

## **34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CCID)**

**Dates:** February 20-23, 2010

**Plenary Speech:** 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM, Monday, February 22, 2010  
Dr. Michael Yates, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Economic Growth  
Agriculture and Trade

**Speech Title:** Community Colleges and U.S. Foreign Assistance: A Proven and Promising  
Partnership

**Location:** The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center, The Woodlands  
(Houston), Texas

**Attendance:** 300 people or more

### **I. Thank You**

Thank you Dr. Carpenter, and a special thanks also to Dr. Halder and Andrea Siebenmann, who have been most gracious in welcoming me. And thank you all for your kind invitation to spend some time with CCID, and to learn more about your dynamic and important organization.

Allow me to also extend my appreciation to Lone Star Community College System, our local host, and to congratulate them on their important International Exploration Grants program that Dr. Carpenter described last night; that sounds like a model for others -- including our international partners -- to follow.

## **II. Overview**

It is indeed a great pleasure to be here today, both to applaud the fine work of your institutions, and to celebrate the proven and promising partnership that exists between USAID, the Department of State, the Department of Education, and America's community colleges.

As Undersecretary Kanter noted last night, President Obama has said that “education and innovation will be the currency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, and no country development strategy can be robust or sustained where education is not supporting employment, and where many young people are out of work.

Unfortunately, in many developing countries, the education systems and institutions do not effectively equip young men and women with the knowledge and skills they need to pursue viable employment, in particular work that furthers innovation and national development.

By contrast, however, your institutions do both. And your success in doing so has made America's community colleges – and the community college model – of great interest to an increasing number of countries around the world.

In fact, in July 2009, at UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education, Dr. Jill Biden dedicated the bulk of her remarks to the critical role that community colleges play in providing quality educational and economic opportunities - opportunities that facilitate increased employment and improved social and economic development in the communities, and nations, they serve.

It is that critical role that provides the foundation for USAID's expanding partnership with America's community colleges.

### **III. The Challenging Context**

Many of the developing countries where we work have growing youth populations in desperate need of gainful employment, and of a quality education to help them find – or even better, to also generate, as entrepreneurs – productive jobs.

And unfortunately, in many of those countries there is a disconnect between the education being provided, and what's really *needed*, to know how to start

a business, or to find work. In addition, a lack of appropriately educated and trained human capital limits investment, further reducing employment opportunities and economic growth.

This is an increasingly serious problem for all. The World Bank estimates that before the end of 2010, the worldwide number of youth in the 15-25 age group will be close to 1.8 billion, and 1.5 billion of them (or 83%) will live in developing nations. The vast majority lack marketable skills or decent employment, and are not positively engaged in society, squandering human resources. Put simply, youth unemployment has reached epic proportions.

In fact, in Egypt, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan and the Philippines, one out of every 3 or 4 youth is likely to be unemployed.

We also know that out-of-school, unemployed or underemployed youth are at higher risk of becoming victims, or perpetrators, of violence and crime, including through recruitment to organized efforts to destabilize fragile states. There are also higher risks of teen pregnancy, and of receipt and transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus and other diseases. Such outcomes not only impose heavy costs on young people and their families, but also on the

economy and society at large<sup>1</sup>, eroding growth, and optimism for the future. In fact widespread youth unemployment can foster instability even in relatively stable countries, where youth radicalization and youth gangs are already serious risks.

Absent significant improvements in the quality and relevance of the education being provided, including increased collaboration with the private sector in shaping that education, there will be increased economic hardship and a growing risk of social conflict. How successful we are, collectively, in helping youth to become educated and productive workers and citizens will affect development and global security for decades to come.

#### **IV. The Power of the Community College Model**

Successfully addressing these challenges is obviously not a simple task. But as you know, and should feel proud of, some good news is found with America's community colleges. They have been providing high quality, relevant, and employer-valued educational opportunities for decades.

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<sup>1</sup> EQUIP3 guide to conducting USAID cross-sectoral youth assessments.

You and your colleagues have developed a model, and set of approaches, that strive to ensure an ongoing and mutually reinforcing fit among four core priorities:

1. the education your institutions provide;
2. the needs of prospective employers;
3. the broader social and economic development needs of a community;  
and
4. the aspirations of the individuals who enroll in your courses and programs.

