

# MILESTONES





MILLENNIUM  
CHALLENGE CORPORATION  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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**MILESTONES**

**NEWS FROM THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION WINTER.2024**

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## CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF UNSUNG HEROES



Alice P. Albright, CEO

For twenty years, MCCers have built this organization from an ambitious start up into one of the United States’ premier development agencies. This team has played a crucial role in developing the successful partnerships that allow the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s impact to be lasting and far reaching. It hasn’t always been easy, but MCC has hit important milestones because of the hard work of everyone who works here.

The dedication of MCCers is as steadfast today as it was on January 23, 2004, when the Bush administration first launched MCC to help the world’s poorest countries build paths to a brighter future. Since MCC’s founding, this agency has delivered nearly \$17 billion in grant resources to 47 low-income and lower-middle-income countries across six continents, with programs lifting over 320 million people out of poverty. MCC’s unsung heroes made this happen over two decades, and this celebration honors their contributions.

As MCC continues to meet the moment—at a pivotal time marked by pandemics, conflicts, climate crisis, rising food and energy costs, and threats to democracy and human rights—the remarkable people behind MCC’s unique model remain an example for how enduring partnerships built by people in Washington and abroad can play a lasting role in making the world a better place. From the dedicated staff who started up the agency in the Bowen Building 20 years ago, to the talented team members focused on adapting to change, and everyone in between ... the dedication of those who work here has allowed MCC to thrive.

MCC has grown into a special place. MCC sees opportunity where others see challenges; this organization gives grants, when others give loans; and this team believes in the potential of a better tomorrow, even when times are tough. There is no other international development agency in the world that lives the values of selectivity, transparency, and country ownership the way MCC does, and the agency’s results over the past twenty years show just how powerful that model is in practice.

So, with that in mind, let this twentieth anniversary be an opportunity to celebrate the unsung heroes, who have created fundamental change in the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world. This includes 480,000 students in MCC education

programs, 440,000 trained farmers, many communities now benefitting from energy, and countless other people who have opportunities they may never have had without MCC’s partnership. This team has changed the world for the better and, today, we celebrate you. 🌟



Photo: Andrew Ladson, MCC

Members of MCC’s “Class of 2004” pose for a portrait. From left to right, standing: Sheri Chamblee, John Wingle, James Hallmark, Kyeh Kim, Kumar Ranganathan, Stephen Gaull. Seated: Stephanie Murphy, Sinnammal Souppaya.



## KYEH KIM

Kyeh took a gamble on MCC's reform-centered way of doing development, signed on as Africa Country Team Leader, and set out to improve lives. While serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer, she realized that the ability to get a good education and job, depended heavily on policies, resources and government leadership. People, the experience taught her, had to be in the driver's seat of their development future. That's what drew her to the experimental start-up, MCC:

"There was intense pressure to get things right and produce results quickly. We worked shoulder to shoulder building the organization, working nights and weekends. Despite the intensity, staff walked through the MCC doors each morning with zeal and a readiness to succeed.

That readiness has led to many achievements, ranging from committing billions of dollars to partners around the world to build real and meaningful change, over to mentoring and building relationships with MCC and MCA colleagues, governments and private sector partners that have joined me in making the world a better place." ✨



I viewed MCC as a disrupter in the world of development where well-intentioned organizations and individuals were trying to do the right things but with insufficient resources and sometimes misguided approaches.

**Policy:** MCC establishes country selection process and indicators **Operations:** MCC convenes 1st board meeting and selects 16 countries for MCC partnerships; MCC opens offices at Bowen; Senate confirms 1st MCC CEO (Paul Applegarth)

2004



## JONATHAN BROOKS

The poverty Jonathan witnessed growing up in Honduras shaped his views on how to make a meaningful difference. When he became a program officer in 2005, MCC’s core principles and fresh approach to poverty reduction resonated with him:

“MCC was still a development aid experiment. Everyone involved was working to achieve the best possible outcomes. Confusion about MCC’s new approach sometimes resulted in bureaucratic sharp elbows in the USG foreign affairs apparatus or unwillingness to share information and resources. But partner countries appeared eager to work with us and we were keen to learn and creatively resolve novel problems. Our drive to partner overseas and at home ultimately made us the success we are today.

