



Partnerships at work: 362 computers commissioned at Unilag



Unilag Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tolu Odugbemi and US Consul General Ms Donna Blair commissioning 362 computers for the Faculty of Business Administration and Department of Computer Science

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Partnership at work: 362 computers commissioned at Unilag

History was made at the University of Lagos (Unilag) on March 13, when USAID in partnership with four private companies and implementing partner Kansas State University, provided the university with 362 computers and software for its Computer and Business Administration schools.

USAID/Nigeria, British American Tobacco (BAT), Microsoft Nigeria, Ocean Energy Nigeria Limited, Zinox Technologies, and the University of Lagos are partnering to increase access to technology and strengthen the curricula within the Faculty of Business Administration and Department of Computer Science at Unilag. Microsoft and Zinox Technologies offered significant discounts on their computers and software; Ocean Energy Nigeria Limited and her partners along with Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)/ National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) paid for the purchase of the 362 computers as well as the software loaded onto the computers at a cost of N26,899,425 (\$210,000) for the 362 computers and N7,126,875 (\$58,900) for the software. The other partners offered cash to fund particular parts of the project.



Consul General Blair, Vice-Chancellor Odugbemi, USAID team and Unilag staff at the Faculty of Business Administration computer laboratory

Tagged the "University Strengthening for Improved Employability Project", the project provides computer laboratories for the departments of Computer Sciences and Business Administration.



Consul General Blair with Computer Science undergraduates at their laboratory

Specifically, the initiative will ensure that the students have access to computers and relevant software, get hands-on technical experience through internships and externships.

The partnership is valued at approximately \$1,300,000.

USAID and BAT are funding the curricula strengthening that incorporate technology, case studies, and corporate social responsibility into the curricula, while also strengthening ties between Unilag curricula development groups and the private sector. USAID's support is through technical assistance from Kansas State University.

United States Ambassador Robin Renee Sanders, who was represented by US Consul General, Ms Donna Blair, observed that the partnership will provide graduates with the tools they need to contribute to a better Nigeria. She said the partnership would provide internships to talented students and increase employment, incomes and productivity of the graduates through strengthened technology skills. "Today, we stand side by side as partners, to launch the first phase of our assistance to the University of Lagos: the unveiling of 362 Zinox computers with installed Microsoft Business and Computer Science software to prepare today's students for gainful employment tomorrow. The computers have been delivered and the software installed, our support will continue as we work with the University of Lagos," Sanders said through the Consul General, Ms. Donna Blair.

USAID sponsors health care conference

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in February, hosted a one-day conference in Abuja on improving healthcare through private sector partnerships. With the theme “Empowering Private Providers for Better Health in Nigeria”, the forum is one of the activities of the Private Sector Partnerships-PSP project, executed by Abt Associates, a USAID implementing partner.

USAID/Nigeria Mission Director, Ms Sharon L. Cromer, in a keynote address, expressed USAID’s willingness to partner with the Nigerian private sector to lead in the innovation of cost-effective health care to large numbers of the Nigerians through the use of sustainable family wellness programs that can be achieved by providing malaria treatment, routine immunization as well as family planning services.

At the conference, Abt Associates released the findings from a private health provider survey conducted in 2007. The survey documents private provider profiles, the health needs of their clients and the training needs of providers.

Prior to the conference, two training programs to improve preventive care practices and to strengthen provider business practices had been held in partnership with health maintenance organizations (HMOs) accredited by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

Representatives from the Federal Ministry of Health, National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Medical and Dental Council, Society for Family Health (SFH) - a social marketing NGO; Total Health Trust, a health maintenance organization (HMO) and banks were present to dialogue on issues related to private sector health care. Other issues discussed were implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), the challenge of ensuring product and service quality, licensing and monitoring of providers and facilities, creating opportunities for continuing medical

education and providing access to finance for private health providers.

Mission Director to Islamiyyah pupils: Education will make you great



Mission Director Sharon Cromer with pupils of Shabab Muslimina Islamiyyah primary school

USAID Mission Director, Ms Sharon L. Cromer had kind words for the pupils of Shabab Muslimina Islamiyyah primary school, Nassarawa local government area in Kano city recently. Encouraging them to take advantage of USAID’s assistance to the school, she told the enthusiastic pupils that a good education will empower them be anything they choose to be in future. Ms Cromer was in Kano state to inspect some USAID funded projects and meet with development stakeholders.

The Shabab Muslimina Islamiyyah primary school was established as a community Quranic School to serve children who have little or no access to basic education in the community. It was absorbed into the state’s mainstream basic education program by the Local Government Educational Authority (LGEA) and registered as an integrated Islamiyyah school in 1991. Shaba is the third largest Islamiyyah school in the local government area. It provides both secular and western education. The current enrolment figure is 1245 with 572 boys and 673 girls.

