

IAWG COUNTRY STUDIES: POLAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 1999, the Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training (IAWG) sent a team representing four federal agencies and the IAWG to Warsaw, Poland, to conduct a one-week study of international exchanges and training programs from the field perspective. There is a rich historical relationship between Poland and the United States that has included extensive exchange and training activities. Poland is currently undergoing a dramatic transformation as the country achieves its goals of democratization and conversion to a market economy. Many U.S. Government-sponsored programs implemented over the past decade have been designed to facilitate achieving these goals. The IAWG's country field study provides insight into programming unique to Poland, and may be illustrative of the potential life cycle of exchanges and training programs in other countries undergoing similar transformations.

The IAWG country field study team focused on these primary areas:

Verification of Fiscal Years 1997 and 1998 Inventories of USG Programs: More than 25 federal departments and agencies reported implementing exchanges and training programs with Poland in the past two fiscal years. However, the data reported to the IAWG is incomplete. Omissions can be traced to the definition of exchanges and training activities, the IAWG's reporting criteria, the *ad hoc* nature of many programs, inadequate personnel and data management resources, and the lack of clear mandates to collect and report information on participants.

Coordination and Cooperation: While there are few mechanisms for formal coordination of USG exchanges and training programs, there are informal coordination methods in place that work well. There is some potential for duplication and overlap, but increased communication (both at the Mission overseas and in Washington) and the implementation of enhanced data management practices would reduce the risk of duplication.

Performance Measurement and Standards: Personnel in Poland face the same challenges in measuring program results as their counterparts in Washington. Long-term results are difficult to anticipate and measure. Expectations of performance measurement must be clearly communicated by funding and implementing agencies. Data management systems are needed to reduce the burden of results tracking and reporting.

Partnership: The government and people of Poland are highly receptive to exchanges and training programs with the United States and knowledgeable about the many opportunities available to them. Host country input in general is quite high. The private sector and NGO

community is still not yet in a position to provide significant cost-sharing to U.S. Government programming, though some examples do exist. Institutionalization of relationships with the private sector could enhance partnership activities and create stable, long-term relationships.

Increasing Efficiency and Decreasing Costs: Efficiency and cost-cutting recommendations from the Mission centered on increasing administrative efficiencies, enhancing coordination and guarding against duplication. Employing alternate methodologies for exchanges and training, such as in-country training and distance education, are also used to reduce costs while maintaining program yield. Counting in-country and third-country training activities is recommended for the future.

Poland provides a testing ground to determine how best to bridge the critical transition from recipient to partner. In spite of Poland's growing relationship with the European Union, the United States still has a meaningful role. Poles continue to look to the United States as an important guide and ally. U.S. Government-sponsored exchanges and training programs are critical to maintaining this relationship.

OVERVIEW

U.S. Government-sponsored exchanges and training programs with Poland have had a long and productive history. With beginnings in the Communist period, these programs continue to be effective ten years after the sweeping victories of Solidarity. During the Communist and post-Communist periods, many Polish educators, leaders, and decision makers from all sectors of society participated in short- and long-term USG programs. Their participation in programs designed to transmit democratic values and processes as well as to demonstrate the benefits of capitalism, no doubt, facilitated the country's transition to democracy, the development of a market economy, membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Poland's likely accession to the European Union (EU). Poland is an exchanges and training success. That very success has modified the exchange relationship between Poland and the United States significantly.

Poland has developed into a training partner in the region. Poles trained in, or familiar with, USG programs now train their own nationals or third-country nationals in the region. USG funds, private foundation assistance, and Polish resources help support these efforts. There are indications that the Polish contributions to bilateral and multilateral exchange and training programs will be increased. Furthermore, it is anticipated that Poland's membership in the EU will mean sizeable EU resources available for training purposes.

Given this success and the anticipation of additional EU resources, the USG will need to redirect its support from programs designed to facilitate Poland's transition to democracy and the development of a market economy to those designed to strengthen democratization and private sector institutions. Decisions to move away from transition-oriented programs have already been made. As of fiscal year 2000, no new activities under the Support for East European Democracy Act (SEED) will be funded and

the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will close its mission in Poland. The Peace Corps will terminate its training activities in the following year and funds allocated in support of Poland's entry into NATO are no longer necessary. While recognizing that Poland's needs are evolving, it is essential that U.S. Government exchanges and training be sustained at a high level to reinforce the bilateral relationship. Hopefully, resources will be made available so that remaining programs can be refocused or enhanced and new programs developed which will solidify the democratic and market economic reforms which have been undertaken.

To get a sense of the nature and extent of U.S. Government exchanges and training programs in Poland and the direction they might take in the near future, a team of five individuals representing four U.S. Government agencies and the Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training (IAWG) conducted a one week country study in Warsaw, interviewing USG officials, Polish and American representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and officials of the Government of Poland (GOP). Because of the rich historical relationship between Poland and the United States, and the dramatic transformation in programming now underway, the IAWG's country study should not only provide insight into programming unique to Poland, but also be illustrative of the potential life cycle of exchanges and training programs in other countries. The findings of the IAWG's Poland field study team are contained in this report.

