

AARON S. WILLIAMS

Summary of Professional Experience

Aaron Williams is the senior advisor for government relations at RTI International. From 2015 to 2017, he served as the executive vice president of RTI's Government Relations and Corporate Communications group. From 2012 to 2015, Mr. Williams served as executive vice president of RTI's International Development Group (IDG). Before returning to RTI in 2012, Mr. Williams was appointed by President Barack Obama as the 18th Director of the U.S. Peace Corps, serving in that capacity from 2009 to 2012. Before his Peace Corps appointment, he was vice president of international business development for RTI from 2003 to 2009. Previously, Mr. Williams served for 22 years as a senior official at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), where he attained the rank of career minister in the Senior Foreign Service. His awards include the USAID Distinguished Career Service Award in 1998 and the Presidential Award for Distinguished Service in 1988 and 1992.

Mr. Williams has had a distinguished career as a senior executive in government, business, and nonprofit organizations, with broad experience in policy formulation, strategic planning, and the design and implementation of development assistance programs. He has directed a wide range of development assistance programs in the areas of economic policy development and economic growth, trade and investment promotion, banking and finance, democracy and governance, education, housing and urban development, and public health.

Mr. Williams has broad experience in the strategic design and management of assistance programs, including long-term assignments in South Africa, Honduras, Haiti, Costa Rica, and Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean islands region. In his role as a senior official at USAID, Mr. Williams provided policy and program leadership to major government organizational units, both in headquarters and field assignments. During his career as an executive with foundation and international consulting organizations, Mr. Williams has led project design teams in several countries, working in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. He has created and managed innovative public-private partnerships between global corporations, government entities (in the United States and host countries), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international foundations.

Mr. Williams is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, serves on the Board of Directors of the Ron Brown Scholar Program, Seed Global Health, ChildFund International, and George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs' Advisory Board. He is a board member of the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign. He has also served on the boards of directors of CARE, the National Peace Corps Association, and the Institute for Sustainable Communities. Mr. Williams served on the Obama-Biden transition team. In 2015, he was appointed by President Barack Obama as the U.S. Alternative Representative to the executive board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). He is a frequent lecturer and panelist on international development topics at universities, research and policy institutes, and U.S. and global conferences. During his tenure as Peace Corps director, he led White House delegations to the 2012 presidential inauguration in Guatemala and to the bicentennial celebration of the independence of Paraguay in 2011.

Education

MBA, Marketing and International Business, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.
BS, Geography/Education, Chicago State University, Chicago, IL.

Professional Experience

2002 to 2009,
2012 to date

RTI International, Washington, DC.

Senior Advisor, Government Relations (2017 to date). Provides expertise and support for efforts to strengthen RTI's relationship with federal and state government agencies, policymakers, and elected officials.

Executive Vice President, Government Relations and Corporate Communications (GRCC) (2015 to 2017). Led the government relations and communications teams in overseeing advocacy and communications for the institute. This group develops productive and mutually beneficial relationships with the U.S. Congress; federal agency officials and policy makers; state government officials; and organizations in the commercial, educational, and nonprofit sectors. GRCC supports four major business groups, eight U.S. regional offices, and ongoing research projects in more than 75 countries. The communications team is responsible for brand strategy, internal communications, media relations, advertising, sponsorships, social media, corporate events, executive communications, library information services, and oversight of RTI Press—the institute's independent publishing arm.

Executive Vice President, International Development Group (IDG) (2012 to 2015). Responsibilities included program development, personnel recruitment, and overall management for a staff of approximately 1,100 professionals in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. IDG was responsible for more than 70 projects in three program sectors (education, governance and economic growth, and global health) and annual average revenues of \$200 million.

Vice President for International Business Development (2002 to 2009). Led representational efforts to expand RTI's involvement in the international development community's dialogue regarding policy and assistance programs of the USG and other multilateral donors. Assisted, and in some cases led, RTI staff to secure major contracts in the key areas of governance, education, and health. Provided leadership in the development of strategic partnerships with other international organizations and global corporations involved in international development activities.

