services as the SAG has made progress in tackling the daunting challenges of youth and employment, further exacerbated by the current economic climate. These partnerships have involved policy support and projects in the youth sector, FET, and adult basic education and training (ABET), and have been with the Departments of Education and Labor (DOL).

USAID support to the youth sector began in 1997, assisting with logistics for the vetting and ratification of the National Youth Policy at the National Youth Summit. USAID also supported various aspects of the National Youth Service Policy (draft policy funded by USAID), facilitated the development of relevant documents for the Interdepartmental Committee on Youth, the Young Positive Living Ambassadors activity, and the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Clearinghouse (a project funded by USAID and later taken over by the Umsobomvu Youth Fund). These activities assisted the National Youth Commission to achieve the objectives of the provincial youth commissions.

The DOE requested USAID assistance with the support to underperforming high schools and colleges located in the Presidential Urban Renewal areas of the Free State and the Northern Cape. This support through the Presidential Urban Renewal Project (PURP) emerged as a forerunner and important learning phase as FET policy and implementation was refined. Support was launched in 1999 as part of the poverty alleviation program of the SAG and represented the implementation of the new FET policies of the time, focusing resources on selected urban communities in each of the nine provinces. Through its Support for Tertiary Education Project (STEP), USAID



The Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was ranked amongst the top 16 out of 41 teams in the world when they won the S.A. competition for imparting business acumen to communities and went on to the SIFE World Cup 2008 in Singapore. USAID was a SIFE contributor. (Photo: SIFE)

implemented demonstration projects in Thabong in the Free State Province and Galeshewe in the Northern Cape Province, to implement models for FET teaching and learning mandates.

By the time the DOE and USAID cooperated to refine the Dinaledi school model and operational framework leading to the pilot 102 Dinaledi Schools Project, many techniques from PURP were transferable to Dinaledi, and Dinaledi inputs were also made available to PURP schools. These inputs included voluntary supplemental classes, general teacher training and follow-up support in OBE and continuous assessment as well as training related to the new curriculum statements in the key subjects of mathematics, biology, physical science, English, and accounting.

In demonstrating the effects of focusing resources on the comprehensive development of FET institutions with full involvement of national, provincial, and district education offices, apart from the direct benefits to the FET institutions and students involved, the Free State and Northern Cape PURP projects added to the growing body of knowledge and experience about how to improve the FET model.

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Youth Leaders Confront HIV and AIDS. USAID supported concerns of the National Youth Commission at its first joint national and provincial strategic planning processes that identified HIV and AIDS as a second critical area (after unemployment) for youth services to address by funding a Study Tour to Uganda for Young Positive Living Ambassadors. There South African youth leaders observed and discussed program interventions with their Ugandan peers who had experienced successful results.

Another USAID-supported HIV and AIDS intervention was the *Rutanang Series: Standards of Practice, Implementation Guides and a Self-Improvement Process for Peer Education Programs in South Africa*, published in 2002. This work was one of several activities emanating from the U.S.-S.A Binational Commission (BNC), also called the Vice-Presidential BNC because it was headed by Vice Presidents Al Gore and Thabo Mbeki. Rutanang was a collaborative project funded by USAID and led by the U.S. Center for Disease Control in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health; South African Departments of Health, Education, Social Development; the South African Vice Chancellors Associations; and local NGOs. All parties contributed to the development of coordinated resources to facilitate effective peer education programs in S.A.

Workforce Development Programs. The SAG undertook a period of research, implementation and assessment of skills development projects. The S.A. DOL assigned tasks to USAID through another assistance vehicle, the Workforce Development Project. This was specifically aimed at providing the DOL relevant technical assistance services and support to organize the work of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) . An example was a Placement Verification Study of the unemployed upon completion of skills development programs sponsored under the Social Development Funding Window of the Department of Labor's National Skills Fund. USAID funded Development Associates Inc. and subcontractor Khulisa Management Services to manage a collaborative effort with the DOL, the Employment and Skills Development Services Branch, and Provincial Offices and Labor Centers of

the Labor Market Information Systems and Planning Unit, training providers and the unemployed who were the beneficiaries.