VERIFICATION OF FISCAL YEARS 1997 AND 1998 INVENTORIES OF USG PROGRAMS

More than 25 federal departments and agencies reported implementing exchanges and training programs with Poland in the last two fiscal years (1997 & 1998). The country field study team attempted to verify this data with field staff, focusing primarily on programs that were omitted and difficulties encountered when tracking program participants. Overall, the team found that the data provided by Washington did not give a complete picture of the magnitude of U.S. Government exchanges and training activities. There are significant activities that take place, many involving in-country or third-country training, that are not included in the annual reports. Omissions can be traced to the following causes:

- While most agencies systematically provide data on participants in traditional, long-term programs, they often do not collect information on *ad hoc* programs, such as programs that address specific requests from Polish government representatives, or one-time initiatives by the U.S. Government.
- Third-country programs are often omitted because they are also *ad hoc* in nature or the responsibility for reporting data is unclear. Does the responsibility rest with the country hosting the activity or with the country sending participants or trainers? In some instances, agencies voiced concerns that both participants and trainers may be either completely omitted from the data or double counted.
- Agencies continue to disagree on the definition of exchanges and training activities. Statutes limit several agencies in terms of the types of activities they can and can not implement. Therefore,

they are understandably cautious about identifying programs in terms that could be misconstrued by policy makers.

- The mandated definition of international exchanges and training participants is very broad, yet it excludes individuals who receive in-country training. Trainers that cross borders are counted under IAWG guidelines, but the in-country trainees who benefit from the activities are not. The Poland study found a strong emphasis placed on the development of in-country training programs and opportunities.
- The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires USG agencies to focus on program outcomes. Several agencies do not believe or have not articulated that counting the number of participants in an exchange or training program is important to achieve or evaluate the results of the program. This is most apparent in programs that focus on conflict resolution and promoting institutional change.
- The U.S. Embassy in Warsaw can only provide details on U.S. Government officials who must apply for country clearance prior to traveling to Poland to conduct training. Contract trainers or grant recipients conducting training may not be subject to the same country clearance requirement.
- Staff shortages due to recent budget reductions prevent the effective recording and tracking of participants in U.S. Government programs. When records exist they are, for the most part, in hard copy and have not been transferred to any type of automated data management system.

Executive Order 13055 -- and the related provisions of the Omnibus Authorization Bill -- calls for improving the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of U.S. Government international exchanges and training. To achieve its mandate, the IAWG needs to reconsider the type of data it collects. Is counting the number of people that cross borders in support of or as part of international exchanges and training programs of primary importance? Do we get a full picture of exchanges and training activities if we neglect counting individuals trained in their home country? How do we evaluate training if we don't know more about the quality or results? During the Poland study, interviewees repeatedly pointed out that the inventory exercise conducted by the IAWG focuses on a very particular type of programming -- traditional exchanges -- and does not reflect the priorities of many government agencies, the reality of budgetary and programmatic constraints, or the results orientation now mandated throughout government.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The study team reviewed in-country coordination and cooperation among administrators of U.S. Government programs. The team examined existing programs to assess the level of information-sharing, complementarity, synergy, duplication and/or overlap.

The team found few mechanisms for formal, overarching coordination of all government exchanges and training programs at the Mission. However, innumerable informal coordination mechanisms do exist. The overall atmosphere at the Mission is highly cooperative. While Mission representatives acknowledge the existence of some overlap and duplication, they emphasize that they have taken steps to increase communication, coordination, and cooperation.

Country team meetings and the Mission Performance Plan (MPP) process represent the broadest and most formal coordination efforts at the Mission.

- AmEmbassy Poland conducts thrice weekly country team meetings involving officials of each government agency represented at the Mission. The meetings provide an opportunity for team members to discuss important activities and Mission priorities. However, the country team meetings focus on the most urgent Mission business and a wide range of Mission activities, of which exchanges and training programs are one small part.
- The annual MPP process provides an opportunity for the various Mission elements to develop the goals and objectives of the Mission in a cooperative manner and link them to resource requests. However, the MPP process does not delve into details of specific program implementation and so cannot really be used as an effective tool for detailed coordination. One representative described it as a "paper exercise" and another as "not functioning, vague". Also the MPP process happens once each year and would not reflect *ad hoc* programming or changes in priorities that would develop within these periods.

In addition to these two overarching coordination mechanisms, some agency- or issue-specific "teams" and programs within the Embassy take a formal approach to coordination. Two USIA-administered programs, the International Visitors Program and the Democracy Commission Grants program (both of which will be discussed subsequently in this report) involve representatives from other government agencies in their selection processes. Various U.S. Government representatives, as members of the Binational Commission, also participate in the selection of Fulbright Fellows.

The widespread informal coordination at the Mission succeeds largely because of the personalities involved, the collegiality at the Mission, and the receptive and cooperative environment fostered by the government and people of Poland.