2009 to 2012

U.S. Peace Corps, Washington, DC.

Director. The Peace Corps is an independent agency within the executive branch of the USG that provides worldwide volunteer opportunities for Americans, working in six program areas: Education, Health & HIV/AIDS, Business Development, Environment, Agriculture, and Youth Development. During his tenure, 9,000 Peace Corps volunteers served in 77 countries, and the Agency had an average annual budget of \$400 million—the largest in the Agency's history—and a global staff of 3,000 professionals.

Under his leadership, Peace Corps strengthened its role as a leader in the global effort to further human progress and foster understanding and respect among

people. In 2011, he led the global celebration of Peace Corps' 50th anniversary, including a national call to all Americans to consider being part of the Peace Corps' legacy of public service and benefit from the agency's life-defining leadership experience.

During his tenure, key accomplishments included a comprehensive agency-wide assessment and implementation of six strategies to strengthen global operations; reopening of three historic Peace Corps countries (Colombia, Indonesia, Sierra Leone); the launch of the Global Health Service Partnership (Seed Global Health), a program created through a partnership with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to improve clinical education and build health care capacity in countries that face critical shortages of health care providers by sending health professionals to serve as adjunct faculty in medical, nursing, and clinical officer training schools of partnering countries; the creation of an innovative short-term volunteer program that provides more Americans the opportunity to serve again; and the creation of new partnerships with leading international development organizations, universities, other USG agencies, and global firms, aimed at expanding Peace Corps volunteers' technical skills and service opportunities.

1998 to 2002

International Youth Foundation (IYF), Baltimore, MD.

Executive Vice President. Supported programs worldwide by increasing the effectiveness, scale, and sustainability of best practices and successful approaches. Created and managed a new Global Revenue Department. Provided leadership to IYF's work with global corporations and multilateral financial organizations related to project design and implementation (e.g., the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and European Union). Reported to the President/CEO on potential partners, domestic and international fundraising, the design of youth development programs, and the creation of systems for program management and monitoring and evaluation. Represented IYF as a speaker at international conferences and other key public affairs events.

1996 to 1998

USAID, U.S. Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa.

Mission Director. Managed USAID's South Africa program, covering the following areas: democracy and governance, education, public health, economic policy, private-sector development, and housing and urban development. Responsible for the formulation and implementation of U.S. economic assistance activities with some 200 entities, including South African government departments, NGOs, private voluntary organizations, universities, foundations, and business organizations. Managed a \$1 billion portfolio and a staff of 140 persons. Played a key role in the U.S.-South Africa Binational Commission (BNC), a high-level forum for collaborating on high-priority areas of mutual interest to the two nations. Worked extensively with cabinet officials from both governments and provided leadership in identifying higher levels of funding. Designed a new strategic plan for USAID involvement in the BNC that led to an expanded role for USAID and streamlined interagency coordination that resulted in improved program implementation. Played a key role in managing assistance for training to education officials, including linkages to U.S. universities.

