



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONDUCTS PROJECT REVIEW AND OUTREACH IN AFRICA

VEGA Executive Director **Earl Yates** traveled in East, Southern, and West Africa from September 5 to September 30 to review ongoing VEGA projects, and to do outreach with USAID Missions in **Ethiopia, Kenya, Southern Sudan, South Africa, Ghana, and Liberia**, as well as with USAID's **East Africa and West Africa Regional Program** offices.

Conferring with the Chiefs-of-Party and staffs of VEGA's projects in Ethiopia, Southern Sudan, and South Africa, he saw first-hand the excellent client relationships that they maintain with their client Missions and host country partners. He also joined VEGA staff in doing critique of project management, with a view to realizing progressive improvement in delivery of VEGA's services. For those Mission staff members who were unfamiliar with VEGA, he explained its purpose for USAID as a whole, its value to USAID Mission as an economic growth services provider, and the ease of access to its services through its **Leader with Associate Cooperative Agreement** with the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade. VEGA field staff and Mission officials welcomed the consultations and look forward to sustained outreach contacts by VEGA's field representatives as well as representatives from VEGA and its member organizations' home offices. For more information on the VEGA presentation to the Mission, please visit www.vegaalliance.org >> Outreach Materials.

VEGA BUILDING ON PROJECT SUCCESSSES

VEGA continues to build on project successes to date by responding to USAID requests for the extended and expanded technical assistance, training, and project management services of its implementing organizations. **USAID/Sudan** has obligated an additional US\$ 4,000,000 of the estimated life of project cost for its **Agricultural Markets and Enterprise Development Project** to enable VEGA to carry out a revised scope of work that aims to address the evolving development needs of the Southern Sudan. **USAID/South Africa** has added US\$ 2,342,405 to finance continued management of its expanded **Annual Program Statement Grants Administration Program**.



VEGA/AMED beneficiary in Rumbek, Sudan

USAID/Ethiopia plans to obligate an additional US\$ 500,000 to expand VEGA's international trade promotion assistance to the Government of Ethiopia, Chambers of Commerce, and selected emerging industries. The **Missions in Armenia, Indonesia, Jordan, and the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade's Office of Microenterprise Development** have obligated US\$ 877,199 to finance the selection, fielding, and support of **Long-Term Business Advisors** to join or replace the Advisors fielded last year. VEGA's Prime implementing organizations for these projects are **International Executive Service Corps, Institute of International Education, and Winrock International**. The associate implementing organizations are **ACDI/VOCA, Citizens Development Corps, Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs, and International Executive Service Corps**.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT—OICI



Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI) has been an active member of VEGA since 2004. Founded by the late civil rights leader **Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan**, OICI is dedicated to the mission of furthering the goals of justice, development and hope to which Reverend Sullivan devoted his life. For over 35 years, OICI has been improving the quality of life of low-income, disadvantaged individuals through the provision of skills training and job creation, business development, and local capacity building of indigenous non-governmental organizations in developing and transitional countries.

OICI works in three specific areas: education and training, food security, and entrepreneurship and business development. OICI has brought together grassroots community leaders in Africa with committed individuals from the United States in order to design and implement projects that provide lasting solutions to complex problems. With a team of over 300 skilled management, technical and field staff in the areas of agriculture, food security, microenterprise development and entrepreneurship, OICI's programs are comprehensive in nature, and aim to give individuals the knowledge and tools they need to build sustainable futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

Since 1970, OICI has worked in approximately 25 countries including **Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Nigeria**. OICI does not simply hand out aid; rather, its mission is to "give citizens of developing countries the tools they need to secure a better future" by empowering individuals, institutions and communities through the transfer of knowledge and skills and by designing and implementing market-driven, sustainable programs.

Mr. Ron Howard, President and CEO, represents OICI on **VEGA Board of Directors**. **Ms. Michelle Frain Muldoon**, Director of Agriculture Programs and FarmServe Africa, is on **VEGA's Leader Steering Committee**. For more information on OICI and its programs, please visit www.oicinternational.org.

