

J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2007

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service Officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for community service, professional fulfillment and personal well-being of Foreign Service Officers and Specialists and their families. The Trust has been funded with contributions from Kirby Simon's colleagues, friends and relatives and other persons interested in the purposes of the Trust. The Trustees are present or former members of the Foreign Service - State Department community and Kirby Simon's parents.

In the Fall of 2006, following the pattern established in the ten previous years, the Trust invited proposals for the support, in 2007, of projects initiated and carried out by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, or by other U.S. Government employees employed at American diplomatic posts abroad. In response to this invitation, the Trust received 103 proposals from 65 countries. With its modest resources, the Trust was able to fund 50 of these projects, conducted in 43 countries, in whole or in part. Grants ranged in amount from \$250 to \$4500 for a total of \$113,940.

The following pages describe the projects supported by the Trust in 2007. (Material in quotation marks is taken from the proposals describing the projects.)

AFGHANISTAN – KABUL. Playground equipment and mural painting supplies for an orphanage – a project proposed by Janae Cooley, Political Officer; AnneLouise Hansen, Human Resources Officer; J. B. Leedy, Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer; and Rosa Dwyer, GSO Housing Assistant.

In many parts of the world, children living in orphanages can cling at least to the hope of adoption, and with it the prospect of growing to adulthood in a family setting. Afghans, however, do not have "a tradition of adoption outside the extended family." At the same time, both religious and bureaucratic barriers make international adoptions "impossible," so that "children housed in these institutions" – many of whom don't even know how old they are – "will spend their entire childhood" in bleak, crowded facilities. The government-run Kabul orphanage, for example, houses over 400 children, 8-12 per room, with a single wood-burning stove in each room and only one outdoor pump for bathing, laundry, and water for drinking and cooking. In this setting, "smile opportunities" are few, and even the few pieces of existing playground equipment are broken and rusted.

With other volunteers from the Embassy, the project coordinators have come up with a plan to re-equip and refurbish the playground with proper drainage and safety pads, and to coordinate a children's mural-painting project for the dormitory exteriors. A grant from the Trust is being used to repair and replace playground equipment and purchase supplies for the mural-painting project.

ARMENIA – ARMAVIR. Supplies and labor to repair and renovate a kindergarten common room – a project proposed by Adela Renna, USAID employee and spouse of Political Officer Daniel Renna.

In recent decades Armenia has suffered through a devastating combination of armed conflict, natural disaster, and political upheaval that has inflicted long-term economic damage. The local government of Armavir – one of the country’s poorest regions – receives little financial support from the central government, yet it is made responsible for the operation of its local kindergartens, among other things. Kindergarten No. 4, whose name is a cold war remnant of the Soviet era, is the second-largest in the area. While teachers do their best to create a nurturing environment with furnishings like “cuddly stuffed animals and educational pictures,” the facility is both bleak and unsafe, riddled with “broken windows, crumbling cement staircases, rusty water heating stoves and chipped tiles.” The common room – where the children should be able to gather – is actually unusable, with holes in the floors (some several feet deep), broken windows and doors, peeling paint, and no light fixtures.

Funds from the Trust have been used to purchase materials and hire professional workers to repair and refurbish the common room, so that youngsters will have “a common gathering place” to present dance and theatrical performances, exhibit their artwork, and “share their talents with parents, families and friends.”

BELARUS – DOBRUSH. Equipment and developmental toys for a rehabilitation center for children with profound learning difficulties – a project proposed by Sandra Ricks, Community Liaison Office coordinator, and Michelle Detwiler, spouse of the Defense Attaché.

The Dobrush Children’s Rehabilitation Centre offers “psychological, medical and pedagogical assistance” to children and adolescents “with profound multiple learning difficulties,” thus enabling these children “to remain at home with their parents instead of being institutionalized.” In recognition of the vital service provided by the Centre, local authorities recently offered the use of a vacant building to replace its cramped facility, where – for example – several specialists were forced to share one room.

The larger size of the new building will increase the Centre’s service capacity, shorten the waiting time for assistance, allow for improvements in quality of care, and enable “greater parental involvement.” In order to accommodate the Centre’s clientele, however, the building has required a number of modifications. Funds from the Trust are being used to install wheelchair ramps, support rails, and positioning and mobility aids, and to acquire some developmental toys.

BELARUS – MINSK. Equipment, utensils, and food to teach cooking skills to orphans making the transition to adult life – a project proposed by Nancy Walraven, Office Management Specialist, and Olga Goncharenko, spouse of a locally employed staff member.

Belarus is home to over 32,000 orphans and vulnerable children who live in government-supported orphanages; many of these children are destined to grow to adulthood there.

The Belarusian government sees to their basic needs, but they lack “any normal type of family life” that would teach them “basic living skills needed for life outside the institution.” The problem is especially acute at Slutsk orphanage, where most of the residents are older children facing an imminent transition to adult life.

Among the skills that these adolescent orphans will need most immediately is an understanding of “how to prepare healthy food and to choose foods that are cost-efficient.” Over a series of ten sessions, this project teaches menu-planning and cooking skills to a group of 15 volunteer students, with the hope that the course will be repeated for other children at the orphanage in the future. A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of food and basic kitchen equipment, including appliances, pots and pans, cutlery and dishware.

BELIZE – BELMOPAN. Books and beanbag chairs for a reading program for underprivileged children – a project proposed by Cathy Stevulak, spouse of the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Roughly half of the residents of Belmopan, the capital of Belize, are “first-, second- and third-generation refugees” from other Central-American countries beset by civil war. While they have found a safe haven, however, these refugees have not found prosperity. Most have settled around the periphery of the city in underprivileged areas known locally as “the zones,” where families tend to speak Spanish exclusively. Belmopan’s public schools, on the other hand, use English, the country’s official language, and offer very little by way of after-school recreation or enrichment. Moreover, “the children from the zones are left out” of “the local music and dance schools,” “presumably because their economic situation does not permit them to participate.” All of these factors compound their educational disadvantage.

This project seeks to “improve the English-reading skills” of primary school-age children in the zones, and to instill a love of reading. To that end it has established “a creative reading program” that adopts an innovative approach. Working with local volunteers, Ms. Stevulak has acquired “12 identical copies of 5 book titles” for each of two age cohorts – 7 to 9, and 10 to 12 – and created groups of 12 children from each cohort. Each child is given a personal copy of a book to be read by his or her group under the guidance of volunteers who create activities and lead discussions relating to the book. When the book is finished, the children return their copies for redistribution to other groups, and in turn receive a copy of the second book on the reading list. In this way, the project can benefit “an unlimited number of students as the program continues.” A grant from the Trust has been used to purchase the books, as well as several dictionaries and a number of beanbag chairs for comfortable seating.

BOLIVIA – SAN IGNACIO MUNICIPALITY. Cleaning and renovation supplies and basic classroom materials for flood-devastated rural schools – a project proposed by Andrew Erickson, Political-Economic Counselor; his spouse Cyrille Erickson; and their daughters Astrid and Sophia Erickson.

The El Nino weather effect is especially punishing in Bolivia, and the country recently faced “the most catastrophic wet season in at least a generation.” The eastern lowlands

were particularly hard-hit: “some 40 percent” of the agricultural state of Beni lay under water, “with two meters or more covering some farms and towns.” The devastation was especially wrenching in Beni’s San Ignacio municipality, where the natural disaster was compounded by poverty, isolation, and low population density. “Massive flooding” in the municipality “ruined schools,” leaving them “utterly bereft of the resources needed to resume the school year,” while the broader economic catastrophe “increased the pressures on children to leave school” and constrained the resources available to help the schools – this in an environment where illiteracy rates were already “extremely high” and school attendance low.