As one of the 38 USAID supported schools in the area, the school participates fully in

the Mission's basic education program. USAID supports the school with teacher training, instructional materials, interactive radio instruction radios, pupil workbooks and teachers' guides. The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) has also been exposed to management skills to be able to initiate and execute projects for the improvement of the learning environment.

Recently USAID supported the PTA with a grant of \$1,500 for the construction of toilets for the boys and girls. This has improved the learning environment of the pupils, increased parents' satisfaction and community participation in the affairs of the school.

In appreciation of USAID's assistance to the school, the LGEA has supplied additional instructional materials and teachers to support the school's efforts.

While in Kano, the Mission Director also visited the USAID supported Nuhu Bamalli Maternity Hospital. The hospital provides antenatal care, delivery services, postnatal and post-abortion care, family planning services, routine immunization services, nutritional counseling, malaria prevention, and voluntary counseling and testing with referral for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV. The hospital serves an estimated 80,000 women and 30,000 children under the age of five.

USAID designated the hospital as one of 16 quality sites in the state and has undertaken physical renovations and provided equipment to improve service delivery.

USAID has trained four hospital staff in life saving skills, interpersonal communication, permanent and long term methods of contraception and contraceptive logistics management. They have in turn provided step-down training to their colleagues for comprehensive improvement of quality of services to its clients.

Ambassador Sanders meets Kano cowpea farmers

More than twenty Kano farmers recently took a break from their fields for an interactive session with none other than the US Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Robin Sanders on matters of mutual interest: Cowpeas.

The farmers, who consist of men and women, are beneficiaries of technical assistance from USAID implementing partner, Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites (MARKETS). USAID is promoting private sector investment in processing and marketing of commercial products containing cowpea flour and linking these businesses to on-going efforts to improve the productivity and farm-gate price of cowpea for targeted farmer groups.

The farmers, who met with Ambassador Sanders at a cowpea processor's factory, discussed issues concerning new techniques that will boost the production and preservation of cowpea crop. With its high protein content, cowpea is a staple food in Nigeria, which is also the world's largest producer. The Ambassador was shown around the factory, where she saw how cowpea was processed and bagged into several kinds of foods.

Ambassador Sanders was accompanied by USAID Mission Director, Ms Sharon L. Cromer, USAID staff and Managing Director of MARKETS, Dr Dick Cook.



Ambassador Sanders and the cowpea farmers of Kano

USAID/Nigeria holds alliance-building training

A team of USAID Washington experts in alliance-building and loan guarantees recently spent one week holding consultations and workshops with Mission staff, alliance partners from the private sector and some USAID/Nigeria implementing partners.



Latanya Mapp-Frett, USAID Director of Economic Growth addressing implementing partners at the workshop

Mission Director Ms Sharon L. Cromer, an avowed champion of partnerships between USAID and private enterprises, welcomed the team and participated in the all-staff training workshop. She set the tone for the week by reminding the staff that the Mission is deeply engaged in alliances, already with 27 global development alliances (GDAs) to its credit. She expressed her determination to assist the private sector engage in development activities. Ms Cromer emphasized the timeliness of these consultations which identify new opportunities to “advance our strategies and Agency goals”. Noting USAID administrator Henrietta Fore’s embrace of the partnership approach, the Mission Director exhorted the staff to ‘deepen and make more meaningful’ the craft of alliance-building.

USAID/Nigeria is uniquely placed to undertake strategic development partnerships because it has a dedicated team of alliance-builders who serve as a portal for both USG colleagues, and for external partners. This institutionalized core of expertise on alliance-building serves a critical function in managing relationships with private sector entities while helping

Mission staff across programmatic and operational areas build their own capacity to engage companies and foundations effectively. The Mission’s advanced work with loan guarantees and the Nigerian banking sector is illustrative on how leveraging private resources strategically can enhance the development of a range of agricultural, housing, health, education and other USAID priorities.

These GDA consultations serendipitously coincided with the arrival of the new US Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Robin Renee Sanders. She met with the GDA and Development Credit Authority team several times during her introductory round of visits to Embassy and USAID Mission staff. On each occasion she expressed her commitment to partnerships. She said she is “more of a fan than you know” about alliances between government and companies, echoing that in remarks to a workshop with Mission staff and implementing partners where she stated that she placed development at the forefront of the three “Ds” of the US Embassy’s mission of development, diplomacy and defense.