The South Africa Opportunities Industrialization Center (SAOIC) focusing on jobs and vocational skills was established in 1996 in Pietermaritzburg, in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province, established by the U.S. Opportunities Industrialization Centers International, Inc. (OICI). The KZN center offered unemployed adults training in auto mechanics and other vocational/technical skills. The center supported skills training for the unemployed through courses and modules accredited by the old Training Boards registered with the Department of Labor. The SAOIC board of directors included an advisory group composed of representatives from the industrial sector, service organizations, and other training institutions.

USAID support of the Amy Biehl Foundation also had a workforce development objective. The foundation was established in 1997, honoring the life of a young American student who had come to Cape Town to work with disadvantaged youth to improve their life prospects and communities. Amy Biehl's life was tragically cut short in August 1993 in an act of political mob violence in the Gugulethu Township outside of Cape Town. When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, the four young men who were convicted and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment for her murder applied for and received amnesty. Amy's parents supported their application, witnessing Amy's love of South Africa and her belief in the truth and reconciliation process. Two of the youths later worked in the foundation. USAID provided support to the foundation's youth skills development and HIV and AIDS Peer Education projects.

Supporting the New FET College Thrust. As part of this transformation of technical and vocational education, 50 FET colleges have been created through rationalizing the smaller and weaker among the 152 which existed formerly to produce stronger multi-campus institutions capable of offering high level skills training. The SAG has committed a recapitalization grant of ZAR1.9 billion (about \$238 million) for upgrading workshops and classrooms and staff training and has set aside ZAR600 million (about \$75 million) over three years for scholarships for disadvantaged students (<http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/education.htm>).

In line with the new FET thrust, in April 2009, USAID and the DOE announced a new cooperative effort aimed at strengthening curriculum and expanding workforce development programs at a dozen FET colleges in South Africa. This is a three-year, \$6.7 million program funded by USAID/S.A.. The project will help South Africa to tap into lessons learned from the experience of American community colleges in expanding learning opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The U.S. managers, the American College on Education (ACE), and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) represent 1,600 colleges and 1,200 colleges, respectively, including related organizations. The newly formed National Youth Development Agency and Right to Care (HIV and AIDS service experts), are the implementing partners in South Africa. The partnership will offer a series of small grants to participating FET colleges to assess and strengthen their institutional operations and services.

In April 2009, USAID and the DOE announced a new cooperative effort to tap into lessons from the experience of American community colleges in expanding learning opportunities for disadvantaged youth

At a presentation on vocational education in South Africa, prominent academic Dr. Linda Chisholm of the Human Sciences Research Council cited researchers observing “What makes [the South African skills development case] unusual is that there was genuine national leadership of the process throughout. In the broadest terms, the relationship with donors was positive. South Africans led the process; South Africans were facilitated to learn from other experiences rather than being presented a particular version by agencies or consultants...” Notwithstanding major progress in the vocational education sector, Dr. Chisholm points to numerous challenges ahead.

Models to Increase Functional Adult Literacy

The Ikhwelo Project (1999-2003) was a pioneering endeavor where the DOE joined forces with communities with the highest adult illiteracy rates in Limpopo and Eastern Cape province, other government departments, South African NGO Project Literacy, and an international donor, USAID, to implement a large-scale adult basic education and training (ABET) program. Ikhwelo was a demonstration of one of the most critical challenges in adult literacy to combat poverty alleviation in rural areas: how adults can attain functional literacy and numeracy skills at the same time as income-generating and small, medium, and micro-enterprise (SMME) skills.

Ikhwelo was a demonstration of how adults can attain functional literacy and numeracy skills at the same time as income-generating skills

Ikhwelo was a comprehensive undertaking that trained more than 300 ABET practitioners, enrolled 3,000 learners in agriculture and SMME programs, and equipped 52 Provincial Adult Learning Centers.

Currently, the SAG is implementing the Ka Ri Gude (“let us learn”) mass literacy campaign, officially launched in February 2008. South Africa is spending ZAR6.1 billion about (\$763 million) over five years to enable 4.7 million South Africans to achieve literacy by 2010, to improve on the 2006 literacy rate of 74 percent. South African capacity in the field of adult literacy is high. There are strong NGOs and the number is reported to be growing dramatically with an increasing number of emerging organizations being accredited as service providers.