In consultation with the communities of the four principal towns in the area, the Ericksons have identified four schools most in need of help and organized a volunteer-driven restoration effort. Funds from the Trust have enabled each of the schools to obtain “cleaning supplies, paints, and basic materials for cleaning and restoration” and to purchase “textbooks, school papers and basic writing and study materials.”

CAMBODIA – PHNOM PENH. Food, shelter, health care and school uniforms for street children – a project proposed by Martin J. Bushue, an electrical engineer with the U.S. Department of State, and his wife Sharon K. Bushue.

This project, now in its third year, was originally undertaken by the Bushues out of their own resources because they were so moved by the plight of Phnom Penh’s street children. Although they are now posted in Rangoon, the Bushues have continued to support 15 Phnom Penh street children, most of them girls, in the hope of that they will acquire “marketable job skills to keep them away from the bar and sex trade of Southeast Asia.” A local Cambodian woman now serves as a project coordinator who “meets regularly with the children and their families” and handles rent, food, health care, and school expenses. The children are “thriving” under this regime. Indeed, because the children have English language skills and new email addresses, the Bushues “have regular conversations with the kids We often remark that a few years ago they were begging for food – now they beg for more Internet time.”

As before, a grant from the Trust is being used to help defray the cost of school fees, school uniforms and supplies, food, limited health care, and some shelter.

CAMEROON – YAOUNDÉ. Furnishings, computer equipment and a stereo to create an education and recreation room at an orphanage – a project proposed by Michael Nedeau, Operations NCO, Defense Attaché Office, and Linnisa Wahid, Vice-Consul.

The New Hope Orphanage, operated by an American nonprofit organization known as *Green Eyes in Africa*, is home to several children who have “endured physical, sexual and emotional abuse,” as well as a handful of adults suffering from blindness or AIDS. “It also reaches out to other orphanages to coordinate community efforts to fight poverty.” The children of New Hope attend local schools, but the education available there is sadly inadequate. Teachers equipped with “extremely limited resources” may be responsible for as many as 92 students each, and the orphans’ ability to learn is further compromised by their own personal histories. “The orphanage directors and volunteers

do their best ... with extra tutoring and homework help,” and “the children are very intelligent and have a strong desire to learn,” but it is difficult to “study outside on a ping-pong table set on a broken chest of drawers, sitting in plastic chairs.”

This project seeks to create a more “conducive learning environment” by converting a large, underused room at the orphanage into a multi-purpose room for “daily tutoring and summer school,” as well as recreation and performance activities. The room will “also serve other impoverished children in the community who participate in activities organized” at New Hope. A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of classroom furniture, a chalkboard, a wall-sized mirror and stereo (for creative dance), and a computer and printer (for computer literacy training and educational software use).

CHINA – XINLIWU VILLAGE. Materials and transportation to rebuild a home destroyed by landslides and flooding – a project proposed by a steering committee comprising nine Foreign Service Officers and four Locally Engaged Staff members.

Almost 79,000 homes in the Quijiang district of northern Guangdong collapsed in the wake of “floods and landslides triggered by tropical storm Bilis.” “Xinliwu Village was hit particularly hard, but its inhabitants, mostly rice and peanut farmers, lack the resources and labor to rebuild,” and the village is unlikely for various reasons “to receive sufficient resources to rebuild from the Chinese government.” As a result, families continued “to live in tents and shacks” even a year after the disaster.

Through a steering committee of Foreign Service personnel and staff members, the consular community has partnered with Habitat for Humanity to rebuild one of the 18 homes that were destroyed in Xinliwu. It is hoped that the effort will not only aid a single family, but benefit the wider community through local procurement and “draw provincial government attention to the area.” Trust funds have been used to obtain building materials, provide food and transportation to volunteers, and cover the costs of construction oversight.

COLOMBIA – BOGOTÁ. Vaccines, medical supplies, and office supplies to support improved record-keeping at an orphanage for girls – a project proposed by Thomas E. Reott, Foreign Service Officer, and his spouse Kimberly Manno Reott.

In a country where poverty is pervasive and “public support for institutions like hogares [children’s homes] is minimal,” disadvantaged young girls are especially vulnerable. Hogar de la Niña Veracruz, operated by Roman Catholic nuns, is both home and school to 35 such little girls. Of their many needs, the nuns have “identified improved medical care as one of their top priorities.” In Colombia, with its “over-burdened and poorly supplied system,” medical care for the poor “is nearly always treatment-based (for an injury or illness)” rather than preventive. “Very few of the girls at the hogar have received vaccinations, and none of them has proper medical charts.”

This project pursues three interrelated goals: to provide vaccinations (with the pro bono services of two local physicians), to educate the girls about the importance of childhood vaccines, and to train and equip the nuns to maintain a thorough medical records system.

Funds from the Trust have been used to purchase vaccines, syringes, and swabs, as well as record charts and a file cabinet.

COLOMBIA – SOACHA. Medical supplies, epilepsy testing, vision exams, and eyeglasses for at-risk children – a project proposed by Chuck Wright, Regional Medical Officer.

Last year, the Trust was able to assist in creating a monthly health clinic at one of three centers operated by the Fundación Proyecto de Vida, a local non-profit devoted to the needs of “children who live under particularly difficult and trying circumstances.” Families in the area are typically headed by women who, with their “three or four children ... live on the equivalent of one to two dollars per day.” “The children suffer with the types of health problems” that arise under such conditions, including “diarrheal illnesses, respiratory illnesses, stress-related health problems, and poor nutrition.” While Colombian children theoretically “have access to public hospitals and clinics,” many “do not receive routine basic health care” because their families can’t afford the necessary transportation, and “they do not receive basic hearing and vision screening” because they “don’t attend formal schools.”

The clinic, begun last year by Foreign Service Health Practitioner Sharon Swain – who is still involved in the project – has “provided a tremendous service to children in need in the Soacha region.” This project seeks to expand the services provided by the original clinic, and to establish similar clinics at the other two centers operated by the Fundación. Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase “an ongoing set of supplies” (including medications, vitamins, and treatment supplies); pay for CAT scans and EEGs for the “couple of children a year who are diagnosed with epilepsy”; and underwrite the costs of eye charts, vision exams, and eyeglasses for children who need them.

CYPRUS – NICOSIA. Athletic equipment for Turkish Cypriot orphans – a project proposed by Amy Dahm, Foreign Service Officer; Maryanne Macris, Community Liaison Officer; and Ipek Uzunoglu, Embassy Program Assistant.

A number of people affiliated with the Embassy have become involved in SOS Village, a refuge in north Nicosia for Turkish Cypriot orphans. The director of the Village recently approached the project coordinators to ask for basketball and football equipment and training as a way of giving the youngsters “an athletic outlet and individualized attention.” The coordinators have assembled a team of volunteers to coach, translate, and otherwise support the project, but they note that the requested equipment requested does not “fall within the purview of official Embassy provisions.”

A grant from the Trust has been used to acquire and install basketball backboards and poles, and to purchase a basketballs, footballs, and football athletic equipment.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO – KINSHASA and LUBUMBASHI. Mattresses, bedding, and storage shelves for residential care facilities serving children undergoing treatment for polio – a project proposed by Jeff R. Bryan, Foreign Service Officer.

In many places around the world, one of the many tragic consequences of “decades of war, poverty, and neglect” is the persistence of diseases that have largely been vanquished in more privileged countries. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, “many children ... have not had access to polio vaccinations,” so that “widespread polio, as well as other diseases and ignorance of safe medical practices, have left an unusually high number of children with partially or fully paralyzed legs.” While many of these children could “gain increased mobility” “with the appropriate treatment and support,” “only an estimated 10% of families with a disabled child can afford an examination by a health care professional, and only 2% of the 10% are able to find the means to pay the fees and follow through with treatment.” As a result, “these children often have no alternative but to spend their lives on all fours, forced to crawl ... on the streets or remain permanently indoors.”