Twenty years later, the design and implementation of our work continues to make us different, and pushes us to learn, collaborate and overcome the most difficult challenges. I remain encouraged because of our focus on the people whose lives we have the chance to improve.” ✨

At the time, MCC felt very much like a mash between a start-up, a brokerage firm, and an NGO, with driven and smart people working very hard to get programs designed and signed. People were relentlessly driving program design with significant freedom and responsibility.

**Operations:** MCC publishes 1st congressional budget request; **Program:** MCC establishes first Resident Country Missions

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2005

## JOHN WINGLE



President Bush assembled a dream team of development specialists from the U.S. Treasury, the State Department, and the U.S. Agency for International Development to catalyze his vision for development done differently. John and the other team members were tasked with creating MCC’s innovative partner country selection methodology—but it had to be transparent and easy to understand.

They nailed it! MCC’s scorecard was one of the agency’s first major milestones. Its creation made it possible for the world to easily see strengths and weaknesses in each country’s political investments and policy framework. For the countries themselves, it provided a path towards becoming eligible to work with MCC. It promoted productive dialogues on how to improve performance in ruling justly, investing in people, and encouraging economic freedom as a means to compact eligibility; and as a means of improving economic growth. The model established a way forward and will continue to work for years to come. ✨

It was difficult to identify indicators that had sufficient coverage and measured the policy or its outcome. (But) the scorecard was an immediate hit within the USG, the development community and with potential MCC partners.

**Operations:** 1st cohort of international staff—Resident Country Directors are placed overseas **Policy:** MCC adopts 1st constraints analysis for program design (Moldova) **Program:** MCC announces 1st agency Gender Policy

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2006



## BRETT BEARCE

MCC was transforming international development, and the agency needed a strong visual identify that made its innovative work recognizable anywhere in the world. In 2007 Brett began work with an agency that designed what would become a milestone in MCC branding—the star logo.

The agency’s first logo—which featured a white world map on a circular, navy-blue background—was eventually replaced with MCC’s iconic red, white, and blue star. The star logo gave MCC a bold, contemporary look that—much like the unique business model—sets MCC apart from other U.S. government aid agencies. Brett worked to develop a suite of materials for business card, fact sheet, and MCA program branding guidelines, which helped establish MCC’s brand as innovative, corporate, and contemporary.

Because of Brett, MCC’s efforts to reduce poverty around the world are instantly recognizable. ★

MCC wanted to differentiate itself from other U.S. government aid agencies because we were such a different, unique model in providing foreign assistance.

**Policy:** MCC completes 1st official constraints analysis (Mozambique); MCC adds natural resource management and land rights and access as a scorecard indicator

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2007

## CHRIS DUNN

Chris found fulfillment in MCC’s unique mission and approach to development, but his fondest memories relate to MCC’s culture of care and respect.

During MCC’s most stressful start-up years the agency cared deeply about building camaraderie among MCC colleagues. The annual employee survey asked questions like, Do you have a best friend at work? Chris always did.

His long list of accomplishments includes the successful closeouts of MCC’s first compacts in Armenia and Benin, and work to develop the first modifications policy, but Chris is most proud of the relationships he built with his MCC and partner country counterparts. He fondly recalls the Senegal Compact Development Team gathering in his honor at MCC’s old offices to sing Happy Birthday in Wolof.

MCC has been successful for 20 years because passionate people like Chris are united by their shared commitment to the agency’s powerful mission. ★

At the end of the day, I just tried to match the passion, commitment, and enthusiasm of my colleagues and MCC partner country counterparts.





## GIGI McDANIEL

A large part of MCC's appeal was its non-bureaucratic approach to business, so the agency's 2008 transition to a more regimented competitive service hiring process was a tough sell.

Gigi wasn't daunted. She knew that the benefits associated with competitive service outweighed the convenience of excepted service autonomy – a fact that MCC's evidence-focused leadership would quickly realize as their ability to access talented people across the federal government increased.

This MCC hiring milestone resulted in the agency's standardized hiring procedures and a shift from paper to electronic personnel files. More than a decade later, MCC staff continue to reap the benefits of Gigi's efforts – from permanent competitive status and an experience-based salary system, to defined career ladders. ✨

We were an excepted service organization. Transitioning to competitive service was the signal that MCC would be here to stay. It's been a challenge to convert this agency and establish our HR standards, but challenge is our middle name.