USAID supports second largest fish farm in W/Africa

Technical assistance and capacity building activity provided by USAID implementing partner, MARKETs, have been attributed as factors that have enabled Durante Fish Farm become the second largest fish farm in the west Africa sub-region. The farm produces more than 500 tons of market size catfish per annum, and is also the largest commercial catfish hatchery in the region.

Recently USAID/MARKETS provided technical assistance that enabled Durante to access a N86.5 million (\$750,000) agricultural loan from a Nigerian bank. This loan will among other things, add to the value chain by the establishment of a fish feed production line that will supplement the farm’s pellet feed mill. Other projects to be funded by the loan include diversification

into tilapia fish farming, construction of additional earth ponds with an accompanying dam.

USAID/MARKETS and Durante Farms have also collaborated in holding workshops in fish feed marketing and fish farming methods to other farmers in Nigeria.

Community buys into USAID Acada learning center



Emir Tafida of Rano with the children of the Acada Learning Center

Seventy-five orphans and vulnerable children have been enrolled into the USAID funded Acada Learning Center in Rano community in Kano state. These children are being sponsored by the local community. The Acada Centers are community based learning centers that provide continuing education services to out of school orphans and vulnerable children. Currently USAID operates 11 of these centers nationwide through its AIDS Impact Mitigation (AIM) project which is managed by implementing partner Winrock International.

It all began in December 2007, when a team comprising local AIM partner, the Ummah Support Group and a volunteer from Rano local government paid an advocacy visit to the Emir, Alhaji Tafida Abubakar Ila of Rano, who is the traditional ruler of the community. They informed him that the aim of the project is to provide basic numeracy and literacy skills for orphans and vulnerable children, made possible by support from USAID.

Emir Tafida was delighted with the news. A former social worker himself, he recognized the significance of the service that was being offered, and promised to give his full support and cooperation. He informed some members of the business community and civil servants within the community who later pledged their support for the seventy-five children.

The center provides basic literacy and numeracy skills, health education and psychosocial support. The children do not pay any school fees; however, the generous donors will pay the salaries of the Acada teachers, provide scholastic materials the students use daily in class, and provide the food supplement the Acada students receive.

Governor appoints disabled rights activist special assistant

Representatives of four political parties and advocates from the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) recently held a meeting to address the concerns of the disabled, who have traditionally been marginalized and neglected by society.



Alhaji Nasseer Argungu

While viewing the coverage of the meeting on television, the Governor of Kebbi state, Alhaji Usman Dakingari noticed one of his disabled constituents, Alhaji Nasseer Argungu, in the lobbying group. Impressed with Argungu's skills in standing up for the rights of the disabled, the governor

appointed a special assistant for disabilities and destitute matters.

Since taking the position, Argungu has successfully lobbied for the creation of the Kebbi state Social Security Welfare Fund which provides educational and medical support to disabled persons in the state.

JONAPWD, which provided Argungu the platform to successfully advocate the rights of the disabled, is the umbrella body of all disabled organizations in Nigeria. The body receives capacity-building and grants provided by Pact Nigeria, and funded by USAID.

Also with Pact Nigeria's support, JONAPWD conducted advocacy efforts to make the 2007 general elections process more disability-sensitive, by paying a visit to the Chairman of INEC in order to draw the Commission's attention to the sections of the electoral act that affects the disabled. This was the first ever interface that a national disability group has had with any elections commission in Nigeria.

JONAWPD is presently holding consultative meetings with its members to develop memoranda for consideration by the Electoral Reform Committee.

USAID Mission Director in Zamfara state, commissions projects

USAID Mission Director, Ms Sharon L. Cromer was in Zamfara state recently on a two day official visit, to commission two USAID supported health projects. She also signed a memorandum of understanding for the provision of assistance in basic education with government officials. During the visits to the health projects, she was accompanied by Zamfara state governor, Alhaji Mahmuda Aliyu Shinkafi and his wife, Hajiya Saratu Mahmuda Aliyu Shinkafi.

She was at the Faridat Yakubu Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) Hospital in Gusau to open the rehabilitation center for VVF patients, where she presented medical

equipment and sewing machines for reintegration and rehabilitation activities for the unit's clients.



Mission Director Cromer reading her address at the Faridat Yakubu VVF Hospital, Gusau

Faridat Yakubu VVF Hospital was established in 1996 by the Zamfara state government to provide special care for women with Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) in Zamfara State and its environs. Since its inception, the hospital has repaired over two thousand VVF cases.

With the advent of the USAID sponsored ACQUIRE/Fistula Care Project in 2007, the hospital is now a training center for VVF surgeons and support staff. The hospital receives VVF clients from neighboring states and the Niger Republic.