The International Polio Victims Response Committee is a small non-profit created to address the plight of these children. It identifies “children living with these correctable disabilities” and cares for them at two residential care facilities – one in Kinshasa and the other in Lubumbashi – while they undergo corrective treatment and receive “leg braces and accompanying rehabilitative services.” Both facilities, which function on a minimum budget, are “in dire need” of foam mattresses, platforms on which to put them, bedding, and shelves for the children’s belongings. Funds from the Trust have been used to purchase these items.

DJIBOUTI – DJIBOUTI. Costs of producing a brochure on breast cancer and educating local trainers to teach women how to conduct self-examinations – a project proposed by Susan Ide Symington, spouse of Ambassador Stuart Symington, and their daughter Jane Wadsworth Symington.

Djibouti is “one of the world’s poorest countries (148 out of 177 in the UNDP ranking),” and its citizens – particularly women and children – suffer from a corresponding range of health problems, including an extremely high infant and maternal mortality rate, “severe malnutrition, and the ill effects of female genital mutilation, which an estimated 98% of women have undergone.” “With such health risks and practices, the important issue of detecting breast cancer early has fallen between the cracks.”

This project aims to “significantly improve breast cancer survival at a relatively low cost by enlisting Djiboutian women and health professionals to pass the breast cancer awareness and self-examination message using the network of women’s organizations and health centers that have been established to attack other medical problems.” It will produce brochures “in four local languages”; hire a doctor to visit women’s associations and clinics in this network to distribute the brochure, answer questions, and train local trainers in self-examination procedures; and sponsor follow-up visits. Funds from the Trust are being used to produce the brochure, pay the doctor’s fee, and cover his food and transportation costs.

ECUADOR – QUITO. Costs of removing lead paint, repainting, and replacing contaminated furniture at an orphanage – a project proposed by Robert A. Raines,

Foreign Service Officer, and administered by Kenneth Farr, USAID Officer (retired).

Home to 90 children (over half of them under the age of two), the San Vicente Orphanage is one of several institutions served by Orphanage Support Services Organization (OSSO), a charity “providing compassionate service to abandoned and disadvantaged children in Ecuador.” During a recent visit to San Vicente, OSSO evaluators “discovered lead paint on the walls, furniture, and toys.” The paint itself had to be removed from the building and replaced with a safe alternative, and the furniture and toys needed to be replaced.

A grant from the Trust has been used to pay for (1) removal materials, new paint, and equipment, as well as professional supervision of the volunteer effort, and (2) unfinished furniture including cribs, tables, chairs, and shelves, together with the paint needed to finish them.

EGYPT – CAIRO. Equipment, supplies, and training and marketing costs to enable Sudanese refugees to launch an automobile detailing business – a project proposed by Mu Octavis Taalib, Foreign Service Auditor.

Officially, more than 30,000 Sudanese refugees and displaced persons live in Cairo, while other estimates place the number in the “hundreds of thousands.” Given current circumstances in Darfur and South Sudan, together with the paucity of opportunities “to make an honest, deserving living” in Cairo, “hope for the future is in short supply.” “For the most part, the majority subsists by banding together, donations from friends and families abroad, and the generosity of several charities,” and there has been an upsurge of “rival gangs developing among teenage boys” who have few transferable job skills and “are quite listless and broken in spirit.”

This project seeks to offer vocational training and generate income for young male Sudanese refugees by taking advantage of a widespread phenomenon in Cairo: the preoccupation with keeping one’s automobile clean to keep the desert dust at bay. “Exteriors of vehicles are washed daily – sometimes twice a day,” but “interiors are rarely touched.” In the expatriate community alone, the number of vehicles would “calculate into a steady, almost incessant demand for interior cleaning.” By offering and promoting a weekend interior cleaning service, participating youth will both learn a skill and engage in “honest work to look forward to” that affords “another means of support to their families.” A grant from the Trust has been used to pay for hand-held vacuum cleaners, cleaning supplies, and the costs of marketing and transportation.

GEORGIA – TBILISI. Equipment and supplies to train street children in the folk art of enamel jewelry-making – a project proposed by Deborah A. Miller, Political Officer.

The Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre for Street Children, known as the Beghurebi Centre, is a local NGO that offers both a day centre and an overnight shelter. Vulnerable street children are given “basic subsistence assistance; psychological and medical assistance; [and] opportunities to participate in educational, recreational and integration

activities.” In addition, as “one of the most important components of the Centre’s activities,” these children receive “training in vocational skills” that offer “a viable alternative to begging and involvement in criminal activity that are otherwise their only options.” “The Centre actively seeks out employment opportunities for children who complete the program.”

“The primary objective of this project is to provide” the Centre “with the necessary supplies and equipment to expand its vocational jewelry-making training program,” focusing on Georgia’s traditional folk art of cloisonné enamel jewelry. With the addition of appropriate equipment and sufficient supplies, which are being acquired with a grant from the Trust, the program will have the means to “become self-sustaining through the exhibition and sale of the jewelry made by the children,” and perhaps even to “help fund other ongoing activities at the Centre.”

GUATEMALA – GUATEMALA CITY. Sports equipment, supplies, and operational costs for a program for vulnerable young women – a project proposed by Jacob Creswell, spouse of Nita Bellare, Deputy Director of the Global AIDS Program regional office.

“Guatemala is a very violent country, and young women have been on the receiving end of an epidemic of rapes and murders.” And even if they manage to escape this fate, young women are often constrained by “barriers set in Guatemalan society about a woman’s place and what she should and can accomplish.”

For both of these reasons, they stand to benefit enormously from Maya Desarrollo Deportivos (Maya Sporting Development), a program that “attempts to reach young women who might not otherwise have access to playing sports” and gives them “a safe place ... to be, to learn and to play.” The program includes a focus on softball, in which “there is immense interest”; at present, however, “the resources do not exist to make it viable but for a very small group of women.” “In order to field a team and have true games and practices, women’s equipment and supplies are needed.” Funds from the Trust have been used to acquire softballs, bats, gloves, uniforms, first-aid kits, and basic office supplies, and to cover transportation and operational costs.

GUYANA – GEORGETOWN. Construction supplies to complete a long-stalled renovation project at a residential facility for children and adults with developmental disabilities – a project proposed by Susan Tuller, Consul; Jennifer Noisette, Deputy Consul General; Niles Cole, Vice Consul; and Rhonda Wells, Vice Consul.

Joshua House Children’s Centre, “operated by the Unification Church of Guyana” with assistance from the International Relief Friendship Foundation, “lodges approximately sixty children and eight adults, with developmental disabilities” from villages throughout the country. Its “old wooden Victorian building” is decaying and too small, and the staff would like to replace it with “a more maintenance friendly concrete structure.” Such an addition was in fact begun, but construction languished when funding ran out.

With volunteer labor, this project will complete the addition, provide additional housing for a girls' dormitory, and add a boys' bathroom. A grant from the Trust is being used to obtain the materials needed to finish pouring the foundation and to wall, roof, paint, and finish the building.

INDIA – CHENNAI. Schoolroom furniture and supplies and playground equipment for a school for underprivileged girls – a project proposed by Saad Bokhari, Vice Consul.

Poverty is the lot of far too many children in India, and girls from impoverished Muslim families have particular needs of their own. The S.K.S. Residential and Educational Academy is a Muslim public school (“not a Madresa”) “open to all girls who need it.” It “houses, clothes and educates girls from six years old to nine years old” – including instruction in conversational English – but conditions are spartan. “For their lessons, the girls sit on the floor, and have no blackboard or visual aids.” Nor do they have “playground structures or games.”