In the area of military/defense programming, the IAWG country field study team encountered one of the best examples of coordination, not only among Mission personnel but also between Mission personnel and host government representatives.

Case Study

The IAWG country field study team met jointly with the Defense Attaché, the

representative from the Office of Defense Cooperation, the representative to the Military Liaison Team, and the political/military officer for the Embassy. This "team" possessed extensive knowledge about the range of programs being implemented in Poland not only by the U.S. Government, but by other countries as well. The team provided some missing data from the IAWG's inventory of programs and discussed challenges in collecting the information.

This defense/military team uses a combination of informal and formal cooperative mechanisms to maximize available resources and to present a coherent and effective programming package in Poland. Formal cooperation involves not only team members and their Mission colleagues, but Polish and NATO officials as well. About three years ago the Embassy initiated monthly meetings that brought together various elements of the Polish government to manage defense-related issues interdepartmentally. The Deputy Chief of Mission and a representative from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs chair these meetings. The defense/military team formed a sub-group to meet with their Polish counterparts monthly to discuss interoperability issues. Based on an assessment of current needs, a new subgroup will be formed to discuss issues of procurement, with the aim of assisting the Poles in employing a logical, sequential, and transparent acquisition process. Additionally, the Defense Attaches from NATO countries periodically meet to discuss programming, and other matters.

The defense/military team also works together informally to determine the best approach to meeting specific goals. They appear to place a high degree of importance on needs assessments and tailored programming, and compare team-wide resources to determine the most appropriate and efficient means to address education and training needs.

While the level of activity in Poland creates significant opportunity for duplication, this appears to have been avoided. This is due, in part, to the close working relationships with Polish counterparts. They make the final decisions regarding what programming to pursue and how best to apportion training and exchange opportunities among staff. Close coordination and communication also help prevent duplicative efforts.

Challenges Faced

The defense/military team identified two major challenges in implementing exchanges and training programs in Poland:

- Shortage of English-qualified participants: The Defense Language Institute (in the U.S.), 15 Department of Defense International Military Education and Training (IMET) laboratories, and NATO partners teach English. But, proficiency is difficult to attain and is highly perishable. It is unclear whether the Polish military takes steps to maintain proficiency among those who have studied the language. Also, with NATO membership,

many English-qualified individuals have been moved to NATO billets. Staff shifts make it difficult to find English-qualified participants and people who can leave their positions to receive training.

- "Cold turkey" cessation of some types of funding: With NATO membership, significant financial assistance ended. It would have been easier, from a programming standpoint, to have gradually phased out funding.

The defense/military team tracks program results and the subsequent postings of program participants. One result clearly is unquestionable. The defense/military exchanges and training programs helped Poland to become a member of NATO.

The IAWG tasked its country field study teams to look specifically at coordination, duplication, and overlap in two major program areas: rule of law/administration of justice programs and international visitors programs. The *FY 1997 Annual Report* identified these two areas as having the potential for duplication.

Rule of Law/Administration of Justice

Many federal agencies are or have been involved in implementing rule of law/administration of justice programs in Poland. The law and democracy team, which consists of the Consul General, the Regional Security Officer, the Legal Attaché (FBI), and the Resident Legal Advisor (DOJ), coordinates these efforts at the Mission. Since the team is small and the individuals enjoy close working relationships, it meets and interacts informally and does not subscribe to more formalized operating procedures. The team keeps no formal records of programs or participants because (a) it is believed that agencies initiating programs keep such records and (b) time and staffing shortages at the Mission prevent it from doing so. As a result, no one compares the participant lists to ensure that there is no duplication in the training of Poles under similar programs/courses. The team depends largely on the Government of Poland to recommend the appropriate people to receive training that benefits them, their organization, and society.

The law and democracy team focuses primarily on law enforcement programs. While there are programs in this area sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Agency and the U.S. Customs Service, no representatives from these organizations are stationed in Poland. Any coordination that takes place must be directed through those organizations' representatives in Berlin. The law and democracy team does not include representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Information Service (USIS/USIA), even though these agencies have a history of rule of law programming. Additionally, the law and democracy team emphasized that law enforcement training could not be entirely effective without legislative reform. While the Resident Legal Advisor of the Department of Justice works actively in this area, it is not certain whether the law and democracy team has the input of similar efforts by USAID and USIA.

Several rule of law/administration of justice programs or activities have been omitted from the IAWG's inventory of programs. The law and democracy team members believe that many U.S. trainers traveling to Poland are not counted, and that Poles traveling to third countries for training may also have been omitted in some instances. The absence of automated records at the Mission makes it difficult to verify or quantify the discrepancies. Many Mission elements face a common challenge: recent government staffing reductions and the wide range of responsibilities held by the government representatives in the field results in insufficient personnel to actively track and collate data on program participants. As stated earlier, with limited resources, tracking program results is far more important to the program than quantifying and tracking participant data. Team members also do not have the time or resources to compare participant lists to ensure that there is no participant duplication. They largely depend on their Polish counterparts to ensure that the most appropriate people receive training and benefit from exchange experiences.