Presently, there is one VVF/Obstetric and Gynecology specialist who doubles as the medical director of the hospital. ACQUIRE has trained six doctors who work part-time in the facility. These doctors also see other patients and perform deliveries.

As a strategy of mainstreaming fistula repairs as a routine health care delivery service, the ACQUIRE/Fistula Care Project is training eight more surgeons who will be deployed to other facilities in the state. In addition to VVF repairs, the Faridat VVF Hospital also provides antenatal care services, routine immunization targeting children under-5 and pregnant women and other medical and surgical services.

With advocacy from the ACQUIRE/Fistula Care Project, the government built the

rehabilitation center as an entry point for reintegration activities. Insecticide Treated Net (ITN) manufacturer, Syngenta supported the project by donating 40 mosquito nets for the wards and ten sewing machines for use at the center.



First Lady Shinkafi, Mission Director Cromer, Governor Shinkafi and ACCESS chief of party, Dipo Olorin commissioning the EmONC facility at King Fahd Women and Children Hospital, Gusau

Mission Director Cromer also visited the King Fahd Women and Children Hospital in Gusau, where she accompanied Governor Shinkafi and his wife in the commissioning of renovated facilities.

USAID/Nigeria provides support through implementing partner ACCESS Nigeria project by renovating and equipping facilities in the hospital.

The ACCESS project, which began work in Zamfara and Kano States in 2006, is designed to increase the use of high quality emergency obstetric and newborn care (EmONC) services in northern Nigeria. USAID's goal mirrors that of the Federal Ministry of Health's (FMOH) reproductive health policy "to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in Nigeria."

The ACCESS project approach for achieving this shared goal is to implement integrated community and facility-based EmONC interventions focusing on antenatal care, emergency obstetric and newborn care, and postpartum care, including family planning, while ensuring a household-to-hospital continuum of care. ACCESS focuses on increasing both the supply of, and the

demand for quality EmONC and family planning interventions.

USAID has been working in Zamfara State in three local government areas– Gusau, Kaura Namoda and Zurmi, and is spreading to three more areas this year. During this period ACCESS has been implementing an integrated community and facility-based EmONC intervention including building the capacity of several categories of health care providers in its supported facilities in EmONC as well as the setting up of Community Mobilization Teams and Community Core Groups in communities within the LGA.

Ms Cromer rounded off the trip with the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Zamfara state commissioner of education, Alhaji Muhammed Sanda Danjari. The one year agreement establishes a collaborative relationship between USAID and Zamfara state to improve the standard and quality of education through the creation of a State Education Account (SEA), which is a tool to measure the flows and uses of education sector funds to meet current and future needs.

International Republican Institute holds dialogue with media on electoral reform

USAID implementing partner, International Republican Institute (IRI) engaged members of the Nigerian media in a dialogue on electoral reform and good governance recently. Also in attendance at the meeting were political leaders, civil society organizations and distinguished scholars. Last year, the government of Nigeria established an electoral reform committee to address lapses in the conduct of previous elections. Stakeholders, including the media are currently preparing memoranda to submit to this committee for consideration.

The media is considered critical to the success of the ongoing electoral reform work and their participation in the process is essential to advance the democratic process in Nigeria. The media is seen as key to ensuring transparency and inclusiveness,

including the participation of marginalized groups, in the debates. The dialogue provided a platform for attendees to articulate their concerns and perspectives on electoral reform and I focused on good governance and communication and the dissemination of credible information to nurture participatory democracy.



Mission Director, Sharon Cromer, Senator Ken Nnamani, Dr Jibrin Ibrahim and Professor Jadesola Akande at the dialogue

The discussions provided an opportunity for participants to address the nexus between governance, communication and reform, with the broader challenge of identifying the role of the media in the process of electoral system reform. Governance, the participants agreed, is the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs which therefore requires the conscious management of regime structures with the aim of enhancing legitimacy.

Resource persons at the discourse included former presidential candidate Professor Pat Utomi, Prof Jadesola Akande, former vice chancellor of the Lagos State University, Dr Sadique Abubakar of Ahmadu Bello University and Alhaji Ahmed Raji, Kano state resident electoral commissioner. Others included Messrs Rueben Abati and Martins Oloja of The Guardian, Mrs Funke Egbemode, of The Sun, Dr. Kabir Mato, of the University of Abuja and Professor Ayo of the University of Lagos.

In her goodwill message, USAID Mission Director in Nigeria, Ms. Sharon Cromer, emphasized that it is important for the electoral reform process to be successful, open and inclusive. She held that the media has great roles to play in the success of the process; reiterating that the media was instrumental to the successful push for the

transition from military to democratic governance. In her words, "the media has an important role to play in advancing the electoral reform process which is fundamental to advancing democracy in Nigeria".