The goals of this project are “to create an environment in which the children would be able to learn English effectively,” to enable physical activity, to “teach the values of sharing and cooperation,” and to create “a healthy and productive” home setting. Toward these ends, the Trust has funded the purchase of classroom benches, a teacher’s desk, cupboards, a whiteboard and related supplies, playground equipment, and a water purifier.

INDIA – DELHI. Equipment, supplies, and labor to produce a public-education video focusing on the deaf community – a project proposed by Carol Duffy Clay, spouse of Robert Clay, Director of the USAID Health Office.

“One out of every five Deaf people in the world lives” in India, “yet the condition for Deaf Indians is quite dire.” Like people with other forms of disability, they are “often perceived as having ‘bad karma’ – ‘a punishment from God’.” As a result, “the disabled remain one of the most marginalized and forgotten groups” in “a country still struggling with problems of vast poverty.” Though attitudes are changing, “there are enduring misconceptions about the Deaf, and equal opportunities remain woefully inadequate.” Deaf children born to hearing parents must struggle to communicate, and “in India, parents receive little support and guidance in raising their Deaf child.” In the larger society, “signing is generally disregarded as merely ‘gestures’”; “there are no organized interpreting services for the Deaf”; and the broadcast media offer “no standard captioning or interpretation.”

By creating “a fresh and compelling short documentary that captures real experiences of Deaf people in Delhi,” this project aims “to increase awareness of the Deaf – their inherent capabilities and unique differences – and to promote better understanding between Deaf individuals, their families and their teachers.” The end product will be “distributed free of charge or at cost,” and will be shown at public events designed to generate group discussions. A grant from the Trust is being used to rent or purchase production and post-production equipment and supplies, to provide food and transport, and to engage the professional services needed.

INDONESIA – LERANG VILLAGE. Small backhoe to aid in the expansion of a brick-making business undertaken by female leprosy survivors – a project proposed by Anne Frej, spouse of William Frej, USAID.

The “remote village” of Lerang, once a leper colony, “is severely stigmatized due to its association with the disease.” “Residents find it impossible to leave or work outside the community,” “malnutrition and illiteracy are rampant,” and many of the disease’s survivors, though cured, “have major on-going physical challenges.” Much of the population survives by making clay bricks, which “are well-known and in high demand,” but the brick-makers are unable to get ahead because of the “very high rates” at which they are forced to borrow money in order to buy needed equipment and supplies.

Because “many households are headed by women,” the village has attracted the involvement of Lembaga Pemberdayaan Perempuan Bone (LPP Bone), “a non-profit organization focusing on women’s issues” that has helped the community assess its needs and priorities and seek out funding. One such need has been for “a small tractor or backhoe that can be used to dig the clay soil for brick making so it does not have to be done by hand,” and funds from the Trust have been made available for this purchase.

ISRAEL. Production of a conflict resolution handbook for use in Arab villages and Jewish community centers and related training activities – a project proposed by Stephanie Tansey, spouse of Robert J. Tansey, Environment, Science, Technology and Health Officer.

“Inter-cultural communication skills” are urgently needed in many parts of the world “to contribute to a culture of peace,” but perhaps nowhere more so than in the Middle East. Ms Tansey has conducted “conflict resolution workshops” for Arab and Jewish women for several years, and “these activities have built a community of women who have learned dialogue skills and want to help others learn to respect and listen to one another,” both across cultural boundaries and within individual homes and families.

This project seeks to build upon that progress by creating “a conflict resolution handbook,” in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, that “will include tips, exercises, and cultural wisdom.” It will be used as the basis for dialogue skills training in Arab villages and Jewish community centers in Israel, partly in conjunction with “a wonderful conflict transformation play-with-dialogue” titled “The Well of Hagar and Sarah.” A grant from the Trust is being used to fund the designing and printing of the handbook, as well as the costs of the training activities.

IVORY COAST – YOUPOUHON. Five pediatric wheelchairs for disabled orphans and a refrigerator for the orphanage – a project proposed by Marcia L. Norman, Management Officer.

“Six crippled orphans, between five and nine, were abandoned” at “a desperately poor orphanage,” where “they are ostracized by the other kids and ... almost totally inactive.” One of these children “died for lack of activity, depression and simple hopelessness.”

The local nurse believes that the remaining five, with wheelchairs, could become more mobile and active, and therefore less excluded.

A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of “five lightweight pediatric wheelchairs,” as well as a “small refrigerator for medicine and baby formula” for the entire orphanage population.

KENYA – MAASAI VILLAGE NEAR MT. KILIMANJARO. Trees, fence posts and barbed wire for a reforestation project – a project proposed by Christopher “Norman” Bates, Information Management Specialist.

The “arid environment” in which the Maasai people live benefits from trees, which “hold water near the ground surface.” For this reason the villagers, with whom Mr. Bates has worked on previous projects, have attempted to plant trees. Their efforts have suffered from “wildlife encroachment” because their village is on the edge of a national park and although they “surrounded the saplings with thorn bushes,” “there are no fences to prevent the wildlife from destroying their work.” Mr. Bates and several volunteers from the Embassy have led the village in planting 400 trees and fencing them with barbed wire. “Once the trees are at a suitable height, some will be transplanted to increase coverage.” The trees receive sufficient moisture because, while “the area is very arid,” “the Maasai had already taken steps to irrigate the area.” “They are very pro-active within their community,” which is why “it is a joy to help them.”

This project will expand the reforestation effort by planting and protecting 400 more trees. Funds from the Trust are being used to acquire trees, cedar fence posts and barbed wire.

LIBERIA – JOHNSONVILLE. Shelving, furniture, books, and kerosene lamps for a library at a rehabilitation center for abandoned children with disabilities – a project proposed by Patricia A. Miller, Supervisory General Services Officer.

The future of Liberia’s children has been gravely damaged by “more than 15 years of civil war.” Many of them suffer from “extreme poverty” and interrupted educations, and those with disabilities are further disadvantaged because “Liberia is a country which, unfortunately, has no use for handicapped children.” Our Lady of Fatima Rehabilitation Center, founded by a long-time missionary, provides a home for “abandoned, disabled children and young adults,” giving them “shelter, nourishment, medical care, education, psychological, and religious experiences.” The Center also ministers to the local community, and has received approval from the government to “provide education for the Center [and] also for the children in the surrounding area.” “Today, the school has 900 students attending in shifts,” and it “provide[s] the most advanced education of any school I have visited in Liberia.” Yet, although the children’s “thirst for knowledge is overwhelming,” “a visit to their library is equally exciting and disappointing.” While the shelves hold textbooks, there are no “fun books” through which the children can learn broader lessons and become acquainted with the pleasures of reading. Nor can they obtain such books elsewhere, because “there are no bookstores in the city of Monrovia.” And even the textbooks can be read only during daylight hours because “the entire country is without electricity.”

This project seeks to create an inviting library stocked with children's classics and books on African folklore. A grant from the Trust is being used to build tables and bookshelves and to purchase books, chairs, and kerosene lamps.

LITHUANIA – VILNIUS. Transport, meals, and costs of admission for an excursion for abandoned and neglected children – a project proposed by Allie L. Almero, Office Management Specialist.

The Alytus Children's Home, about 1½ hours outside of Vilnius, is "the largest home in Lithuania for children between the ages of four and eighteen." Most of its residents "are not true orphans, but have been taken away from their parents because of chronic alcoholism, crimes or parental neglect." Of these children, perhaps the neediest are "those ... who are without relatives or foster parents and therefore must remain in the home all year round." For them, a special excursion – and the additional attention that goes along with it – can "provide sustenance to their emotional needs, if only for a day, by providing an experience during which they understand that others care about them." Unfortunately, though, the Home can ill afford organized trips, "since the children's basic nutritional and physical needs take priority."