**Operations:** MCC completes 1st compact amendment process; **Policy:** MCC launches comprehensive constraints to growth analysis; MCC closes first threshold program in Tanzania

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2008

## STEPHANIE BURCH



Stacks of compact documentation made signings time-consuming and implementation overly complicated. There had to be a more efficient way to document compact agreements, rights, and responsibilities. Stephanie Burch found it and led the development of MCC's Program Implementation Agreement (PIA).

This operational milestone enabled MCC to replace confusing language with plain English, and ultimately helped foster better diplomatic relations with MCC partners.

The PIA streamlined compact documentation and reduced the number of legal documents for all parties involved, resulting in clearer compact negotiations with straightforward expectations for roles, responsibilities and compact implementation goals. To this day, these clear expectations empower our partner country counterparts to fully own the negotiation, development and implementation processes. ✨

Anytime you can clarify and simplify the legal rights and responsibilities of parties to a transaction, it helps to ensure that there is a true meeting of the minds, helps to avoid future disputes, and ultimately facilitates a successful partnership.

**Operations:** MCC has its 1st partial compact termination (Nicaragua); **Policy:** MCC's 1st M&E policy is published; President Barack Obama embraces MCC as an essential partner to combat global poverty.

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2009



GINA SPIRO

MCC's commitment to transparency and improving how we work required clear policies, guidelines, and procedures. But things started to get confusing after six years of country selections, multiple projects and the development of team-by-team processes for amending documents. MCC turned to Gina to lead the creation of a consistent, centralized policy repository for all MCC programs.

Her cross-agency initiative gathered all policy, guidance and guidelines developed since MCC's founding and outlined a collaborative policy change process. The final product was MCC's *Policy on Policies*—used to amend, develop and produce, and house all policies created at MCC.

With this key milestone, MCC team members can now analyze and respond to policy questions more quickly and engage in discussion and debate based on a shared understanding of applicable policies. Having a clear and consistent process and a policy repository to document lessons learned supports MCC's commitment to improving how we work. ★

We were striving for clarity and consistency. By creating a unified and collaborative process for agency policy changes, we successfully deployed a single resource where all MCC policies could be found. The Policy on Policies transformed how the agency works.

**Program:** MCC officially completes its 1st 5-year compact (Honduras)

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2010

KRISTIN PENN



As part of MCC's original Land and Agriculture Team, Kristin understood the importance of unlocking productive sector potential in countries where the poorest people are tied to the agricultural economy. While MCC established indicators for agriculture, land and water programs that impacted the poor and subsistence farmers, Kristin brought that respected data, analysis and evaluation to Feed the Future—the U.S. government's global hunger and food security initiative.

Kristin used MCC's data-driven approach to build Feed the Future's monitoring and evaluation system (FTFMS)—an unprecedented whole of government approach to global poverty. Kristin's work building FTFMS enabled all agencies within Feed the Future to fully maximize and report on their agricultural investments and measure their results and impact over time. To date, hundreds of millions of people have been appropriately counted as having benefitted from the government's food security efforts. This milestone marked one of the first times MCC's unique monitoring and evaluation approach was used as the foundation to build a vital tool for an interagency initiative. ★

Evaluations keep our work honest, demonstrate when we should adjust from lessons learned, and motivate us to do the job better. I was excited to bring MCC's data-driven approach to an initiative that continues to lift millions of people out of poverty.

**Policy:** The MCC scorecard adds the control of corruption and democratic rights indicators **Operations:** MCC receives its 1st clean audit opinion, starting a 13-year clean audit streak

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2011



## DAN CALLAHAN

As a military rebellion escalated in Mali, Dan patiently consoled a distraught employee in Bamako. There was just one month before elections and so much had been invested and accomplished in what had been a model democracy. Then uncertainty occurred in a flash, marking MCC's most unfortunate milestone—a partner country coup d'état.