A representative of the electoral reform committee (ERC), Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim informed the gathering that the ERC is committed to ensuring that the opinion of Nigerian citizens forms the base of the reform.

In his keynote address, former senate president, Dr. Ken Nnamani acknowledged the need for electoral reform with emphasis on ensuring that perpetrators of electoral fraud are sanctioned. This, he held, will serve as deterrent to others to would-be-fraud-perpetrators, particularly officials of electoral management bodies who make phantom declaration of results. The importance of this is reflected in the unfortunate situation in Kenya, which was not caused by the conduct of the elections, but by declaration of false results.

In conclusion, participants held that there is an urgent need to prepare the media to effectively play the important role of monitoring and evaluating the electoral process.

SUCCESS STORY

Rural communities mobilize government to improve education

Curious children at Gaya Special Primary School clamored at a turn on one of the new computers in the computer laboratory. For most of them it was the first time ever seeing and touching the 'television-like' machine. Crowded in the laboratory, they listened with rapt attention as their teacher gave instruction on the parts of a computer and how to operate it. Nearby, another crop of students sat comfortably in their new classrooms writing down assignments for the weekend. It was their first ideal school environment. Explaining the excitement of the children, head teacher Hussaini Iliyasu said, "The classrooms were not conducive

for any learning activity.” He continued, “This is the first time the local government area would have a computer laboratory and we are delighted to be the pioneers.”



Future software developers

Though most of the residents in Gaya, a remote and rural community in Kano state, are farmers and traders, several influential Nigerians holding public office call this part of the country home. Nonetheless, the area's public infrastructure and services suffer from gross neglect, thus, public health and education services are rarely used. Years of neglect have led to dilapidated structures while learning aids and instructional materials are almost non-existent, negatively affecting learning outcomes for public school children.

The USAID-supported community coalitions in the area recently reinforced their strategies by establishing a community coalition forum representing the interests of all three of the far apart communities in the local government area - Gaya Kudu, Gaya Arewa and Kademi. Explaining this strategy, Gaya Kudu Quality Improvement Team Chairman, Abass Ibrahim, said, “In order to get the level of results we wanted, we had to unify our ideas and voices. With the culture and tradition of our people, if the representatives do not respond appropriately they would have wronged all.” With the formation of the forum and with guidance from USAID implementing partner, Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS), the community members mobilized resources to equip its only hospital with basic infrastructure ranging from benches for the antenatal care section to renovation of toilets and the installation of a borehole.

They also approached two natives of the local government area who occupy seats in the national and state houses of assembly to garner their support for two school projects. Their efforts yielded results. While the national assembly representative supplied computers and trained two teachers in computer skills, the state assembly member provided funds for renovating seven school blocks in the three communities. According to Abass, “This is the first time we united with one voice to call the government to action on our priority issues. At first we didn't realize what an effective tool we had as a people, but now we do.”

Through its work with community coalitions, USAID fosters accountability at all levels and promotes an environment in which all Nigerians are involved in learning, planning and taking action to improve health and education in their communities. The Gaya forum is now exploring other development projects in the community and mobilizing personal and public funds to implement them. According to USAID partner COMPASS state community mobilization program coordinator, Mohammed Gama, “It is interesting to see community members take ownership and responsibility of their own community's development.”

Through COMPASS, USAID supports similar activities in five states, making substantial contributions to the renovation and construction of local schools and health facilities, and mobilizes communities to increase school enrollment and visits for health services, especially for girls and women.



Coalition for computer literacy

ALBUM



Zamfara government officials welcome Ms Sharon Cromer. At center is the commissioner for women and children affairs, Hajia Zenab Halilu Anka



Harry Pinpong of USAID's Office of the Inspector-General was at the Mission for three days to update staff of the Offices of Financial Management and Acquisition and Assistance in Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates Agreements (NICRA)



USAID Mission Director Sharon Cromer with Zamfara state commissioner for education, Alhaji Muhammed Sanda Danjari during the signing of the State Education Account agreement in Gusau recently



Education Team Leader, Sandy Ojikutu, Latanya Mapp-Frett, Director of Economic Growth, Consul General Donna Blair and Unilag vice chancellor, Tolu Odugbemi during the commissioning of 362 computers at the university recently



Sharon Cromer visiting the Emir of Gusau, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Danbaba



Send-forth: Sophia Mukasa Monico receiving a resounding Power Clap during her send-forth party. She has resumed duties at UNAIDS, Swaziland

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