In partnership with a local charity known as "A Path of Hope," and with support from the Trust, members of the Embassy community have orchestrated several annual excursions for 50 children (a different group each year) to the capital city. This year, renewed support from the Trust has enabled another 50 children to participate in the day-long trip, including a morning museum visit, lunch at McDonald's, and an afternoon devoted to a range of activities at the Vilnius Equestrian Center.

MACEDONIA – SKOPJE. Baseball and softball equipment for a community-building sports program – a project proposed by Timothy J. Donnay, USAID Supervisory Program Officer.

"Macedonians are noted for their love of the outdoors" and for sports like basketball and soccer, but "baseball and softball are relatively unknown," although they are growing in popularity elsewhere in Europe. In the belief that "baseball and softball provide a wonderful opportunity for kids, as well as adults, to learn the value of hard work, teamwork, and most importantly, sportsmanship," "the goal of this project is to get baseball and softball established in Macedonia." A number of kids in Skopje have registered to play, and parents and other interested people have volunteered to coach and to establish teams in rural communities. Some equipment donated by Pitch In For Baseball (associated with Little League Baseball) has been earmarked for "'incubator' programs ... to establish the sport outside of Skopje."

Funds from the Trust have enabled the construction in Skopje of backstops and a pitching and batting cage, renovation of a storage shed, and purchase of umpire equipment, bases, and batting aids.

MALAWI – LILONGWE. Books, equipment, supplies, and operating costs for a life-skills program for vulnerable children and vocational training for adults – a

project proposed by James and Kay Powell, parents of Elizabeth C. Powell, Community Liaison Officer, whose partner Maureen I. McGeough is a Regional Security Officer.

The Chilungamo Orphan Care Centre, in the capital city of Lilongwe, seeks to provide “kindergarten education, post school training and counseling services” to over 100 orphans and vulnerable children. It “is virtually destitute,” however, and “lacks basic needs.” By working with the Centre, this project seeks to help mitigate “the dire situation in Malawi” by contributing to “the alleviation of poverty and the shaping of Lilongwe’s society for the better.” For children, the Powells will help to establish an Early Childhood Development Centre” offering “a variety of programs” – including “arts and crafts, music, hygiene and self care, physical fitness and sports, [and] reading” – that will “enable participants to work together, respect themselves and others,” and acquire vocational and “leadership skills.” For young adults and widows, the Powells will “coordinate and assist” in the creation of a Vocational Training Centre, which will teach “a variety of trades including welding, plumbing, metal work, panel beating of spray painting, and tailoring.”

Funds from the Trust are being used to pay for the acquisition and shipping of used books and other re-usable materials, together with the purchase of playground and physical education equipment, a generator, storage containers, locks, first aid and medical supplies, and office furniture and equipment,

MALAYSIA – KUALA LUMPUR. Books, toys, school and medical supplies for Burmese refugee children – a project proposed by Jeffrey Hilsgen, Political Officer and Refugee Affairs Officer, and Sharon Haines, spouse of Legal Attaché Christopher Haines.

Almost all of the roughly 30,000 Burmese refugees living in Malaysia are members of ethnic groups that “have faced systematic persecution and a myriad of abuses from the Burmese government.” Unfortunately, their lot in Malaysia is not significantly better. The government considers them “illegal immigrants” “subject to arrest, caning and deportation,” they “are not allowed to work legally,” and “their children are prohibited from attending school.” Many “remain locked up in overcrowded and unsanitary illegal migrant detention centers.” What little help they have comes from each other: “the Burmese refugees have banded together and formed associations to advance their interests, protect each other and provide basic services.” One of these associations, the Alliance of Chin Refugees (ACR), seeks to “provide some basic education to refugee children” by operating two schools with volunteer support. One of these schools, for roughly 60 children, is run out of an apartment occupied by several refugee women settled there by the Chin Women’s Organization, now affiliated with the ACR. The second, serving 80 children, is situated in another rented apartment elsewhere in the city. These schools lack “money for basic supplies, equipment and one meal per day” – not to mention chairs or desks – for those children who attend. Because the United States has decided to accept “several thousand Burmese refugees” for resettlement, these students concentrate on learning basic English, although they also study “math, history, and grammar” in their native language.

In order to bolster the educational experience available at these schools, Trust funds are being used to purchase such items as “pencils, paper, color crayons, white board and markers, books for each reading level, scissors, glue, folders, name tags, and staplers,” as well as “motor development toys,” vitamins, and basic medical supplies.

MEXICO – TARAHUMARA. Materials and installation costs for rainwater harvest and retention systems in two rural communities – a project proposed by Nathan Macklin and Martha Crunkleton, Foreign Service Officers.

The Sierra Madre Mountains of western Chihuahua State, home to “the Tarahumara tribal people,” comprise an especially “poverty-stricken rural area of Mexico.” Some of poverty’s worst effects, however, can be mitigated by a reliable water supply. This project will acquire and install “two Rainwater Harvest and Retention Systems in two rural Tarahumara communities” under the supervision of Banco de Alimentos de Cuauhtemoc, a local non-profit that “prides itself on teaching its clients how to be self-sufficient.” The design consists simply of retrofitted gutters and a 6,000 gallon holding tank, but the system “allows a family to not only have abundant potable water, but also the ability” to cultivate a small garden. Each of these two systems will be installed in a “home with six or more family members and will be used by neighbors and community members.”

A grant from the Trust has been used to pay for the purchase and transport of construction materials for the systems and for garden plots, the services of a technical consultant to oversee the volunteer laborers, and gardening tools and training.

MOROCCO – SALE. Labor and materials to renovate three bathrooms at an orphanage – a project proposed by Nancy V. Riley, spouse of Ambassador Thomas Riley, and Touria Bernoussi, a secretary at the Embassy.

The “historic city” of Sale, “just across the Bouregreg River from Rabat,” has “slowly slipped into poverty,” “with shantytowns clinging to its ancient walls and a poverty-stricken population faced with a high unemployment rate.” The orphans of Sale, however, are fortunate in one respect: the Sale orphanage is headed by a “fabulous director.” “With very little money, but with great personal strength and perseverance, [he] has made the orphanage a real home for the children,” who range from 7 to 18 years of age. While the children are well cared-for, however, “the bathrooms ... are now in a deplorable state. They are unsanitary, smell, and have broken pipes.” In addition, “there is no hot water,” so that “the children are forced to go to a ... public bath house” where, for a fee, they can bathe.

Funds from the Trust are being used “to purchase building materials and bathroom fixtures, and to have them safely and professionally installed.”

NAMIBIA – WINDHOEK. An encyclopedia set for an after-school program for disadvantaged youths – a project proposed by Joan O’Connor Newton, spouse of the USAID Director.

“Katutura, the former township area under the apartheid years,” is now “the residential area for the most disadvantaged residents of Windhoek.” The Katutura Youth Enterprises Center (KAYEC) “is a non-profit, faith-based educational organization” that offers “occupational training for out-of-school, out-of-work young people.” As an additional focus for “students 14 to 18 years old,” the Center recently added the International Youth Award (IYA), “a voluntary, after-school program which encourages personal growth, self-reliance and responsibility to one’s community” through activities in “four areas: (1) service; (2) skills acquisition; (3) physical education; and (4) adventurous expedition.” Those who complete basic requirements may advance to “higher levels of achievement.” The Award program is highly popular, and “the support [it] provides is crucial: adolescence has always been a shaky time but now with the HIV/ AIDS rates in Africa, it is a very high risk time of their lives.”