The employee's safe removal was Dan's top priority, and a stark reminder that MCC's work to spark economic growth in countries has a direct impact on the lives of overseas staff. Since that day in 2012, Dan has managed emergency MCC staff evacuations in Burkina Faso and Niger. He also orchestrated the complex return of over 30 staff and their families during the COVID 19 pandemic—a time of airport closures, housing scarcity and general fear of the unknown.

Today, MCC has 31 overseas employees posted—many with families. Dan manages the logistics and care of these valued employees who are the first, and often lasting, representatives of MCC to the countries it partners with. MCC can fully deliver on its mission because of Dan and the work he's done to ensure the safety and success of MCC's overseas employees. ★

Overseas staff are MCC's bread and butter—they bring MCC projects to life and represent MCC for our country partners. Special care extends not only to our overseas employees but to their families as well. If I can make an overseas employee's life somewhat easier, everyone benefits.

**Policy:** MCC launches revised country selection process **Program:** Cabo Verde becomes the first MCC partner country to be selected for a subsequent compact; MCC launches its first five set of independent agriculture evaluations

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2012

## PATRICK FINE

There had always been talk in the international development community about the ways country ownership, accountability, and competition could revolutionize their work. MCC effectuated the culture shift.

Patrick was excited to be a core team member when the agency introduced its unique, non-traditional approach to bilateral foreign aid. MCC, he believed, was an inspired undertaking - in step with its time, responding to real needs, and staffed by passionate, capable, pragmatists. They established a process that made countries responsible for designing their own programs, created accountability through a five-year clock that required partner governments to fulfill their part of the contract, and encouraged competition with objective, independent criteria of good governance.

What MCC achieved was groundbreaking - the first substantial innovation in bilateral development assistance and a revolutionary approach that demonstrated U.S. development leadership. ★

The biggest achievement was the way that MCC enhanced U.S. soft power by increasing U.S. influence in ways that benefited both the U.S. and MCC partner countries. It was—and still could be—the most powerful tool in the U.S. soft power arsenal.





## SUJATHA AUGUSTINE

Millennium Challenge Authorities (MCAs), the accountable entities that manage partner country programs, needed to get through the full life cycle of MCC-MCA programs without running into problems with incompatible, unreliable, and unsecure computer technology. Sujatha led the team that created a way.

Sujatha's MCA MIS Program, is the MCC milestone that transformed MCA operations by standardizing IT functions and software, identifying required technology, and creating the SAP business application to ensure all MCAs follow the same practices and processes for managing and reporting budgetary, financial, procurement, and contract data. The program even sustains IT operations in areas prone to power failure, prioritizes training, and advocates for women IT Managers. To date, this proven solution has been a monumental success—providing stable and secure computing environments at MCAs in 13 countries. ✨

MCA-MIS allows rapid implementation and stand-up of key IT functions when offices are first established. MCA users are always proud of their new IT knowledge and capabilities, and we take pride in promoting the talent of local staff and IT experts.

**Program:** MCC is named most transparent U.S. government agency and bilateral donor; MCC partners across the U.S. government to launch the Power Africa initiative **Policy:** MCC signs threshold program with Honduras, using a new model for MCC threshold programs

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2013

## AGNIESZKA RAWA



While MCC's development investments were supporting modernization efforts in Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire, Agnieszka was developing a digital partnerships agenda that could maximize digital access globally.

MCC understood that roads, schools, and reliable energy were starting points for economic growth. As countries reformed and modernized their economies, they also needed a well-developed digital ecosystem and skilled people to augment productivity across all sectors. So, Agnieszka established MCC's Digital Agenda—a milestone that enhanced support for countries as they undergo a digital transformation.

As part of that agenda, MCC partnered with PEPFAR to help people build capacity for data and digital tool use. Women, who had the lowest educational attainment, were targeted. The effort resulted in Digifemmes and the Tanzania Data Lab—programs that provide Ivorian women entrepreneurs with digital skills to grow their businesses and help Tanzanians build numeracy, data analytics, coding, machine learning, and AI skills. Agnieszka's work with MCC's Digital Agenda keeps our programming relevant in a rapidly changing world. ✨

Ensuring that women and often marginalized communities are at the center of digitalization is probably the most transformative investment that we could be making.