The law and democracy programs at the Mission face several challenges in addition to limited personnel:

- First, the team indicated that not all law and democracy training and exchange activities are coordinated through the Mission. When Polish officials travel to the United States, they may hold discussions with counterparts in the U.S. and agree to joint programming that is not then coordinated through the law and democracy team. This is disruptive, can lead to duplicative programming, and limits the team's ability to spread resources among host country institutions in a way that best addresses U.S. Government priorities and objectives.
- Second, it appears that funding for and implementation of law enforcement and rule of law programs are often separated between and among agencies. Agencies do not always accurately or adequately respond to the input provided by the Mission through both the MPP process and through more specific planning exercises. There is a perception at the Mission that some programming is not tailored to the needs of Polish institutions or country-team objectives, as communicated by the Mission. "Hot topics" in other regions or countries affect "funding" agency decisions and "implementing" agency program content, but may hold no relevance to the Polish situation. There seems to be inconsistent recognition of this in Washington. Mission personnel suggested that through needs assessments and/or discussions with the Mission these problems could be resolved.
- Finally, the delay of interagency funding transfers presents programming obstacles and disruptions, delaying implementation, costing staff time and negatively affecting overarching implementation plans.

In sum, the IAWG country field study team determined that a high risk of duplicative programming exists in the area of administration of justice/rule of law. Why? Because so many agencies operate these types of programs (not to mention NGOs and European entities); activities developed in Washington are not systematically coordinated through the Mission; and the existing Mission "team" does not track program activities and information and does not include some key players in rule of law programming.

To address these issues, the Mission could benefit from a full-time dedicated staff position to coordinate rule of law/ administration of justice activities. The team should be expanded to include representatives from all agencies involved in rule of law/administration of justice programs. Finally, coordination of funding, as well as planning and implementation difficulties with Washington would need to be corrected. There clearly needs to be more coherent coordination of activities by State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs or another centralized coordination body, streamlining of the funding transfer process, and enhanced responsiveness to programming requests articulated by the Mission.

International Visitors Programs

Most of the U.S. Government international visitors programs involving Polish participants occur on an *ad hoc* basis; an individual who wants to develop a program contacts an agency directly and works with them to put together a schedule of meetings. The individual's company, the Polish government, international organizations or non-governmental organizations fund these programs. The exception to this is the U.S. Information Agency's (USIA/USIS) International Visitors Program. With this field-driven program, Mission representatives nominate candidates to be sent on a highly structured, U.S. Government-funded program lasting 3-4 weeks. (Participants in USIA's Voluntary Visitor program usually receive programming anywhere from 2 days to 2 weeks. These visitors are responsible for arranging and paying for their own international airfare to the United States.)

The operation of this program at the Mission demonstrates good coordination among agencies. At the beginning of each program cycle, a call for nominations to the program goes out from USIS to the rest of the Embassy community. Out of about 120 nominations, an interagency selection committee picks 50-55 participants each year. The Embassy attempts to screen out individuals who have had previous U.S. experience unless there is a compelling programmatic reason to allow them to participate. Prior to last year, there was no automated system for tracking international visitors, but now USIS representatives enter this data directly into USIA's Exchange Visitor Database (EVDB). Activities of program alumni, however, are still largely tracked on paper and through the institutional memory of staff.

From the Mission perspective there is little concern about duplicating visitor program activities of other government agencies, largely because other government representatives at Mission do not initiate separate visitor programs. (Note: For the purpose of this report, the IAWG does not consider trade missions or promotion visits to be international visitors programs.) However, there is the potential for duplicating the activities of non-governmental organizations. Recently, USIS has taken steps to guard against this by developing a cooperative relationship with the German Marshall Fund, which runs a program that is very similar to the USIA International Visitors Program. These two programs now compare participant lists to avoid selecting the same candidates and to ensure a fair and beneficial distribution of resources.

Throughout our meetings with Embassy personnel we heard many suggestions on how to improve the coordination of exchanges and training programs at the Mission. They include:

- Sharing resource requests/planning documents: While all agencies represented at Mission cooperate on the preparation of the Mission Performance Plan, this document does not address specific resource requests and program plans for specific agency elements. Sharing the more specific resource allocation or planning documents from each agency at the Mission would contribute to a better trans-agency understanding of programs, enhance communication, and promote an environment more open to coordination.
- Establishing an interagency exchanges and training database into which basic participant and program data could be entered: Such a database could be used to inform other elements within the Embassy of upcoming or recent programs and to check programs for duplication and overlap of both purpose and participants.
- Establishing an interagency exchanges and training committee: This committee could meet on a regular basis to coordinate and share information on exchanges and training activities.
- Using existing data collection systems to coordinate or distribute participant information: There may be several systems at the Mission that could be used to share information on participants among government representatives to avoid "double dipping" and to count the number of program participants that travel from Poland to the United States. For instance, J visa recipients could potentially be tracked using the Consular Section database, though some modifications would be necessary to provide information on program sponsorship. Another suggestion voiced during our study was to use the background checks system that is required prior to sending participants to the U.S. as a means to collect participant information.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND STANDARDS