VEGA WELCOMES NEW CHIEF OF PARTY TO ITS BULGARIA BTD PROGRAM

Mr. Alexander Babinov joined VEGA/Bulgaria Business and Trade Development (BTD) as the new Chief of Party, bringing more than 20 years of experience in small and medium enterprise (SME) development, tourism, and regional development to the program. Mr. Babinov's expertise ranges from administration and management of development programs and strategic planning to designing and implementing activities in the areas of regional trade, SME growth, job creation, tourism development, and dissemination activities. He has coordinated closely with the Bulgarian government and private sector companies, local business associations, think tanks, foreign companies, and donor institutions, including DFID, European Union and USAID. As Chief of Party, Mr. Babinov will continue to lead and implement VEGA/BTD program activities in Bulgaria.



VEGA/BTD PARTNERS MEET IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



VEGA/Bulgaria field and U.S.-based representatives at Partners Meeting in September

On September 5, VEGA hosted a partners meeting in Washington, DC, for the VEGA/Bulgaria BTB field and home office staff. The team had the opportunity to discuss program implementation and plan for a possible six months no-cost program extension. VEGA/BTD will continue to provide training and technical assistance to Bulgaria's business services organizations, investment planning, authentic tourism development, and assessments for the development of a new industrial park. All of the project activities are aimed to equip Bulgarian businesses with the skills to operate more competitively in their region, as the country moves toward accession to the European Union in 2007.

The BTD field staff, including newly appointed Chief of Party, **Alexander Babinov**, and BTD's former Chief of Party, **Charles Conconi**, were joined by U.S.-based VEGA officials: VEGA Executive Director, **Earl Yates**; VEGA Project Management and Support Officer, **Lee Warren**; VEGA Outreach Associate, **Van Nguyen**; VEGA Financial Manager, **Liz Carlin**; Citizens Development Corps Senior Vice President, **Deirdre White**; Citizens Development Corps Senior Program Officer, **Amanda MacArthur**; Financial Services Volunteer Corps Managing Director, **Charles Kilbourne**; Financial Services Volunteer Corps Regional Director, **Anthony Randazzo**; International Executive Service Corps Associate Vice President, **Sue Akerley**; and, International Executive Service Corps Program Manager, **Melinda Packman**.

SUDAN AMED CTO VISITS VEGA HQ

VEGA welcomed USAID/Sudan Agriculture & Marketing Enterprise Development (AMED) Program Cognizant Technical Officer **Mr. Lokosang Wani Lemi** and USAID Agricultural Reconstruction Advisor **Mr. Phillip Steffen** to its D.C. office on September 15. Mr. Lemi replaced **Mr. Gary Alex** as VEGA CTO for the AMED Program in Sudan. During the visit, VEGA staff along with representatives from its prime implementing partner **Winrock International** and associate partners **ACDI/VOCA**, **CDC**, and **IESC** shared their experiences with working in Sudan and VEGA's ability to modify quickly and effectively its program to meet the changing needs of Sudan Mission.



VEGA/AMED US-based staff Meeting with newly appointed CTO on September 15, 2006

PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS

VEGA/ETHIOPIA SUPPORTS NINE FIRMS HEADING TO NY GARMENT SHOW



USAID/Ethiopia Mission Director Glenn Anderson making a speech during the grand opening of Nova Star Garment.

VEGA/Ethiopia African Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA+) in collaboration with **Enterprise Ethiopia**, a World Bank funded program sent nine Ethiopian garment/handicraft firms to the **Material World Trade Show** at the **Jarvis Center in New York**. The Ethiopia delegation was part of an African pavilion consisting of 42 African garment manufactures from nine countries. The African pavilion at the Material World Trade Show promoted garment exports under AGOA from Africa. This was the first time that Africans have come together to market the duty-free privilege under AGOA and to create an African brand. During the past month, VEGA/Ethiopia also hosted three US garment buyers to come to Ethiopia on a buyer mission. The visit provided the US buyers with a first hand look at the factories in Ethiopia, an opportunity to meet face to face with relevant stakeholders in the country and to get an understanding of the Ethiopian business climate.

During the past month, a brand new garment factory, **Nova Star Garment**, was officially opened in Ethiopia in the presence of the **President of Ethiopia**, the **State Minister of Trade Industry** as well as the **USAID Mission Director**. In his opening remarks, the Mission Director **Glenn Anderson** mentioned some of the successes achieved under the VEGA/Ethiopia AGOA+ program and the on-going support to the Ethiopian private sector on AGOA. The Managing Director of Nova Star Garment thanked VEGA/Ethiopia for the support provided thus far.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS (CONTINUED)



ECIAfrica Project Leader with Tabale village women's group who are working and receiving training in small-scale chicken production outside of Bloemfontein, South Africa. These women will also receive numeracy and literacy training under the VEGA SAAGA program.