**Program:** MCC signs the Ghana Power Compact to spearhead the U.S. government's efforts to double electricity-access in Sub-Saharan Africa; MCC partners with PEPFAR to advance data and digital access to improve economic, gender, and HIV/AIDS outcomes in East Africa **Operations:** MCC celebrates its 10th anniversary

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2014



ELLEN MORAN

The energy level was intense, the workload was demanding, and everything seemed possible when Ellen signed on as the 66<sup>th</sup> member of MCC's staff.

There were no policies, procedures or processes in place, everything had to be developed along the way. The world was watching and the timeline for delivering compacts was ticking. Despite immense pressure, Ellen and MCC's first team were convinced MCC's vision was realistic.

But staff couldn't just focus their energy on compact development; in the early years, MCC was still defending its existence. Critics questioned the need for a new development agency, and MCC programs and procedures were scrutinized by skeptical Hill staff. Outside agencies needed convincing that it made sense to work with MCC. The agency's greatest challenge, Ellen recalls, was being taken seriously and convincing others that MCC had staying power. MCC persevered. ✨

With far less than a full complement of staff, five compacts were signed in 2005 followed by another five in 2006. In retrospect, that pace was amazing.



JOHN HANLEY



Partner countries across the globe had been setting up accountable entities, called Millennium Challenge Authorities (MCAs), and hiring experts to implement MCC grant programs for a decade. But each MCA organized, hired and incentivized employees differently. There was no consistency until John Hanley standardized the approach.

Because it was equally important to maintain country ownership, standardizing the MCA framework was complicated. MCC had to work with partner countries and international best practice experts to fully understand the job roles at each MCA and develop a compensation framework that could be efficiently replicated from country to country based on market comparators. The hard work resulted in *MCC's Guidance on MCA Human Resources Procedures and Manuals*.

This milestone framework for MCA recruitment, pay and workplace policies, allows MCC to work more rapidly on MCA planning and resources. But it also provides space for country context, innovation, and improvement. ✨

Consistency provides greater assurance that each accountable entity can attract the right talent and assure MCC that it is being responsible stewards of MCC funding.

**Program:** MCC announces new commitment to bring \$1 billion in public-private partnerships to the developing world; MCC and Peace Corps sign MOU to align efforts to combat poverty; MCC works across the U.S. government to boost West Africa's economic recovery in the wake of the Ebola outbreak **Operations:** MCC moves from Bowen building to Franklin Court

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2015



## LeJUAN BUTLER

Even in the best workplaces, bad things can happen. That's why MCC's commitment to transparency, and accountability is important. In her role as a volunteer EEO Counselor, LeJuan assists aggrieved employees and documents issues and concerns to get to resolutions. She uses MCC's milestone in diversity—the EEO System—to reach resolutions and maintain an open, respectful and supportive atmosphere.

Just as MCC promotes respect for diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in our partner countries, the agency works hard to maintain a flexible and inclusive workplace culture that supports fairness, equal opportunity and respect.

Having an EEO Division gives employees a safe space to go if they feel they've been discriminated against. MCC's EEO counselors, like LeJuan, work hard to help bring out the best in all of us as we advance the fight against global poverty. ✨

Employees definitely have a confidential place to come and talk about issues they believe fall under the EEO umbrella. I use Vegas rules—what you tell LeJuan stays with LeJuan.

**Policy:** MCC launches NEXT, an agency strategy to deepen its fight against poverty; MCC ranks #1 of all U.S. government agencies in America's Federal Invest in What Works Index **Program:** MCC establishes an Economic Advisory Council; MCC launches the Office of Strategic Partnerships

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2016

## ADAM BETHON



By MCC's 13<sup>th</sup> year the fiscal outlook had changed drastically. Congress had flattened its resources for MCC. The agency needed a transparent process for reviewing and managing its limited resources, so Adam delivered MCC's first Integrated Planning, Budgeting, and Execution framework, or IPBE.

IPBE marked a major accounting and transparency milestone for MCC budgeting. This established tool helps amplify MCC's transparency, enables the agency and its partners to be accountable to American taxpayers, and provides published results for future decision-making. IPBE helps MCC maintain its high standard of accountability. ✨

Tracking and assessing the execution and availability of MCC's funds all while strategizing for new resources with our external stakeholders takes a lot of deliberate and coordinated effort. IPBE is now the foundation.