U.S. Government personnel in Poland face many of the same issues and challenges as their Washington counterparts with regard to developing performance measures and measuring results. While long-term results are often more important than those obtained in the short-term, measuring the long-term effect of a program is difficult. Aside from programs designed to impart specific, technical knowledge or expertise, many U.S. Government exchanges and training programs focus on enhancing understanding and changing people's opinions and attitudes. Measuring results of these types of programs presents a challenge, for opinions and attitudes often are not predetermined and do not become apparent until long after the program concludes.

Many Polish government officials have participated in the international visitors program. During their time in the United States, participants get exposure to a wide variety of issues and meet with many professional counterparts. Upon returning home, the officials' attitudes may be slightly altered and affect

subsequent professional activities and decisions. However, tracking and recording these subtle changes is difficult. And there is no objective way to attribute them directly to the U.S. exchange experience.

Important long-term results often exceed the original goals of exchanges and training activities. The University of Warsaw Law Center, for example, provides Eastern European students with a foundation in American law through a linkage with the University of Florida School of Law. The relationship has been nurtured over the last 10 years and periodically received U.S. Government support and SEED funding. However, it was not clear at the outset that the Law Center and the granting of degrees would be the end result. This important result would not have been captured in a short-term review.

"Results" tracking seems to fall into two distinct categories at the Mission: tracking of outcomes and tracking of people. Tracking outcomes may range from noting the resolution of trade disputes or regulatory disagreements to evaluating long-term legislative trends and the evolution of public attitudes. The former is easier to track and evaluate. For instance, the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service implements a veterinary exchange that facilitates the negotiation of health certificates. This has a direct and measurable impact on U.S. exports of meat products to Poland. Linking long-term legislative trends and changes in public attitudes to particular program activities is a far greater challenge. Tracking of people focuses on the individual participant and his/her activities, such as skills enhancement, professional achievements, decision making roles, and personal initiatives and policy contributions that can be traced back to the program. While this type of tracking is possible, it is incredibly labor intensive and requires a sophisticated data management system to be useful. Many agencies employ both approaches, depending on the type of program or activity implemented, but a significant number focus more specifically on examining actions or trends. A few others concentrate on *institutional* change and don't focus on individual participants.

Case Study

The U.S. Agency for International Development uses a systematic approach to performance measurement through its Results Review and Resource Request (R4) process. This three-phased process includes:

- Multi-year Strategic Objectives (SOs), which USAID prepares and vetts in collaboration with key partner organizations, and shares with all other agencies at the Mission. USAID Poland established two overarching SOs: 1) to stimulate private sector development at the firm level, and 2) to increase local government effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability. (In 1989, when the U.S. began developing programs to assist with Poland's transition to democracy and market economy, USAID decided that this would be a 10-year effort.)
- Intermediate Results (IRs) or incremental targets/goals to chart progress toward achievement of the longer term (10-year) development strategy; and

- Performance Indicators, i.e., objectively verifiable measurements against established baseline data. Example: number of state-owned enterprises privatized with U.S. technical assistance, number of citizens who think local government is effective and prudently managing public resources/providing services. Training/skills enhancement programs directly support achievement of the strategic objective.

The objectives to be achieved determines the request for an allocation of personnel and financial resources, including the resources that are devoted to skills enhancement activities and technical assistance. USAID Poland and the Europe and Independent States Bureau stage an annual review of progress toward the achievement of the strategic objectives.

USAID shares copies of the R4 document with other U.S. Government agencies and with Polish partner organizations. The Agency also posts this document on its web page for easy access to the public-at-large. Thus, USAID's performance measurement standards encompass the three critical elements of objectivity, transparency, and accountability.

Representatives at the Mission requested that Washington agencies develop an across-the-board process to provide data. Creating a single set of recommendations for performance measurement would fail to recognize the dissimilarity of program priorities and goals. However, the following procedural recommendations can be shared among agencies at the Mission:

Automate tracking systems: Institutional records of program results and achievements of program alumni are often scattered throughout various paper files or maintained in the memory of long-term employees. To capture results, a systematic, automated approach for recording and preserving this information should be adopted. However, we again return to the issue of staff shortages. Any attempt to go back through previous records and/or to transfer information into a database-type system would take incredible amounts of time and energy throughout the Embassy. The problems remains that there are not enough hours in the day to devote to this type of activity, especially when it would result in sacrificing the very programs on which it would be designed to report. Should tracking and archiving records be deemed a priority, thought should be given to hiring a contractor for this purpose.

Create alumni networks: Alumni networks can facilitate participant tracking, enable alumni to share and build upon their U.S. experiences, and serve as a continuing link to the program's target audiences.