Beyond a Level Playing Field: Transforming Higher Education

U.S. development strategy recognized the considerable capacity of South Africa to meet its own higher education development needs. The U.S. strategy also noted the requirement for further capacity in higher education among the disadvantaged majority which had been largely excluded historically from the higher levels of government, business, and the professions. To date, USAID has been the largest international donor to tertiary education in South Africa, on the basis that the quality and equitability of the tertiary education system would be key to South Africa’s development.

Establishing Policies to Create an Equitable Higher Education System. Between 1994 and 1998, USAID supported higher education policy through a grant to the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), appointed by President Nelson Mandela to review the provision of higher education and project a plan in line with the

transformation of South Africa and the country's Constitution. Through a succession of consultations influencing SAG policy enactment, NPHE provided the implementation framework for achieving the vision of a single national coordinated higher-education system that would be affordable, sustainable, and responsive, contributing to the human resource and research needs of South Africa. Eventually, the NPHE mandated the reduction of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 (eventually 24). Through the Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP), USAID assisted the DOE by supporting stakeholder empowerment programs, investigative studies, and development of three-year rolling plans for the Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs).

To this end, TELP arranged five summits for the HDIs and related constituencies to enable the parties to explore issues and contribute to policies and implementation plans related to: Cooperation in Higher Education; Mergers and Rationalization; Three-Year Rolling Plans; Teacher Education; and Policy Development for the New Academic Policy (later the Higher Education Qualifications Framework).

A major strategy of the rationalization of higher education was to elevate the preparation of teachers to the university level from the disparate teacher training institutions managed by the former provinces and racially defined homelands. To assist this important area of policy and implementation TELP supported workshops investigating: Public Distance Teacher Education; the National Plan for Teacher Education; Colleges of Education; the South African College for Teacher Education; and the South African College of Open Learning.

A contentious element of equity was, and continues to be, funding: how to allocate it and the relationship of post-secondary teaching institutions in the various sectors. TELP made possible a series of research projects to sort through the policy issues and propose recommendations, including: the New Funding Formula; the National Student Financial Aid Scheme; Management Information Systems; Incorporation of Nursing Colleges and Agricultural Colleges; Private and Public Higher Education; A Regulatory

The Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP), USAID assisted the DOE with stakeholder empowerment programs, investigative studies, and three-year rolling plans for the HDIs

Higher Education Transformation Statistics		
	1991/94	2006/7
Public Higher Education Institutions	36	24
Universities/Comprehensives	21	17
Universities of Technology (ex "Technikons")	15	5
National Institutes		2
	Enrollment Percentage	
Black African students	40	61
White students	47	25
Indian students	7	7
Colored students	5	7
Female students	48	55

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2008.

Framework for Private Higher Education; and Approaches to Cost Modeling for the Higher Education Sector.

During that period of profound shifts in higher education, the managers of TELP, who were predominantly South Africans, used approaches “that allowed people time to understand and incorporate change into their thinking and their actions.”

Strengthening Historically Disadvantaged Universities. Recognizing the ongoing negative ramifications of structural inequality on 17 HDIs, apart from the crucial arena of policy, USAID focused development planning before the 1994 elections, and post-election resources in higher education on these entities. Higher education is the purview of national government, whereas all other education levels are governed by concurrent national and provincial competencies. After 1994 the new SAG acknowledged that HDIs had to contribute more effectively to the nation’s economic and social growth; they had to produce graduates with the relevant skills and knowledge to both maintain the economy with the most advanced financial, technological, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors in Africa, as well as assist in the development of an increasingly technology-driven economy.

HDIs had to produce graduates with the relevant skills and knowledge to maintain the economy

Over an eight-year period from 1998 to 2006, USAID’s Tertiary Education Linkages Project approved the implementation of a series of activities in consultation with the DOE and an advisory panel composed mainly of vice chancellors of the targeted 17 HDIs. Support for HDIs collectively helped to strengthen financial, management and research capabilities at the 17 HDIs that were marginalized by the apartheid education system of separate university facilities and unequal resources for racial groups.