As part of the “skills acquisition” component of the program, Ms. Newton teaches a weekly after-school English language class and escorts her students on bi-weekly trips to the public library. “Strengthening English is crucial” because “all tenth graders are required to take standardized tests,” which they must pass in order to continue their education. In addition, all IYA students suffer from the absence of reference materials in KAYEC’s library. A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of an up-to-date World Book Encyclopedia set, which will “be invaluable to the students in preparation of papers for classes, projects, homework, browsing and exposure to subjects as yet unheard of.”

NICARAGUA – LOS AMADORES. Construction materials, workshop supplies, and furniture for an arts and crafts cooperative – a project proposed by Maria Regina Pontes, spouse of Daniel Bazán, Foreign Service Officer.

Subsistence farming yields few opportunities for generating disposable income, and it is often the women of a community who are especially motivated to do something about it. This is one such story. “Los Amadores is a rural community” just outside of Managua, where the 500 residents “live in extreme poverty, and illiteracy approaches 100%.” Several years ago, the needs of Los Amadores came to the attention of the Asociación de Damas Diplomáticas (the Association of Women Diplomats), who marshaled the resources needed to build and stock a community kitchen to feed the area’s 100-plus school children. Subsequent visits yielded another observation: “the women of Los Amadores, in between caring for their children and making the arduous trek to the community’s distant water source, reached out in search of activities that might bring in sorely needed income.” Ms. Pontes “began to teach a small group of women how to make baskets out of newspaper, a craft popular in Brazil,” her country of origin. The finished baskets are handsome works of art, “resemble[ing] something made out of plant or tree fiber such as rattan or bamboo,” and the project took off. “Soon, many of the women simply took wing and discovered the creativity within themselves,” making not only baskets but other items such as handbags.

Working with the Association, the cooperative quickly succeeded in marketing its products and went on to become something of a national media sensation. With a little persuasion, the mayor of the town surrounding Los Amadores agreed to donate land for a building, and to send educators to teach the adults how to read and write. As a result, a

new kitchen is being built near the elementary school, and the old one is being refurbished for use by the women artists. Funds from the Trust have helped to purchase cement, aluminum siding, paint, wire, molding, and shelving, as well as tables, chairs, and craft supplies.

NICARAGUA – MANAGUA. Materials and labor to install latrines and hand-washing facilities at an impoverished school – a project proposed by Patricia Sanders, spouse of the Drug Enforcement Administration Country Attaché.

The future of any country depends on its children and their “access to good quality education,” and this is especially true in Nicaragua, “the second poorest country in the Americas.” Yet parents were until recently required “to pay small fees to public schools to help cover the cost of desks, books and even electricity bills,” creating a huge disincentive. Although the national government has “enacted a new policy preventing public schools from levying any charges on students,” the resulting spike in public-school attendance (an increase of “over 30% practically overnight”) has created a different set of challenges. “Classrooms are overcrowded, the quality of education is low and basics such as desks, books, decent buildings and safe, secure playgrounds are in short supply.”

All of these problems are amply evident at Hilario Sánchez Primary School, located in one of Managua’s poorest barrios. In spite of the best efforts of teachers and the “many parents ... who participate actively ... and have contributed their time and labor,” “conditions at the school are dismal.” The students, who attend in shifts, must vie for an insufficient number of cast-off desks, and the building and grounds are in disrepair. “Worst of all, the original three-stall latrine” has “broken down walls,” “full pits,” and caved-in flooring. School officials and parents “have identified latrines and a hand-washing station as the most urgent priorities,” but a government plan to add classrooms at the school does not include latrines. A grant from the Trust is being used to buy and transport building materials and pay for skilled supervision of the volunteers who will build “a new four-stall latrine with a separate hand-washing station.”

ROMANIA – PLOIESTI. New mattresses and mattress pads for a home for disabled children – a project proposed by Kathleen Kavalec, Cultural Affairs Officer, and Isabella Alexandrescu, Cultural Assistant.

“The St. Andrei Center for Disabled Children serves as a home for disabled children,” ranging in age from “a few weeks to 18 years,” “whose parents are unable to care for them at home.” Though “clean and reasonably well-staffed,” the Center “suffers from a lack of resources.” Staff members have suggested that an especially urgent need is “new mattresses and mattress pads.” “Since many of the children spend a great deal of time in bed, and because many are incontinent, the mattresses tend to wear out quickly and become soiled over time.”

Several Embassy employees have donated sufficient money to purchase 20 new mattresses, and a grant from the Trust has been used to acquire 10 additional mattresses, 20 crib-size mattresses, and waterproof mattress covers.

RUSSIA – MOSCOW. Teachers for recreational activities and computer-skills courses for street children – a project proposed by Erin Krasik, Deputy Office Director for Democratic Initiatives.

The plight of Moscow's street children, "the majority of [whom] leave home because of family alcoholism and violence," is worsened by bureaucracy. "If a child runs away from home or is forced onto the streets, he or she often lacks the documentation needed to access public services, including a place to live and go to school." The alternative is a life of begging, drug and alcohol abuse, and (all too often) sexual abuse. Active Child Aid "reaches out to homeless children" in Moscow, "providing them with food, clothes, and emergency medical referrals," and trying to help them "return to families or orphanages." A recent affiliation with another charitable organization has enabled Active Child Aid to open a drop-in center where homeless kids can find "recreation and a safe place to spend a few hours every day." "This partnership creates an excellent opportunity to launch social and educational activities" to augment the "emergency assistance" offered by Active Child Aid.

This project seeks to take advantage of the opening of the drop-in center by offering computer-skills training (which many children desire as "a foundation for longer-term educational and job training programs"). The Trust has provided funds to hire "a professional computer instructor 2-3 times a week to introduce young people to the basics of computer usage and applications, and internet access and research."

RUSSIA – NIZHNE-SERGINSK REGION. Equipment and labor to create a sports facility for a children's shelter – a project proposed by Isabella Strohmeyer, Community Liaison Officer, and Virgil Strohmeyer, Public Affairs Officer.

As happens with many U.S. diplomatic offices around the world, the staff in Yekaterinberg enjoys a special bond with several local "organizations that have a history of informal affiliation with our Consulate." One relationship that "has become stronger and deeper with the years" is with a rural orphanage "where 30 children have found refuge not only from harsh family conditions, but also from ruthless Russian winters." Because the children have "little means to have fun if any at all," volunteers from the Consulate have developed a regular schedule of special events and contributed toys, books, and winter clothing.

"While all of these efforts are greatly appreciated," the Consular staff has decided to create "a sport/playground" as a contribution "that will have a lasting impact on [the children's] lives and become part of their everyday activities." At present, although "it is hard to imagine a child's daily existence without running, jumping, or playing," the orphanage has no "facility – indoors or outdoors – [in which] to play or engage in any physical activity." The new "mini-stadium" will feature basketball and volleyball courts, a soccer field, monkey bars, pull-up bars, and a catwalk. Project coordinators have secured partial sponsorship from three major companies, and funds from the Trust are being used to prepare the ground and create a grass surface; install goals, poles, and other hardware; and purchase balls, hoops, and nets.

SIERRA LEONE – TAIAMA. Equipment, supplies, and training costs to create a nutritional support program for malnourished children – a project proposed by Samuel H. Pieh, spouse of Foreign Service Health Practitioner Clara D. Pieh.

Of all of Africa's impoverished countries, Sierra Leone is among the most disadvantaged. 68% of its population "lives below the poverty level" as defined by the U.N.'s Human Development Index. Among the dreadful results are "an exceptionally high maternal mortality rate" and "the 2nd highest Infant Mortality Rate in the world," with "46% of infant and under-five deaths ... attributed to malnutrition." One promising means of combating the scourge of malnutrition is a "therapeutic food (RTUF) called 'Nikey gboteh,' which is a special kind of nutritional therapy consisting of locally harvested peanuts with the addition of vitamin and nutritional supplements." RTUF, whose nutritional value has been well established, is especially advantageous because it requires no refrigeration or daily preparation and "may be fed to children in small amounts many times a day."