Clarify goals and responsibilities: The initiating agency needs to articulate the goals of a given program activity and to determine up front who will measure the results of the activity. Some individuals at the Mission indicated that they do not track results because they had never been instructed to do so. In the case of third-country training, it is not always clear who holds the responsibility for results reporting: the funding element (located in Washington, D.C.), the implementing element (the agency or entity that provides the training), the sending element (the Mission where participants originate), or the receiving/training element (the Mission where participants are trained).

HOST COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP

Given the rich historical relationship between Poland and the United States, as described in the overview of this report, it is no surprise that the government and people of Poland favor the exchanges and training programs with the United States and know about the many opportunities available to them. Host country input varies from program to program, but in general is quite high. The example of cooperation found in defense/military programming is noted above. In law enforcement programs, the host government plays a crucial role in selecting participants and determining needs. Additionally, there is a high level of cooperation with the Ministry of Education. In addition to cooperation under the J. William Fulbright Program and the Center for Civic Education, which are both detailed below, the Ministry also has played an important role with the Peace Corps English teaching program. Peace Corps volunteers that teach English are paid and housed by the Ministry of Education. This financial support has enabled the program to exist as long as it has.

Case Study

Inaugurated in 1959, the U.S. - Poland Fulbright Program is the longest running and largest academic exchange program in Central and Eastern Europe. Polish Fulbright alumni, who now number nearly 1,500, are prominent in national life and include ministers, members of parliament and the mayor of Warsaw. In 1990, the Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission was established through bilateral agreement, solidifying this program as a true partnership. Administered by a binational board comprised of five Polish leaders and five Americans, the Commission developed a program that reinforces Poland's advancement toward democracy and a free-market economy. While the U.S. Government continues to provide most of the program funds, the Polish Government offers significant support such as the Commission's office rental and utilities and *zloty* stipends for U.S. lecturers and students, round-trip travel for Polish grantees, and a two-week orientation program for new U.S. grantees.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

When examining public-private partnerships in Poland, it is more useful to focus on the degree of input, coordination, and cooperation as opposed to actual cost-sharing and leveraging. While Poland has made huge strides in establishing a healthy market economy, the private sector and NGO community is still not yet in a position to provide significant cost-sharing to U.S. Government programming, though some examples of this do exist. The team noted that in several types of programs that involve Polish private sector representatives, such as trade missions arranged by the Department of Commerce's Foreign Commercial Service and some programs of the Foreign Agricultural Service, business entities are

required to fund their participants. Some exchange programs operate cooperatively with private foundations. For example, USIS has cooperated with the Stefan Batory Foundation to support participants in its Voluntary Visitors program. Mostly, however, partnership takes on the form of cooperative program development, in-kind support, and program advertising and recruitment.

At this time, relationships with many private sector entities are informal and based on personal contacts. With frequent staff changes on both sides, these relationships are tenuous. Institutionalization of relationships could enhance partnership activities and create more stable long-term relationships.

BEST PRACTICES

In addition to the examples listed in the preceding sections, the country field study team identified several other administrative and programmatic best practices found in Poland.

Democracy Commission Grants

Funded through SEED since FY 1994, the United States Information Service administers a small grant program aimed at developing NGOs and supporting grass-roots activities which foster democracy in Poland. This program is particularly effective because it is bureaucratically simple and can respond quickly to targets of opportunity. USIS solicits applications for grants, which cannot exceed \$24,000, on a quarterly basis. A mission-wide committee, headed by the Deputy Chief of Mission, awarded more than 180 Democracy Commission grants in Poland from FY 1994-98 at a total cost of \$1,711,999.

Recent examples of grant recipients include the Global Action Plan Foundation to create local-level environmental policies; the Educational Association for Human Rights to support workshops for secondary students; the Women's Mutual Aid Movement for work to abolish discrimination of women; and the Polish Association of Legal Education for projects to strengthen the rule of law.

Center for Citizenship Education Programming

The Center for Citizenship Education aims to strengthen democracy in Poland through educational reform. With support from the U.S. Information Agency, the U.S. Department of Education (USED), and the U.S. Agency for International Development, along with a multitude of private foundations, and government (both Polish and foreign) organizations, the Center engages in the following types of educational activities:

- The training of Polish elementary, secondary, and university teachers to become leaders in effecting democratic change.
- The development of instructional materials to help teachers train students to become responsible citizens. It should be noted 30 percent of Polish teachers use materials developed by the Center.

The Ministry of Education's (MINED) support and local government endorsement for this activity assures it further use.

- The development of a manual for teaching civics based on the experiences of Polish teachers who have taught in this subject area.
- The maintenance of linkages with Ohio State University's Citizenship Development Program to review and comment on the materials developed by the Center.
- The fostering, establishment, and maintenance of linkages between university professors from Departments of History and elementary and secondary school teachers. As is the case in the United States, these linkages are difficult to establish and maintain.
- The support of visits by U.S. teachers to Poland to a) present guest lectures to Polish teachers, b) share cross cultural experiences in the teaching of civics and c) develop instructional materials for U.S. students to help them understand the nature of democracy and its processes as perceived by Poles as citizens of an emerging democratic state within the NATO and EU structures.
- Serve as a consultant to teachers and officials from other countries of the region and includes teachers from these countries in its civic training courses.