VEGA/SAAGA VOLUNTEER AND COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE DUE TO BEGIN AT SUBGRANTEE PROJECTS

VEGA/South Africa APS Grant Administration Program signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with two local organizations, **Salesbytes** and **Triple E Holdings**. Salesbytes was founded 16 years ago by **Suzanne Burgess**. Since its creation, Salesbytes has developed a large network of sales and marketing professionals through its various business networking initiatives that include conducting seminars, providing sales and marketing training across many industries as well as co-coordinating sales and marketing events. Under the MOU, two professionals will provide marketing and financial training and technical assistance, on a volunteer basis, in the production and packaging of rooibos and essential oil-based soap products to 20 women in **Wupperthal** and **Aurora** in the Western Cape.

Triple E Holdings is a registered organization with 15 years of experience providing **Adult Basic Education Training (ABET)** to more than 600 companies throughout South Africa. It offers worthy and credible ABET solutions to organizations, individuals, and communities through the development and delivery of appropriate numeracy/literacy educational materials. As agreed in the MOU, Triple E will provide, on a cost-share basis, numeracy and literacy training to approximately 80 people in **Bloemfontein**, **Aurora**, and **Bushbuckridge** areas in South Africa.

VEGA FIELDS 2006—2007 LONG-TERM BUSINESS ADVISORS

In August, the **Institute of International Education (IIE)**, VEGA's implementing partner for the **Long-Term Business Advisors Programs in Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, and with Microenterprise Development**, oriented eight Advisers to go out into the field. Since September, they have begun working with local host country organizations or USAID Mission project partners in Jordan and Mexico as well as the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Indonesia. Their scopes of work range from conducting market research to promoting partnerships between the United States and host country governments.

- **Greg Swarin** graduated from the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University. He is working in **Amman, Jordan** with the Business Development Center to develop business plans and marketing strategies for numerous industries and firms. He is also responsible for promoting access and exports to U.S. markets.
- **Payton Deeks**, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies is working in **Jakarta, Indonesia** on a USAID/AmCham partnership under USAID's Global Development Alliance (GDA) Program to align interests in public-private partnerships in Indonesia.
- Graduated from Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs, **Ana Luisa Pinto** is stationed in **Chiapas, Mexico** as the Financial Management and Internal Controls Advisor for Alternativa Solidaria (AISol). She is responsible for conducting market research as well as working with this microfinance institution on its strategic plans.
- **Kathleen Keiser**, also a graduate of Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs is working in **Aqaba, Jordan** with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA). Kathleen is focusing on removing development barriers and encouraging investment in industrial and port activities.
- Another graduate of Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs, **Kate Weber** is working with the Jordan Garments, Accessories and Textiles Exporters Association (JGATE) in **Amman, Jordan**. Kate is assisting JGATE in managing its public relation activities and member outreach and marketing, as well as managing the association's website as a revenue-generating tool.
- A graduate of the University of Denver's School of International Studies, **Erica Stuhlreyer** is working with the Jordan Investment Board (JIB) in **Amman, Jordan**. Her scope of work supports JIB's mission of increasing foreign direct investment to Jordan, and enhancing local investment in a bid to create new job opportunities, increasing national exports, and the need for the transfer of technology.
- **Chris Reinstadtler** is working with Excellence, Inc. in **Amman, Jordan** to improve its financial and reporting mechanisms as well as accounting and system integration.



*From left to right:
VEGA/LTBAs Greg Swarin, Payton Deeks, Ana Luisa Pinto, Kathleen Keiser,
Kate Weber, Jeanah Lacey, Erica Stuhlreyer, and Chris Reinstadtler.
Photo by William Phillips, Red Tack Arts.*

In addition to their current scopes of work, these Advisors will also be researching and publishing case studies in business best practices under the supervision of Professor Richard Linowes of the Kogod School of Business at American University in Washington, DC. These case studies illustrate important considerations for doing business in emerging markets and are available to MBA and related MA programs across the United States. Case studies from previous VEGA/LTBAs are available at www.emdap.org/casestudies.html.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS (CONTINUED)

VEGA ASSISTS THE WOMEN SELF HELP DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Seating area at UNMIS cafeteria

In Juba, Southern Sudan, **VEGA/Agriculture and Marketing Enterprise Development (VEGA/AMED)** is working with the **Women Self Help Development Organization (WSHDO)** to provide management training for its staff and to increase employment opportunities for its members. Due to VEGA interventions, WSHDO is now well recognized among international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies in Juba for its ability to identify eligible women for training opportunities and other activities.