**Program:** MCC signs its first compact agreement in South Asia with Nepal; MCC closes its 1st subsequent compact partnership (Cabo Verde) **Operations:** Mark Green becomes the longest tenured MCC board member as USAID Administrator

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2017



DAN PETRIE

MCC was reducing poverty one country at time until Dan's work with Congress created opportunities for a regional approach to investments. Because of the team effort to include MCC in legislation to expand regional trade and investment, MCC can now successfully leverage Regional Compact Authority.

By linking MCC improvements to broader African Growth and Opportunity Act enhancements, MCC built a coalition of motivated supporters and secured passage of the AGOA & MCA Modernization Act. This milestone legislation granted MCC new authority to make investments that extend beyond borders and help create better integrated markets for trade, investment, and economic growth.

Thanks to those efforts, we can continue to push ourselves to maximize the opportunities and methods for delivering greater global prosperity. To date, MCC has approved four regional compacts and continues to explore how to integrate bilateral compacts and threshold programs for regional investment and economic benefits. ★

Goods and services don't stop at borders. Regional investments can provide that extra *oomph* needed to accelerate economic growth.

**Operations:** President Trump signs the AGOA and MCA Modernization Act into law, providing new authorities for MCC to engage in regional compacts **Program:** The MCC Board selects 1st regional program (Benin-Niger); The MCC Malawi Power Compact closes

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2018

MARC TKACH



To deliver projects on time, the Millennium Challenge Authorities (MCAs), which manage MCC-funded grant programs, need to hit the ground running. Marc made it possible for partner countries to start up their MCAs and get down to work.

Marc led a team that established IPM, a common framework for project delivery. The system empowers MCAs to make better and more timely decisions throughout the life of their program. It helps partner countries assess the strengths and limitations of a program and affirms their ability to make choices for needed changes that are steeped in evidence, data and best practice.

Because of IPM, people in MCC partner countries can successfully implement and manage their own projects and programs and take ownership of the day-to-day responsibilities related to deadlines, performance, and disbursements.

IPM filled a gap in MCC's country ownership and project delivery approach. This important accountability milestone enables MCC to empower MCAs and strengthen our partnerships for years to come. ★

MCC and every MCA works hand in hand on improving project delivery practices, and ultimately supporting MCAs to make timely, better decisions.

**Program:** Women in Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (WGDP); MCC officially hosts 1st meeting of the MCC Economics Advisory Council; MCC launches partnership with Bechtel and the Government of Cote d'Ivoire to transform infrastructure master planning for public-private, sustained development

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2019



## CARRIE MONAHAN

When Morocco was pursuing ways to address youth unemployment issues, Carrie helped develop an effective public-private partnership model for building real and practical job skills that can be used in other MCC countries.

Existing Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) centers were producing graduates with skills that weren't aligned with industry needs so Carrie's team and the Government of Morocco enlisted private sector help to prioritize relevant, high-quality skills training programs that directly connect to market trends and job opportunities. MCC's \$100 million Charaka Fund financed the construction or rehabilitation of 15 Moroccan TVET centers in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, aerospace, and industry. The result was an MCC milestone in education and job creation.

Carrie's innovation opened the door to even more practical and targeted opportunities to create jobs that lift people out of poverty. The Government of Morocco has used MCC's TVET model in new training centers and shared it with other African countries interested in duplicating their TVET success. 🌟

Now that MCC has learned from this experience, we can design better and more impactful programming to benefit young people in the countries where we work, and we are more prepared to deliver on our mission to reduce poverty through economic growth.

**Program:** MCC convenes virtual WiSci-Morocco camp, a program for 100 girls from Morocco, Cote d'Ivoire and the U.S., to showcase girls' interests in science, technology, engineering, art and design, math (STEAM) and leadership skills **Policy:** MCC ranks first among U.S. agencies for aid transparency in Publish What You Fund's Aid Transparency Index

2020

## BOB FISHBIEIN

MCC offered economic development done differently. Bob—intrigued by the agency's fresh approach, quirky culture, and the real possibility of making a sustainable difference—happily accepted.