This project aims "to ensure the availability of RTUF for sustained growth and development to malnourished children," within a health-education context intended to "monitor the status of the child [and to] share information about ... appropriate local foods, fruits and vegetables for proper nutritional support" of both children and breast-feeding mothers. A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase supplemental vitamins and minerals, as well as seeds and garden implements, and to engage a community health worker.

SOUTH AFRICA – PRETORIA. Computer and office equipment to enable improved record-keeping and communication for an organization providing oversight and coordination of care for children in crisis – a project proposed by Linda Ingalls, Office Manager to the Deputy Chief of Mission, Betsy Sherwood, spouse of a Diplomatic Courier; Victor Williams, spouse of a Legal Attaché; and two other members of Hearts & Hands, a volunteer organization.

The Tshwane Place of Safety (TPOS) performs a vital service in Pretoria. Devoted to "abandoned, abused, orphaned," "HIV-positive, disabled" and special-needs children, the organization "manag[es] more than 170 children in crisis, over 100 safety parents (homes) and 30 foster care parents." It also operates a weekly well-baby clinic and distributes "starter packs" of food and clothing to new foster parents. All of this "entails a heavy burden of administration," which includes "coordinating with South African officials and hospitals, [providing] safety and child care training [for] volunteer safety parents, and marketing." Accurate record-keeping and reliable communications are essential to such an enterprise, yet TPOS lacks the equipment necessary to the task. "Because basic survival needs of the children must come first ... office equipment routinely falls in priority." Aged machines often fail, so that "the organization risks losing important data," "urgent documents cannot be printed or faxed," maintaining "a proper database" is impossible, and tracking inventory of donated and purchased items "is very difficult."

This project seeks to help TPOS "operate more effectively – and thus manage the care for more children" – by acquiring "the technology to run a professional office that is able to

create databases, generate correspondence . . . , maintain timely and efficient communications with all participants,” and “create marketing materials” to pursue local funding. To these ends, a grant from the Trust has been used to purchase a fax machine, computer, monitor, and color laser printer.

SOUTH AFRICA – QUDENI TOWNSHIP. Connections for electricity and running water, an oven, security bars and locks, and clothing for children orphaned by AIDS – a project proposed by Richard Bienia, Regional Medical Manager, and his spouse Baroline Bienia.

“Arguably the most heart rendering consequence of AIDS occurs when it kills a child’s parents.” More than 350 AIDS orphans – “often six or seven of them” in a household – live in “the isolated township of Qudeni,” which is located in “a remote, impoverished, rural area.” The plight of these children is dire. They “may be left in the care of a granny, or may be living in a child-led household. The granny is impoverished and often incapable of caring for” them. They “have no access to electricity, transportation or social services, and no one to validate their humanity. They often sit alone. They are hungry and un-bathed, [and] have inadequate clothing and other household essentials such as soap or a blanket.”

Working with a friend who grew up in Qudeni Township, the Bienias have launched a project to help the village “overcome the paralysis that had arisen because of these overwhelming AIDS problems and . . . poverty.” Beginning with a township meeting that finally enabled villagers to talk openly about the “very taboo” subject of AIDS, the “Qudeni Community Project” has blossomed. It has acquired a building; enlisted volunteers; begun providing meals for children and planted “a survival garden”; delivered supplies and home-based care to especially needy households; furnished children’s clothing and some school uniforms; offered day care “for the younger children so that the older siblings can attend school”; created a service that allows youngsters to “drop in” for baths, clean clothes, and tea and bread; and acquired a cell phone charger that is used to charge batteries for a fee, thus generating a modest income. It now seeks to expand its services by hooking up to water and electricity, creating a kitchen, and securing the building. A grant from the Trust is being used to acquire electrical poles and wiring, purchase an electric oven, “connect to a community stand pipe,” install bars and locks on the doors and windows, and buy “100 school uniforms and shoes” (without which students cannot attend school) to be handed down from year to year.

SRI LANKA – MT. LAVINIA. Dressers and a safety cover for staircase railing for abandoned girls – a project proposed by Karie L. Ennis, Office Management Specialist.

Sri Lanka “is now and has been involved in a civil war” that has left “many families poverty ridden and living in crime infested areas.” The recent tsunami inflicted yet more damage, swelling the numbers of “street children who have been abandoned by their parents because they cannot care for them.” Clarendon Children’s Home is a refuge for such young girls. The building is old “and falling apart,” and the Sisters “are planning on building their own orphanage, hopefully within a year or two.”

Meanwhile, two matters are especially pressing. The first is the lack of a stair rail: there is an unprotected two-story drop down which “two young girls have already fallen.” The second is the decrepit state of the few dressers on hand. “Each girl arrives with nothing from the street. As she stays, she receives clothing, shoes, a few personal items, and her school books, but no place to keep these items.” “We want each girl who has lived a life on the street to feel [that she] has a private space,” so the Home plans to acquire 30 wooden dressers than can be used in the old building and moved to the new. While this supply will not be “enough for each girl to have her own dresser, [it will] be enough for most of the big girls.” Funds from the Trust are being used to install a protective stair rail and pay for the wood and labor needed to build the dressers.

SWAZILAND. Classroom furniture for several rural schools serving orphans and vulnerable children – a project proposed by Nelda Villines, Office Management Specialist, and her spouse Mwana Bermudes.

Ms. Villines and Mr. Bermudes, who have received Trust funding for AIDS-related efforts in the past, have undertaken “another ... project also related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Swaziland.” In response to “the high volume of orphans and vulnerable children” caused by the disease, community leaders have established “several rural preschools” around the country. These schools are staffed by volunteer teachers who “carry out their lessons in a small building with no furniture, no chalkboard, no books and no school supplies.” “Children attend school sitting on the floor, while the volunteer teacher presents her lessons standing up most of the day.”

While “the cost of commercial school furniture” is “prohibitive,” a solution has presented itself in the form of the wooden packing crates used to ship the personal belongings of Embassy personnel. “With the technical assistance of [a] local ... volunteer,” Mr. Bermudes came up with a design for “combo units” comprising a long table and two benches, each of which can seat up to five youngsters per side. A local carpenter built several units, and other Embassy staff members were inspired to donate their crates. With sufficient wood now in hand, this project will “build approximately 20 ‘combos’ and three heavy-duty teacher’s desks” to be donated to three schools for orphans. A grant from the Trust is being used to pay for nails, glue and similar materials, labor costs, and transportation.

TAIWAN – TAIPEI. Transportation and lunch for teen-age orphans to participate in an event focusing on globalization and trade, career choices, and networking – a project proposed by three members of the American Institute in Taiwan: Gregory M. Wong, Senior Commercial Officer; Allen Chien, Commercial Specialist; and Jacqueline Hong, Commercial Assistant.

“Like the ‘digital divide’ known to most Americans, there is also a ‘globalization divide’ where some people in transitional Asian economies are being left behind the economic miracles – due to being unprepared for the future labor force trends and rising needs for education and multilingual skills.” As “a small island that is increasingly politically isolated, and heavily dependent on global trade,” Taiwan is especially vulnerable to this phenomenon.

Future-Kids Taiwan is a program that seeks to “empower teenage orphans” by “giving them a booster shot of insight, contacts, strategies, and hope that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.” During “a packed day of hands-on activities,” participating youth receive an introduction to international business, lunch with local business leaders “who have achieved global success,” tour and attend a program at the Taipei World Trade Center, and receive additional resource books and contact information. Foreign Service volunteers will build on these initial contacts with “mentoring and and follow-up in the months and years ahead.” A grant from the Trust has been used to help cover the costs of transportation and lunch.