In early 2006, VEGA awarded WSHDO a small grant to be used to:

- Refurbish existing office space and purchase needed office supplies and equipment;
- Provide bread and pastry baking training to groups of internally displaced women;
- Upgrade tea shops, kitchens, and cafeterias located on UN compounds.

WSHDO started in 1975 in Western Equatoria with the assistance of GTZ, the German equivalent of USAID. GTZ continued its support to WSDHO until 1996. In 1997, the Area Rehabilitation Scheme followed by the German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA) organization took over funding responsibilities until November 2003. The Juba WSHDO has been operating independently since December 2003.

WSHDO in Juba currently manages three cafeterias that serve local Sudanese meals along with traditional tea, coffee, and cold drinks. The cafeteria located at the WSHDO compound caters to local workers including state government staff. The other two cafeterias are located at the **United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)** headquarters compound and the **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)** compound. The VEGA grant has transformed two of the three cafeterias into profitable enterprises.

In late July 2006, WSHDO, through the assistance of VEGA, successfully won the full food and beverage service contract at UNMIS. Although the cafeteria is designed to provide meals for the local Sudanese staff working for the UN, approximately 60-65% of the customers are UN international staff. In addition to ongoing training by VEGA senior staff, in June 2006, VEGA Volunteer **Connie Freiermuth** provided training to staff of all three cafeterias on hygiene and sanitation guidelines and measures. The cafeteria is popular because of the quality of food, service, and the staff's attention to hygiene and sanitation measures. The UNMIS cafeteria sales have continued to increase since the new cafeteria opened. Recently, daily sales of food alone have averaged 33,000 SD (US\$ 153.50).

VEGA has also provided WSHDO with guidance in the contract terms for the cafeteria at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) compound.



One of the hotels participating in the Authentic Bulgarian Quality Mark

VEGA AUTHENTIC BULGARIAN QUALITY MARK REALIZES SUCCESS

VEGA/Business and Trade Development (VEGA/BTD) project launched the new **Authentic Bulgarian Quality Mark Program** in July, in collaboration with Bulgarian tourism industry representatives. The goal of the program is to improve the quality of the tourism products and services offered in Bulgaria and to enhance the image of Bulgaria as an ideal tourist destination to ultimately attract more and higher-value tourists.

According to VEGA/BTD Chief of Party **Alexander Babinov**, "The concept and systems behind the Authentic Bulgaria Quality Mark ensure that when visitors see a hotel carrying the (Authentic Bulgarian) sign, they will know it has been independently assessed and offers the best quality for its category. It is not only good for travelers and our country's image for tourism, but a major part of the program is to support hotel owners improve their businesses through providing business consultation as part of the assessment."

In September, VEGA/BTD initiated one of the first and most important steps in the program – the assessment process. After careful selection, a company has been chosen to conduct all the assessments and provide constructive feedback and advice. Today, more than 20 hotels have been assessed. VEGA/BTA anticipates a total of 70 hotels will be assessed by November, and at least half will be eligible to receive the Authentic Bulgarian Quality Mark. The hotels that did not meet the criteria initially will be given the opportunity to make the changes necessary and be reassessed.

The Authentic Bulgarian Quality Mark Program has received positive feedback from participating hotel owners. One owner stated, "We are very proud of our hotel, but the assessors really made us consider every aspect of our business and how we could improve. I am very happy with the program and have great expectations of how it can help me further."

Another hotel owner being assessed commented that he was not sure what to expect but was very grateful to have received a thorough consultation. This has made him carefully consider the next phase of his hotel development. He is very pleased that VEGA/BTD has started this program in Bulgaria. He believes that the program will help the Bulgarian tourism industry by not only attracting more visitors, but also by helping the hotel owners make real profits. "I will carry the Quality Mark with pride," he said.