MCC felt very much like a start-up company with staff crammed into cubicles, minimal bureaucracy, and an administrative process that seemed almost ad hoc. There was a melding of cultures, which placed finance and environmental and social sustainability on an equal footing. Discussions were always lively. It was an uncertain, but exciting time.

As a young, unknown agency, MCC faced challenges—including frustrating misperceptions. One time, much to Bob's dismay, a misconception that compact qualification guaranteed automatic approval prompted a complaint call to the White House. There were intense moments in the early years, before MCC's on the ground results were tangible. But the agency's results-oriented approach and transparency saw MCC through the rough patches and earned it lasting bipartisan support. 🌟

I feel enormously enriched thanks to my years at MCC and all the folks whom I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with.





BRIAN FORNI

COVID-19, conflict and weather-related crises caused many developing nations to suffer economic setbacks and become increasingly vulnerable. Many of these countries fall outside of the low and lower-middle income thresholds that MCC is authorized to work in, for now.

Working across the agency, Brian led a team of policy, budget and Congressional staffers to develop the Candidate Country Reform bill, which was introduced in 2021.

This bill is a programmatic milestone that, if passed, could expand MCC's eligible country pool. Expansion would enable MCC to lift millions more people out of poverty, strengthen democratic and national security ties, expand opportunities for trade and good jobs, and make America safer.

Brian has secured bipartisan, bicameral support from authorizers and appropriators and continues to lead MCC's Congressional priorities to ensure it delivers its mission. As this legislation continues to move forward, Congressional support for the expansion of MCC's authorities affirms that the agency remains a powerful projection of soft power. ★

This legislation signaled to our partners that the United States, through MCC, is prepared to support countries that uphold democratic values in their efforts to deliver for their people and counter growing poverty rates.

**Program:** MCC and Africa50 sign MOU to advance a new global infrastructure platform; MCC and the DFC launch the American Catalyst Facility for Development (ACFD) **Operations:** White House nominates Alice P. Albright for MCC CEO

2021

OMAR HOPKINS

It's easy to love MCC's development process, except when it takes a long time.

After a partner country is selected by the MCC Board, the work to negotiate and sign an agreement, analyze the major constraints to growth, and develop the programs and projects sometimes take up to four years. The wait can be frustrating for emerging democracies pursuing growth for their people and for MCC staff working to establish accountable entities. In an effort to streamline the development process and implement MCC's lessons learned, Omar led a team engaged in blue sky thinking to develop a fast-track initiative.

Omar and MCC experts in contracting, program design, policy economics, engineering, digital development, finance, and trade, outlined the factors that help partners accelerate the compact development process. Although the approach won't be suitable for all countries, Omar and his dream team created an extremely useful tool for countries that have previously worked with MCC. As MCC looks to the future, the agency will continue to build on this milestone and other efforts to iterate towards faster, more efficient approaches to compact development. ★



The vision outlined by CEO Albright was to dramatically reduce the time between selection and board approval—to as little as 24 months. The Blue Sky Initiative is a demonstration of MCC's ability and willingness to try new approaches to be more responsive.

**Policy:** Launch of the MCC Evidence Platform with the University of Michigan; MCC releases updated Inclusion and Gender Strategy **Program:** MCC officially signs 1st regional compact at the African Leaders Summit

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2022



## DAVID KASSEBAUM

Change can be complicated, just ask David about orchestrating the first amendment to an MCC compact.

MCC's first compact amendment was needed to change the support for—and scope of—projects in Mali. David's team had to draft the amendment, negotiate with the Government of Mali, obtain MCC Board of Directors approval, and get the document ratified by the Malian Parliament.

Nearly twenty years later, the compact amendment process remains a standout operational milestone. David's template for compact amendments was used to also authorize the U.S. Treasury Secretary to sign a compact. The authorization of Secretary Yellen as an MCC signatory increased political support from the U.S. government and host country, Indonesia. David navigated an interagency legal process with lawyers from the Treasury and State Departments and the production of a legal document by the State Department's Treaty Office, codifying for all future compacts the ability for the Secretary of Treasury to represent MCC as a compact signatory. The compact amendment process was necessary to make the important changes to compact agreements we engage in today. ✨

Both amending compacts and adding the U.S. Treasury Secretary as the signer of a compact expanded MCC's capabilities and demonstrated that MCC can be flexible and nimble to accomplish our mission.