Through the Center for Citizenship Education, a small amount of federal seed money directly impacted on teaching the teachers of civics, teaching teachers, and teaching students the processes and values associated with democracy. The involvement of MINED and local governments and the pedagogical methodologies employed to teach civics, spills over into the other disciplines, suggesting that these programs made a significant, and long-lasting, impact on the educational system of Poland.

USAID Local Government Initiative

USAID's approach to sponsored training is a best practice in several respects:

It targets specific areas that support attainment of the major objective of strengthening democracy in Poland through its focus on local governments.

It concentrates on a realistically manageable number of regions.

Post-communism assessments showed that the development of decentralized governance was one of the greatest challenges for most, if not all, of Poland's 2,500 cities and towns (known as "gminas"). During the first four years of independence (1990-1994) more than 12,000 fledgling NGOs emerged and began to focus mainly on quality of life issues (democracy, environment, social welfare), primarily at the community level. Clearly, USAID resources were not adequate to cover the wide spectrum of needs. Thus, USAID's U.S.-based training targeted key areas (community development, public administration,

health, business, economics, finance, environment/energy, privatization, etc.) for hundreds of Poles. Many of the participants were sent to the United States in groups in the interest of cost efficiencies. Thousands of others participated in USAID's in-country training activities, which focused on training trainers.

Through NGO partnerships, USAID is providing skills enhancement and other assistance that, so far, has resulted in the development of 48 local government initiatives, commonly known as local government partnership programs (LGPPs). In a nutshell, these partnerships aid local governments to become more responsive, more efficient, and more accountable, focusing on land management, housing management, financial management, and strategic planning. They evolved from eight pilot activities to a multi-dimensional initiative that helps strengthen the capacity of a wide range of Polish institutions, research centers, academic entities, and professional associations such as city treasurers, economic development officials, and city secretaries/notaries, drawing heavily on participant training internships, and other types of exchange programs.

A number of Polish associations established close ties with U.S. national and local municipal counterparts. These relationships are expected to endure long after USAID's presence in Poland. In order to share lessons learned, "best practices" and case studies from the 48 LGPPs will be disseminated to as many of the other 2,400 *gminas* as possible.

Overall, through the efforts of the LGPPs, local municipalities developed greater management efficiencies, increased their capacity to lobby and influence national policies, and drew more extensively on private organizations such as the nonprofit Housing Institute for solutions to government problems. One can rightly conclude that this component of USAID's 10-year strategy for assistance (training, partnerships, etc.) contributed significantly to the strengthening of democracy in Poland through its focus on the role of local government, and the broadening of participation, notably through non-governmental organizations.

Informal FSN Networks

During our meetings with two Foreign Service National Employees (FSNs) of the U.S. Information Service, they discussed informal networks of FSNs developed among the multi-country groups that received in-service training together in the United States. These networks provide a forum for discussing program management and administrative issues, for sharing useful contacts, and for providing emotional support to what can be a demanding and difficult job. This network works because it is kept small in size. Creating a larger list-serv for all FSNs would be inefficient and would quickly break down. FSN employees provide the backbone and the institutional knowledge for many, if not all, Embassy programs. By sharing their experience and expertise across Embassy lines, they are multiplying this knowledge and experience to benefit a much larger audience.

Worst Practices

While the team did not intend to include in this report a category for "worst practices," one point deserves to be articulated again. Throughout all our conversations there was a common thread that ran through any discussion of areas needing improvement: poor communication. Communication is not only important among various representatives at the Mission, but also among their Washington counterparts and between Mission representatives and their Washington counterparts. From minute administrative details to overarching policy formulation, Washington agency failure to obtain or respond to Mission input regarding procedures, policies, and planning results in decreased efficiency and waste. From unusable forms and inefficient grantee travel allowance disbursement policies to off-the shelf programming that does not address the needs of a target audience, lack of effective communication between Washington and the field offices is felt.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY & DECREASING COSTS

As part of the country field study, the team shared the IAWG's proposed approach to addressing the 10 percent cost savings plan requested by Congress. Recommendations from the Mission were centered on increasing administrative efficiencies and getting more "bang for the buck" by enhancing coordination and guarding against duplication.

A number of suggestions for enhancing program coordination have already been detailed. Most agree that having an automated data system into which program information could be entered and viewed by all agency representatives would both increase coordination and limit duplication. However, the problem of resources remains. The Mission would need the resources to establish such a system and the personnel resources to enter information. In today's current budget climate, this may present an insurmountable challenge.