TAJIKISTAN – DUSHANBE. Used winter clothing and soap for impoverished nursing home residents – a project proposed by Elizabeth Horst, Chief of the Political and Economic Section.

The Pohati nursing home, whose residents “are largely ethnic Russians,” is among the most tragic victims of “a failed social system.” “Grinding poverty” prevails across the country, “the ninth-poorest ... in the world,” but “ethnic Russians are particularly bad off.” “[The recent] civil war drove away almost all the Russians and Germans” who could get out of Tajikistan, leaving behind “those [who were] too old or too poor to start a new life, who are now at the mercy of the state for their care.” Their suffering is especially acute in winter, when “most of rural Tajikistan receives [almost] no electricity.” Pohati gets “two hours ... in the morning and an hour or two in the evening” “under the best of circumstances.” When Ms. Horst visited, she found “the elderly residents [wearing] every layer of clothing they owned, and many huddled under their covers in bed all day.” To make matters still worse, donated items too often “disappear, likely taken by the nursing home’s underpaid staff, themselves living barely above the poverty line.”

In keeping with the elderly residents’ comments about “what we need the most,” and with a grant from the Trust, this project will directly “provide quality used winter clothing – jackets, sweaters, pants, socks, gloves,” as well as soap.

TOGO – KELEKPE N’TARE. Fencing, tools, supplies, and labor to create a gardening and reforestation project at a middle school in an impoverished area – a project proposed by María-Elena Dunn, spouse of the Ambassador, and Jesse Casanova, Peace Corps Volunteer.

In “the village of Kelekpe N’Tare ... less than 60 percent of the kids are able to attend school” because their families can’t afford to send them. For the same reason, these children are vulnerable “to being trafficked to Nigeria,” where they and their families are promised “money, an education, and a better life.” In fact “they are enslaved, starved, [and] abused,” but “in an area with no jobs and no reason to stay, many opt for leaving, frequently ‘sold’ by the parents who see no other way out.”

This “gardening and reforestation project” aims to give these vulnerable children three advantages: “some income” that will enable them to attend the local middle school; “an activity to keep them from being trafficked”; and “an environmental and business education.” A pilot group will plant vegetables and fruit trees and sell their crops at local and regional markets. In the process participants will learn agricultural skills such as

“composting, natural insecticides, double digging methods of gardening,” “crop rotations, [and] mango grafting,” plus “business tools includ[ing] cost benefit analysis, risk assessment, basic bookkeeping,” and niche marketing. Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase and transport gardening tools, seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides, and to cover the costs of clearing land and installing fencing.

TURKEY – ANKARA. Furnishings, computer equipment, and materials for a library in a squatter neighborhood – a project proposed by Shannon B. Farrell, Economic Officer.

Over the past few decades, Turkey’s cities have seen a significant influx of people from rural areas. Many end up living in communities like Mamek, “an impoverished district of Ankara” composed of “gecekodu,” the local name for “untitled single-story shanty structures.” From the government’s point of view, “squatter housing has developed into a major problem in Turkey’s largest urban centers,” yet this “well-maintained” neighborhood exhibits a “sense of pride and community.” “With minimal education, area residents generally obtain employment in the informal economy, living month-to-month and making improvements to their shanty structures as money permits.”

One of Mamek’s greatest achievements is its small neighborhood library, which “serves as the current venue for women’s adult literacy courses and children’s after school English, Math, Science and Turkish classes.” Although the facility is equipped with some tables, chairs, and bookshelves, “it desperately needs a facelift.” In addition, the library hopes to begin offering a preparatory course for the “national university entrance exam,” an advantage long enjoyed by more affluent students. A grant from the Trust is being used to buy paint, bathroom tiles, vinyl flooring, reading chairs, classroom tables and chairs, chalk and bulletin boards, and educational software.

TURKEY – MARDIN. Material, equipment, and training costs to establish a local-crafts project for low-income women – a project proposed by Margaret C. Pearson, Foreign Service Officer (retired).

“Southeastern Anatolia is the least developed region in Turkey,” where “many traditional families ... have been displaced because of civil unrest ... and the development of a major dam project.” “These displaced families often migrate” to already-overburdened cities, including Mardin. The tribal women “have traditional skills such as hand sewing and embroidery,” but they “are frequently illiterate” and have “no knowledge of how to turn these skills” into income-producing activity.

In cooperation with the non-profit group Anatolian Artisans (AnARt), this project will help some of these women “produce crafts that reflect their regional culture while utilizing local raw materials,” with the goal of creating objects “that will be appreciated in regional markets and beyond,” thus generating income for their creators and “enhanc[ing] the status of women within the family and community.” “Initial design ideas will be developed working with the crafts-women,” who will then be taught “how to follow patterns [and] sew to a high quality.” After prototypes are developed and market-tested, production will begin. Trust funds are being used to purchase local fabrics

and two sewing machines, and to cover the travel costs and and honorarium for a consulting “trainer/design expert.”

UGANDA – TORORO. A range of furnishings, appliances, equipment, and supplies, together with operating costs, to expand a nursery school for impoverished deaf children – a project proposed by Lorraine Alexander, an epidemiologist with the Global AIDS Program.

“There are no affordable schools for the deaf in Uganda,” and even the private boarding school at which Ms. Alexander first sponsored a deaf child “was dirty, ill-equipped” and disinclined to teach sign language. As a result, she joined with the founder of the Deaf Education and Development Organization (DEDO) to establish “a free nursery school” for “poor, preschool-aged deaf children” and to offer no-cost sign language classes for families and the community.

The school has been immensely successful, so that “now we have too many children who need to attend but live too far to commute.” Its needs have grown accordingly: dormitory accommodations for students who live too far away to walk and whose parents can’t afford transport; hearing assessments for the children; furniture, appliances, and office supplies; and a computer, software, and internet access. Funds from the Trust are being used to pay for a used computer and DVD player; playground equipment and toys; beds and bedding, mosquito nets and fans; a table and chairs; kitchen appliances and supplies; uniforms and school supplies; a generator; audiology testing and hearing aids; office furniture; food and vitamins; and fuel and utilities.

ZAMBIA – LUSAKA. Repairs and classroom furnishings and supplies for two local grade schools, and transportation to a videoconferencing center to facilitate the schools’ participation in a cultural exchange project with a grade school in the United States – a project proposed by Sanya Hunsucker, Office Management Specialist.

The Bridge to Africa project “is a cultural exchange between” the Palo Alto Elementary School in California and two local grade schools in Lusaka. The State Lodge Middle Basic School was selected to participate because it is “a government school with little or no resources, but a very motivated Principal and staff,” while “the Chainda Community School ... is [a school] for single or double parent orphans and some handicapped children.” “The children walk to both of these rural schools and some of them walk twelve or more miles a day.” Although the project “started out small with only one class involved in Zambia and one in California,” “it has mushroomed into a project that now completely involves all three schools.” “We start out with the children exchanging drawings of themselves, families and schools,” and photographs are also sent and posted. At the same time, “the teachers ... in Zambia are discussing with their students the differences and similarities” of the schools, “their students and cultures. In Palo Alto, they ... devote a unit of study to cover life in Africa, African geography and the cultural/social aspects.” The goal is “to make a connection with children across the world.”

“At the end of this project, the students and parents” in Palo Alto “will send approximately 20-25 boxes of school supplies” to Zambia, while the students in Zambia will “make a couple of simple toys that are very common here to be presented to the students” in California. A grant from the Trust is being used to arrange for a video conference between the *Zambian* and American students; to supply furniture, computer equipment, and a security grill for the schools in Zambia; and to provide and repair electricity and electrical fixtures at those schools.

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