**Operations:** MCC Union is officially recognized by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) AS MCC Local 1444  
**Policy:** MCC launches new education indicator to track investments in inclusive education **Program:** Using geospatial mapping and drone technology, MCC and MCA-Niger unearth 6 billion metric tons of underground water in land-locked Niger

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2023

## SHEILA HERRLING

MCC was putting the best principles of development effectiveness into practice and Sheila was proud to be part of the team that made them work.

Traditional development assistance methods, she believed, were broken—scattered across multiple agencies, directed by executive and congressional earmarks built up over decades, unmeasured, and under-prioritized in our national security strategy. But MCC had strong support and a clear vision for disrupting the status quo and achieving success.

Sheila worked hard to validate MCC's principles and secure a budget that optimized the agency's ability to deliver without displacing other development programs. During her tenure as MCC's Vice President for Policy and Evaluation, the agency modernized its foundational country selection criteria, became a model development program, and was ranked as the world's most transparent bilateral donor. Sheila's efforts have helped MCC stand the test of time. ✨

MCC has transitioned between political administrations and has evolved over the past 20 years to meet the challenges of the time while maintaining its founding principles.





Sustainable Development Goals mapping can be a tool to support partner country ambitions and coordinate with other bilateral and multilateral donors.

their economies and support their SDG priorities. Casey helped MCC achieve a major programmatic and accountability milestone by creating an innovative way to share our investment and history portfolio using the global language of the SDGs. ✨

**Operations:** MCC celebrates 20 years of reducing poverty through growth **Policy:** MCC exercises new threshold authority to partner with the Philippines and Tanzania for MCC programs

2024

## CASEY DUNNING

When world leaders gathered for the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2023, MCC mapped out the ways its poverty-reducing investments have supported countries on their Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) journeys.

In an effort to demonstrate how MCC has advanced the SDGs over the last 20 years, Casey led a team that mapped MCC’s portfolio against the SDGs. The maps showed that MCC’s multidimensional approach to poverty reduction ensures results along multiple SDGs. For example, MCC’s energy sector investment doesn’t stop with power grid improvements—programs are designed to be sustainable and inclusive of women and disenfranchised groups. The result is an investment that advances the SDGs on poverty reduction and energy (Goals 1 and 7), as well as Gender Equality (Goal 5), Reducing Inequalities (Goal 10), and Climate Action (Goal 13).

The maps were well received by MCC country partners and other bilateral donors who can see how MCC’s infrastructure investments help grow

“MCC is one of the most powerful tools in the United States government’s development toolbox. We look to the future with a renewed sense of commitment to the cause of reducing poverty through growth.”

—Alice Albright, MCC CEO

“Ensuring that women and often marginalized communities are at the center of digitalization is probably the most transformative investment that we could be making.”

—Agnieszka Rawa, MCC

“MCC has transitioned between political administrations and has evolved over the past 20 years to meet the challenges of the time while maintaining its founding principles.”

—Sheila Herring

“Tracking and assessing the execution and availability of MCC’s funds all while strategizing for new resources with our external stakeholders takes a lot of deliberate and coordinated effort. IPBE is now the foundation.”

—Adam Bethon, MCC

“Use power to help people. For we are given power not to advance our own purposes nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one just use of power and it is to serve people.”

—George W. Bush  
43rd President of the United States of America, MCC Founder

“Evaluations keep our work honest, demonstrate when we should adjust from lessons learned, and motivate us to do the job better. I was excited to bring MCC’s data-driven approach [to work] that continues to lift millions of people out of poverty.”

—Kristen Penn, MCC

“It’s very important that we, as the strongest nation in the world, do what we can to help emerging democracies, and that’s what MCC has been able to do for the last 20 years—alleviate poverty around the world by building economies. I’m proud to be part of it.”

—Congressman Ander Crenshaw, MCC Board Member

“The vision outlined ...was to dramatically reduce the time between selection and board approval—to as little as 24 months. The Blue Sky Initiative [demonstrates] MCC’s ability and willingness to try new approaches.”

—Omar Hopkins, MCC



learn more: [www.mcc.gov/20](http://www.mcc.gov/20)

# Reducing Poverty Through Growth