For example, community colleges have developed and institutionalized a variety of approaches, including business and stakeholder advisory councils, that enable ongoing collaboration with the private and public sector, in the development, and continuous improvement of, relevant and high quality education and training programs.

That makes lots of sense, and students – male and female - who participate in these programs greatly enhance their job prospects.

In addition, employers have a greater chance of securing the talent and human capital they need to improve performance, expand their businesses, and contribute more to economic and social development. Everyone wins!

That is precisely the sort of outcome and result that our partners and colleagues in developing countries are eager to achieve, and they are increasingly intrigued by the community college model. And given the goals of U.S. foreign assistance, USAID, the Department of State and the Department of Education are eager to help countries explore these possibilities.

Of course, we all understand that Houston is not Jakarta, and Cedar Rapids is not Cairo. Particular programs developed at specific U.S. community colleges may or may not be applicable in Addis Ababa or Kabul.

But the core principle of the community college model – the fundamental and institutional commitment to engage and collaborate with community stakeholders, to ensure the development and delivery of *relevant* education and training – can be applied in any community, to develop locally appropriate approaches and solutions.

In fact, as many of you already know, in those instances in which the community college model has been tailored and adapted to local circumstances overseas, the institutional and system-wide results have been very encouraging.

For example, in India, Thailand and Vietnam, USAID support for community college partnerships and the community college model supported improved vocational and technical training; enhanced workforce development; the development of new institutions that incorporated key elements of the US community college model; formation of community college associations; and the broader application of the community college model across the post-secondary education system. A similar system-wide collaborative effort is presently underway in Brazil.

CCID and several CCID member institutions were key partners in much of this work, and you should be commended for your commitment and valuable contributions.

In addition, the model appears applicable across a wide variety of countries, subjects and sectors, and provides benefits to both women and men. For example:

- in Namibia, CCID worked with polytechnic institutions to develop programs in entrepreneurship and the development of small and medium sized businesses, including businesses owned and operated by women;
- in Sri Lanka, Kapi'olani Community College of Hawaii partnered with hotels and education providers to strengthen the nation's tourism industry;
- in Mexico, Alamo Community College partnered with vocational and technical training providers to meet the needs of the manufacturing sector;
- in Vietnam, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System established an alliance with Kien Giang Community College to promote information technology training and improve student language skills;

- in Egypt, Walla Walla Community College worked with Egyptian higher education institutions to improve agricultural training and sustainable food production capacity;
- in India, local institutions collaborated with Houston Community College to improve the education and training of health care workers; and
- in Latin America, the Scholarships for Education and Economic Development Program (or SEEDS), works with U.S. community colleges to provide 2 year training, and shorter term training, for disadvantaged young men and women. In 2009, 267 individuals (more than half of whom were women) completed their degrees. In 2010, we have issued 270 scholarships, and again more than half are for women.

From Africa to Asia, Latin America to the Middle East, in the fields of health, agriculture, economic growth, education, ICT, and manufacturing, the community college model has demonstrated its ability to help education institutions and systems improve the relevance and quality of post-secondary education, in a manner that fosters improved employment prospects *and*

meets community economic and social development needs. Each example speaks to productive employment and growth.

## **V. USG and USAID Commitment to Community Colleges**

In light of such successes, and the growing international interest that we see - the US Government is expanding its efforts to help US community colleges collaborate with developing country partners to strengthen the quality and relevance of education and training. This expanded effort reflects the President's commitment to renewing our engagement worldwide, and the broad USG conviction that community colleges can be vital assets in that effort.

For example, in November 2009, in collaboration with the Department of State, the Department of Education, and our partners at Higher Education for Development, USAID helped support a small grants program to help US community colleges work with partners in the Broader Middle East and North Africa, to foster institutional and systemic reforms to improve the quality of education at community and technical colleges in the region.

In 2009 and 2010, the Department of State and USAID continued our multimillion dollar investment in community colleges as providers of participant training, bringing the four year total investment to \$42.6 million.