The HDIs used TELP resources for curriculum and program development to enhance their competitiveness and relevancy. These activities aided HDIs to adapt to the outcomes-based learning program requirements of the new National Qualifications Framework, requiring: changes in teaching and learning practices; preparation of outcomes-based learning materials to support students; development of outcomes-based assessment practices; and relevant quality promotion and assurance processes for the ongoing review and evaluation of the learning programs. With TELP resources, HDIs developed Quality Assurance systems in accordance with the Council on Higher Education’s (CHE) framework and the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

Student academic development is another area where TELP funds assisted. All of the 17 HDIs received support to improve and offer academic development programs to all first-year students. TELP supported compensatory bridging programs mandated for at least 75 percent of those students who required help in the key learning areas of mathematics, English, science, research and study skills. Most of the programs became permanent features in the institutions.

HDIs also developed financial management information systems (MIS) to effectively manage their institution’s finances. The financial MISs were developed and implemented to help generate and implement three-year rolling plan projections. This process strengthened leadership capacity to effectively manage the institutions at a crucial time when financing was in flux due to national policy changes. In the case of the University

of Zululand, TELP funding made possible a complete assessment, reorganization, and training program for the finance division, resulting in major improvements according to Rector Dr. Rachel Gumbi. Still in practice to this day is a performance management system (PMS) initiated with TELP support. Development of processes and tools for the system, including the Balanced Scorecard and the Integrated PMS Handbook, were funded by TELP.

South African universities accessed budgets through TELP to fund linkages; they implemented 18 linkage partnerships with U.S. universities. Examples include:

- Durban University of Technology (DUT) and Savannah State University to add Membrane Technology studies to the DUT Department of Chemical Engineering, including staff development and a new curriculum.
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the University of Michigan to increase CPUT's capacity in Science and Engineering, specifically smart materials and cleaner production.
- University of Venda (UNIVEN) and Georgia State University partnered together to expand UNIVEN's School of Business, Economics and Administrative Sciences, by developing Business Information Systems (BIS) curricula, improving infrastructure, technology, and skills development for faculty.
- In 2003, there were only 19 black speech and audiology therapists who spoke the mother tongues of the majority of South Africans, out of about 1,200 registered therapists in the country. A collaboration sponsored by TELP brought together the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA), now merged with the University of Limpopo, with the Communication Disorders Department at the University of Massachusetts. A series of faculty exchanges resulted in a curriculum in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology that was accredited by the professional board of Speech-Language practitioners in South Africa. From the first 19 students in 2001, the enrollment has grown steadily to 66 in 2009 and is expected to double in the upcoming years.

TELP's last phase included assisting with the institutional merger activities that resulted from the complete restructuring of higher education in South Africa. Following the 2001 release of the National Plan for Higher Education and subsequently, the June 2002 *Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education*, where most of the HDIs were merged and/or incorporated into historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) or other HDIs. TELP allowed HDIs to be better prepared as they entered those historic mergers.

USAID investments into curriculum development, financial systems, and in human resources left behind sustainable gains at historically disadvantaged universities. Though small compared to the overall budgets of the HDIs, TELP resources focused on upgrading the quality of teaching and learning, and supportive systems, while the existing government budget was more focused on core functions. Today, the constant progress

TELP's last phase included assisting with the restructuring of higher education in South Africa

of Previously Advantaged Institutions, and the flow of staff and students from HDIs to them, present ongoing challenges for the HDIs.

Achieving Gender Balance in Higher Education. Gender equity was a TELP cross-cutting component. HDIs were facilitated to incorporate gender equity into all TELP activities. In a sample of eight HDIs, a study funded by TELP looking at trends between 2003-6, showed that there had been little change even though most had gender equity plans in place: representation of women barely increased from 43 percent to 46 percent, but women generally occupied fewer strategic and management positions or high-level academic positions. The persistently low numbers of women in executive positions in higher education, even as they have achieved parity in some cases in lower levels, led TELP to form Women in Higher Education Executive Leadership (WHEEL) in 2006, together with Higher Education South Africa (HESA). In the first WHEEL intake in 2006, 20 women in higher education competed to engage in a year-long skills development program. HESA (formed in 2005) represents a unified body of leadership that grew out of the restructuring of the higher education sector; it was the successor to two former bodies, the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP), making it an ideal place to position WHEEL.

