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OPINION SUBMISSION

USAID is Dead, Long Live USAID!
By Jeffrey Charles Hardy
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I have never been more dismayed than when I heard that the President's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) initiated actions that effectively shut down the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

I have good reason to be upset.

In 2012, USAID played a vital role advising our international Care for Peace Foundation as we built a prototype tele-connected Community Development and Health Center (CDHC) in a "deep rural" village in Myanmar.

Alongside Aung San Suu Kyi's Ministry of Health, the Myanmar People's Health Foundation, and the University of Virginia Center for Telehealth, the CDHC continues to thrive today.

Shortly after the CDHC started serving their village patients, the Myanmar military staged a violent coup that overthrew Aung San Suu Kyi's democratic government and placed her under house arrest, and more than 2,000 government officers were thrown into jail.

Thankfully, we got out without incident.

Despite the fall of the democratic Myanmar government, our mission continues to succeed: two of our local partners have already replicated our CDHC model in 22 rural townships and villages.

But can USAID be saved?

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established USAID as a single agency with a $40 billion annual budget to manage U.S. foreign aid, mainly focusing on economic and social development, health programs, disaster relief, and global support for democracies.

By 2012, Aung San Suu Kyi had greatly benefited from USAID's ongoing advice and support for Myanmar's emerging democracy.

Our role was to follow the advice of Bill Slater, then Director of USAID Myanmar, and begin the gradual development of a national health system, one remote clinic at a time.

In 2014, we marked our partnership with formal agreements to eventually build at least 250 more CDHCs in townships across the country.

Memorandum of Understanding Signing Meeting with
Government officials from the Myanmar Union, Rakhine State,
The Thahaya Association, The People's Health Foundation,
and Jeffrey Charles Hardy (November 14, 2014)

The recent actions by DOGE targeting USAID, which included a funding freeze and the cancellation of most foreign aid contracts, led to a significant decrease in its ability to fulfill its global public-spirited promise.

After overcoming my shock, I had an idea about who and how could help save USAID.

The first step in solving a problem is to understand how the President handles global issues.

He believes that business-focused solutions are the best way to negotiate the end of wars, reduce immigration, and tackle economic disparity.

For example, he has proposed creating a hotel strip along the Gaza coast that runs the entire length of the Mediterranean Sea.

To end the war in Ukraine, he has proposed an agreement with President Zelensky to divide mineral rights.

Following the President's idea, instead of trying to "save" USAID in its current form, we could transform the government-funded model into a Public-Private Partnership (P3) business model ("P3AID"), which would ultimately secure humanitarian and development funding from various government, business, and philanthropic sources.

Who can help start a P3AID development process?

One idea is to invite Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, who have committed to giving most of their wealth to charitable causes, and to make immediate use of their charitable trust, The Giving Pledge, to establish P3AID.

Along with their involvement in forming P3AID, they might invest 10% of their pledged donations to kickstart the modified program and give other socially- and environmentally-conscious American philanthropists a chance to donate where it is needed most.

The Giving Pledge contributors could also offer their expertise to support ongoing development, operational skills, and technology, similar to how the Care for Peace Foundation worked alongside USAID, the Myanmar government, our in-country partners, the University of Virginia Center for Telehealth, and the villagers in Myanmar.

It takes a global partnership to raise a village.

If Care for Peace can successfully collaborate with multiple public, nonprofit, and private partners on a small scale in Myanmar, it definitely could and should be expanded on a larger scale.

Although the story seems like it's right out of a movie, let's focus on saving USAID first.

"Through Care we can attain Peace"

The Care for Peace Community Development
And Health Center in Pantawpyin Village (West)
Rakhine State, Myanmar

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