One agency suggested that perhaps a coordinated administrative support position for exchanges and training programs would be useful. The staff person filling this position could handle activities such as IAP-66 preparation, basic orientation, records/data management and basic follow-up. This concept would likely be most useful to agencies with highly similar program implementation practices, but may not be useful to the whole range of activities represented at the Mission. It could be tried on a trial basis, perhaps, for visa preparation or data management, and expanded if feasible. One concern voiced by another agency representative about this idea is that it would add another "layer" through which documentation on program participants needs to pass and potentially would slow operations.

It is clear from trends in programming in Poland that alternative methodologies are also a popular means to decrease the costs of exchanges and training programs, while keeping program yields high:

- *In-country training*: The IAWG does not currently collect data on in-country training, but this is a critical methodology for sharing information and imparting skills in a cost-effective manner. While exchange programs are strongest when a culture can be experienced first-hand, training programs are well suited to in-country staging. In-country training is the primary emphasis of a

number of U.S. Government agencies, and should be reflected in IAWG statistics.

- *Third-country training*: Similarly, sending individuals to a third country for training can cut costs. Poland is both a recipient country and a sending country in this respect. It is not uncommon for Poles to travel to third countries to receive training (the FBI's International Law Enforcement Academy in Hungary is just one example), to conduct training (based on their status as the region's "success story") or for people from the region to receive training in Poland.
- *Train-the-trainer*: Programs that focus on training a smaller cadre of future trainers received mixed reviews from Mission representatives. One team indicated that the approach doesn't work well with non-technical programs, because you can't teach someone in a short period of time to change their ideology or outlook. Old ways creep back into subsequent training sessions. On technical programs or any program with the goals of familiarization or skills acquisition, however, train-the-trainer programs can provide a huge multiplier effect. Peace Corp environmental program volunteers sometimes benefit from this, being sent by their host organizations to third countries to receive training. They then relay the training back to their host organizations, allowing more people to benefit from the experience, especially those lacking the language skills to attend the original training.
- *Distance Education*: Several entities in Poland expressed interest in this approach, but recognize that start-up costs are high. One concern with distance education is the mental shift that would be required to accept distance education as a regular feature in academia. Psychologically, people may not be ready to replace a good lecturer with a computer or video screen. Also, professors at the university are paid based on the number of hours they lecture each year. If they shift to facilitating course materials provided through distance education programs, it may have negative salary implications. Perhaps distance learning could be utilized for short-term training programs or on an *ad hoc* basis.

CONCLUSION

Poland provides a clear example of how exchanges and training activities can foster deep and long lasting change. While each department and agency represented at the Mission has a different outlook and objectives, and therefore priorities, there do not appear to be any gaping holes or blatant cases of duplication and overlap. However, there is potential for duplication. Mission representatives agree that enhanced coordination would benefit everyone.

Poland is in a unique position in the region. Because of its success in navigating through the difficult transition from a communist system to democratic governance and market economy, Poland is seen by many program managers and policy makers as a regional model for achievement. Third-country training involving Poland is becoming commonplace, especially with regard to Ukrainians and Belarussians, though activities with other Eastern European countries are also common. In the case of Ukraine, the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperative Initiative (PAUCI) has been created to promote a democratic

society and market economy in Ukraine. PAUCI programming is designed to yield many significant benefits: Ukraine will draw on the reform experiences of Poland, relations between the two countries will deepen, regional security will be strengthened, and Poland will help build Ukrainian links to the West.

In the case of Belarus, Poland provides an accessible training environment to leaders who would never be allowed, for political reasons, to travel to the United States. The willingness of Polish entities to provide this assistance and tutelage is praiseworthy. One Polish foundation indicated that it uses a portion of its own budget to support activities in Belarus, not because it is mandated to do so, but because it recognizes that there are needs in Belarus that are not currently being met. Or in the word of a representative of that Foundation, "because it's the right thing to do."

As noted in the introduction of this paper, Poland has reached another crossroads; this one between assistance and accession. The majority of foreign aid funding is disappearing and will be replaced by programs aimed to speed Poland's accession to the European Union. But what of the gap between these two phases? One potential entity that may fill a part of this temporary void is the yet to be determined successor to the Polish American Enterprise Fund. *Gazeta Wyborcza* published an article in May noting that the White House is pushing for \$150 million from the Enterprise Fund to remain in Poland to support a new foundation which would fund civil society projects in Poland and promote reform concepts in Poland's eastern neighbors. While the future of such a foundation is not yet known, many entities in Poland are discussing the need for some such additional support for programming and are fully capable of utilizing available funds not only to solidify Poland's achievements, but to also share them and promote reform elsewhere in the region.

While aspects of the U.S. - Polish relationship are unique, the evolution of U.S. Government programming in Poland equips decision makers with lessons that can be applied to other countries in the region. Poland provides an excellent testing ground to determine how best to bridge the critical transition period from aid recipient to partner nation. In spite of Poland's successes and growing relations with the EU, the United States still has a meaningful role to fill. Poles continue to look to the United States as an important guide and ally. U.S. Government-sponsored exchanges and training programs are critical to maintaining this relationship and developing richer relations into the new millennium.