HDIs were facilitated to incorporate gender equity into all TELP activities

Female enrollments in all higher education institutions have increased considerably. However, female students remain underrepresented in the fields of science, engineering and technology. Women are being appointed to senior academic positions in public higher education institutions and sometimes reaching parity in permanent staffing plans. Nevertheless, white males still dominate senior positions overall in public HEIs according to the 2008 review by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

S.A. Universities Battle HIV and AIDS, Serve Communities, Build Skills. The imperative for higher education institutions to serve their communities is particularly strong in South Africa. Supporting the efforts of South African universities to counter the high HIV and AIDS rates in the country is cost effective and sustainable as USAID's strategic investments leverage existing capabilities.

USAID under the President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is continuing to assist local universities to fight the AIDS pandemic in their institutions and their adjacent local communities. USAID under PEPFAR supports local universities working in collaboration with international and local organizations to improve the health status of grassroots communities as part of their students' honors (a distinction added to a bachelor's degree) projects and supports Voluntary Counseling and Testing and Prevention programs on campuses. Most of the activities are spearheaded by university faculties, campus health clinics and organizations such as Johns Hopkins University, Dance4Life and DramAidE. PEPFAR funded activities cover almost all university campuses nationwide.

Other targeted programs with local universities are specifically aimed at supporting the basic education system through linkages with feeder schools and local communities on HIV prevention programs.

S.A. Universities Target Equity and Excellence. As in basic education, in higher education there is a continuing challenge to South Africa to balance the need for equity with the need for quality if the country is to become a strong, united, democratic, and prosperous nation in the 21st Century. South African universities are forging ahead to preserve areas of strategic advantage and position research outputs on par with the best in the world. An example: since 2004, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) have established seven university centers of excellence to spearhead advancement in disciplines that include biomedical tuberculosis, biotechnology catalysis in the chemical and manufacturing sectors, and epidemiological modeling and analysis. These centers monitor participation of black and female students, reporting about 50 percent participation in both categories in 2008.

Implications of the reorganization of higher education are still unfolding. Although South African universities have large infrastructural and human capacity, they are challenged in meeting the skills demands on the nation while the country has to simultaneously make financial trade-offs that limit investments in higher education.

Effective Partnership – Why South Africa?

USAID has cooperated side by side with every level of education in South Africa: early childhood development; primary and secondary schooling; FET, adult literacy; and higher education. USAID has worked with South African academics, NGOs, educational statutory bodies, community leaders, teachers and principals, student groups, unions, private providers and public educators, and officials at the school, district, provincial, and national levels.

USAID balanced its resources – though small compared to total South African spending, they have sometimes been significant when applied to specific targets – between strategic technical assistance and key investment areas. The USAID method of having a number of funding vehicles in place allowed project responsiveness in an environment that often changed quickly due to the years of intense policy formulation and implementation.

When the United States Government began its support of South Africa's black majority in 1986, the possible extent of the impact of HIV and AIDS was unknown. Later it was to become a devastating drain on resources and human dignity, producing huge numbers of orphans and vulnerable children, reducing the already inadequate teaching corps, further compromising effective teaching and learning. Consistent efforts by many partners are beginning to show progress, with reduced infection rates. USAID has been a partner with the SAG in weaving HIV and AIDS interventions into every level of education, from preschool, to school-based life skills programs that have been an important part of the battle, to university outreach and research efforts.

South African institutional strength has been a major success factor of USAID programs. Attaining the USAID objective of “increasing the cadre of qualified black professionals and technicians for the post-apartheid society; where blacks will play a central role in managing the multifaceted economy of the country” was possible because of the rich

The USAID method of having a number of funding vehicles in place allowed projects to respond to the changing environment

array of South African NGOs, educational bodies, and private sector firms that worked with USAID and their counterparts in the U.S. Even with continuing challenges to make quality education accessible to the substantial poor segment of the population, South Africa is demonstrating that it is a knowledge resource for other African countries and the world.