In addition, our field Missions have demonstrated increasing interest in community colleges. For example, in the fall of 2009, USAID/Southern Africa awarded a \$6.7 million cooperative agreement to the American Council on Education, or ACE, to strengthen the capacity of the Further Education and Training college sector to improve education and employment outcomes for the country's youth. ACE, in collaboration with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC), Jobs for the Future, Youth Build International, Bronx Community College, and consultants from U.S. community colleges, will work with 12 colleges and 44 campuses in three provinces. The program will have an institutional, provincial and national impact – to say nothing of the positive outcomes for so many hardworking people.

As the current fiscal year continues to unfold, and the Agency continues to support the President's Global Engagement Initiative, the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, our Office of Education, and

various USAID Missions will develop additional programs aimed at workforce development, entrepreneurship, and the improvement of education and employment opportunities for youth. Given your proven ability to provide valuable assets to such programs, I encourage you to pay close attention to the USG websites where such opportunities will be advertised, as well as the websites of our partners, such as Higher Education for Development.

USAID is especially interested in leveraging technology to expand access to quality and relevant education. The Agency has noted with great interest the various distance and online learning programs being developed by community colleges, and these programs may provide models for use in developing countries, including through new partnerships between your, and developing country, institutions.

We can work together even more to explore this potential. For example, if USAID can work with partner countries to support local recognition of, and academic credit for, U.S. community college courses provided online, what can U.S. community colleges do to facilitate the affordability and accessibility of such courses to lower income youth in developing countries?

How might your institutions leverage your prior international collaboration, or develop new partnerships, that might enable youth in developing countries to gain unprecedented access to training and certification through online course offerings? On a related matter, I note that USAID is in dialogue with our colleagues at the Department of Education to explore ways in which our development programs might coordinate with the Department of Education's support for the development of online courses.

## **VI. A Challenge**

I'd like to leave you with an invitation and a challenge. As I indicated earlier USAID, and the US Government more broadly, is interested in helping our host country partners understand and explore further the application of the community college model. We are also committed to expanding opportunities for community colleges to continue making valuable contributions to U.S. foreign assistance.

In an effort to support both objectives, I appeal to you – as a COMMUNITY, not just as individual institutions - to marshal your energies and your private sector partners, particularly businesses with global interests and a presence in developing countries, for whom a skilled workforce means

better business, to develop compelling initiatives that may attract USG investment and collaboration. We certainly know we don't have the corner on all the good ideas -- so let us know yours.

Inventory your partners, determine whether and where they have international endeavors and interests, and explore how your collaboration in the US might provide a foundation for working in other parts of the world. Share with us your promising and compelling ideas and approaches that might be suitable for our investment, collaboration, and support.

In particular, I invite you to submit ideas under the Agency's Global Development Alliance, or GDA, program. Each year, the GDA program issues an annual program statement that invites concept papers for Agency consideration. I invite you to develop a consortium of schools and business partners to identify an approach and program that would attract the interest of USAID, and the broader USG. And I invite you to:

- develop ideas and opportunities that will advance the President's commitment to global engagement;

- consider how your institutions might address some of the world's most important development challenges, including such matters as food security, global climate change, biodiversity conservation, and promoting entrepreneurship and economic opportunity, including for more women and girls.

In that context you may wish to think about how your programs can help interested young people to develop the kinds of skills they can use to become development assistance professionals one day, perhaps working for USAID or others. I was pleased to see that there is much in some of your International News bulletins that relates closely to the work we do in USAID, in roughly 100 countries around the world, and we are growing our workforce rapidly. We need more skilled people, including ones who understand the power of community colleges to change lives.

I invite you to:

- create more programs and approaches that will help youth in developing countries gain a quality and relevant education that will lead to viable employment, and accelerate national social and economic growth; and

- to leverage and expand the success of our proven and promising partnership.

## **VII. Concluding Remarks**

During her remarks at the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, and as Dr. Kanter noted, Jill Biden indicated that “community colleges are one of America’s best-kept secrets.”

Well, thanks to the success of our prior collaboration with community colleges, and the excellent work of CCID and your member institutions, the secret is definitely out at USAID, and in the broader USG.

And we are very excited about spreading the word!

The strategic and tailored application of the community college model offers us all a real opportunity to make the world a better place. I don’t think there is any more noble task, and we look forward to working with you, and our host country partners, to make it happen.

Thank you.