The *2006 USAID Policy Framework for Bilateral Foreign Aid* of the USG specifies that ideally, other countries should be at the center of their own development, with American bilateral foreign aid in a supporting role. It also states the intention of supporting strategic states to help achieve major U.S. foreign policy goals of especially high priority in specific countries as key allies from a strategic standpoint. South Africa's conduct of its education sector in relationship with America meets both criteria for a constructive international partnership.

In 1997, when asked why the Clinton Administration placed so much importance on South Africa and established the U.S.-S.A. Binational Commission, Vice President Gore replied:

Even with continuing challenges to make quality education accessible to the poor South Africa is a knowledge resource for other African countries and the world

First, we are on the same journey, trying to create a nonracial democracy with justice and economic opportunity for everyone regardless of gender, religion, or ethnic origin. If South Africa succeeds, it will have a global impact [by demonstrating a model of community that works for all its citizens], second, if South Africa succeeds economically, it will not only create a model for development, but it will be a beacon of hope for the whole continent. A strong South African economy could become the engine of growth which powers other countries, especially in Southern Africa. South Africa is small in economic stature, generating less than one percent of the global economic output, but South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy has imbued the country and its leaders with international and moral authority that go far beyond the size of the economy or population. We are pleased, therefore, to have South Africa as a partner that shares many of our values and interests.

Vice President Gore's words are just as true today.

Summary of USAID expenditures

U.S. Bilateral Agreements with S.A. Department of Education	Obligation (\$)
1. Education Support and Training (ESAT) (1995)	8,000,000
2. Support to Tertiary Education Project (STEP) (1995)	11,974,906
3. S.A. Basic Education Reconstruction (SABER) (1995)	47,209,800
4. Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP) (1995)	42,444,279
5. Revised Education Bilateral (2003)	43,622,094
Total Education Bilateral Obligations	153,251,079
Unilateral Obligations to Education Sector 1986–date	244,287,039
Workforce/Skills Development with S.A. Department of Labor (2000)	2,550,000
Total U.S. Commitments to S.A. Education and Skills Training	400,088,118

This review is a compilation of the many education projects that affected the lives of thousands, ranging from formulating policies to training educators

Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to this review of activities of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to improve education equity in South Africa. Assisting disenfranchised South Africans to get an education is an American endeavor that goes back beyond the historic watershed election of Nelson Mandela in 1994, to the late seventies. This review is a compilation of the many education projects that affected the lives of thousands, ranging from formulating crucial policies to redress education inequities, to training educators from the pre-school to the post-graduate levels. USAID funded scholarship programs in America and at home helped to ensure that black South Africans had the multitude of skills critical for the success of their new democracy.

The current Mission Director, Dr. Carlene Dei, must be commended for supporting this undertaking. The review would not have been possible without the institutional memory and voluminous records maintained by Ms. Mathata Madibane, long-time USAID education team member and Co-Team Leader, who guided this report. While many separate reports exist, these two people had the vision to put the entire remarkable history of the education partnership together in one document. Many other USAID officials shared insights on how the relationship between South Africa and the U.S. evolved over the years.

Thoughtful analysis was also readily available from South African education officials. Though they were often overworked, they made time, noting the value of South Africa's education partnerships with the U.S. They did not gloss over difficulties, were forthright about the challenges facing South African education, what they would like to do better, and how to improve future cooperation with USAID.

Representatives of South African and American nongovernmental organizations and firms were very willing to provide perspective on why and how projects were implemented, the lessons they learned, and how the lessons shaped their ongoing work. For many, their involvement shaped their lives.

While there were many views about which USAID strategies and projects had the most impact, there was one point that interviewees were unanimous about: educational opportunities change lives. For the primary school girls and boys, often single or double orphans and their elderly caretakers it was being able to be “normal” because they had a school uniform and supplies. For teachers, it was new confidence from skills that gave them better mastery of their subjects—some compared their challenges with some teachers in America because of going to a leadership development program there. For Mandela Economics Scholars alumni, they spoke about feeling empowered to better tackle the problems they had to solve in agriculture, macroeconomic policy, municipal government, and other arenas of a still transforming society.

The long and productive engagement between Americans and South Africans to help transform education in South Africa was possible because of all of these people. They represented a fraction of the thousands who were involved in one way or another. Any errors and omissions are those of the author alone.

Johannesburg, September 2009



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