- 1993 to 1996 USAID, Washington, DC.
- Executive Secretary Executive Secretariat. Served as a senior advisor to the Administrator of the Agency. Managed the Executive Secretary staff (20 persons) in the following areas: direction and control of the Agency's decision-making processes, management of the executive communication center, and liaison with other USG agencies and the White House. Key troubleshooter and leader in coordinating with the White House and the NSC, the Congressional leadership's staff, and other senior cabinet staff in the policy-making process and interagency coordination on a wide range of issues. As member of the transition Steering Group, provided the leadership in developing the Agency's new management systems, and played a major role in securing the "buy-in" of the career officers for this major USG reengineering initiative.
- 1992 to 1993 Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), USAID, Washington, DC.
- Assistant Administrator (acting). Formulated policies and plans, and directed and supervised activities for the headquarters component. Provided policy guidance to 30 field offices concerning country strategies and management of USAID programs. Provided direction and advice in the allocation of administrative funds (\$350 million) for the field and headquarters. Served as liaison to senior officers of USAID, the Department of State, and other relevant USG organizations. Provided policy guidance to Bureau representatives at intra-agency and inter-governmental meetings that had a bearing on relations between the United States and the Latin American countries. Served as principal liaison to carry out consultations on policy and programs with the U.S. Congress, state governments, the American university community, and the private sector. Served as principal liaison with international organizations, bilateral donors, and U.S. private voluntary organizations. Supervised four staff office directors, three geographic region office directors, and two special affairs offices. Prepared performance evaluation reports for all senior officers in headquarters and the field. Recommended and selected candidates to fill executive-level positions overseas and in Washington, and handled approvals for all required personnel and manpower decisions.
- 1989 to 1991 Regional Development Office for the Caribbean, USAID, Bridgetown Barbados.
- Mission Director. Responsible for the management of USAID's Eastern Caribbean program. Formulated and implemented U.S. economic assistance activities with approximately 20 institutions representing 12 independent countries and 5 territories. The Mission consisted of 100 staff persons with a portfolio of 32 projects at a level of \$220 million.
- 1986 to 1989 Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), USAID, Washington, DC.
- Director, Private Sector Office. Designed and managed the LAC private-sector strategy and programs. Developed Bureau policies and mechanisms for financing the establishment, improvement, and expansion of productive private enterprises. Facilitated participation of the U.S. private sector in the development process. Served as the Bureau's senior private enterprise representative with USAID's field missions. Served as Co-Chairman of the Executive Branch's CBI Operations Committee. Represented the Bureau in negotiations with senior
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representatives of the private business sector, the investment community, representatives of other federal agencies with overseas interests, multilateral organizations, and host country officials. Supervised a staff of eight persons.

1985 to 1986

Industrial & Agricultural Development Office (IAD), USAID, U.S. Embassy, Costa Rica.

Assistant Mission Director. Managed two divisions for a new office established to design and implement a \$440 million portfolio in development finance, export promotion, investment promotion, rural development, and agribusiness development. Established the new office and recruited and managed 23 U.S. and national staff members. Served as principal advisor to the Mission Director for the development and management of Mission policies and strategy.

1983 to 1985

Office of Private Enterprise Development, USAID, U.S. Embassy, Costa Rica.

Office Director. Managed the USAID Mission's projects and programs for a \$270 million portfolio. Established the office and developed and managed the Mission's policies and strategy. Managed the 10 office staff, and designed and implemented activities for existing and new assistance projects. Developed and maintained close working relationships with the municipal business and trade associations and assisted host government institutions to promote industrial development.

1979 to 1983

Office of Private Enterprise Development, USAID, U.S. Embassy, Haiti.

Office Director. Managed the Mission's private enterprise development program. Established the office and developed the Mission's short- and long-term sector strategy. Fostered working relationships between USAID and the business community, relevant Government of Haiti departments, principal business associations in the United States and Caribbean, and international agencies.

1976 to 1979

USAID, U.S. Embassy, Honduras.

Project Design Officer (1978 to 1979). Designed and managed a \$40 million portfolio in the areas of agribusiness, agricultural research, and university education.

Agribusiness Consultant (1976 to 1978). Designed and implemented the Mission's first agro-industrial project.

1974 to 1976

Consumer Foods Group, General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, MN.

Assistant Product Manager. Prepared and executed product marketing plans. Developed long-range plans and business analyses. Provided budgetary analysis and planning. Planned and implemented a media strategy.

1973 to 1974

International Multifoods, Minneapolis, MN.

Assistant to Corporate Vice-President. Assisted on all matters related to sales, advertising, operations, research and development, and purchasing.

- 1970 to 1971 U.S. Peace Corps, Midwest and National Offices, Washington, DC, and Chicago.
Coordinator of Minority Recruitment/Project Evaluation Officer. Developed and coordinated recruitment programs for minority groups at universities and colleges in the Midwest and East Coast regions.
- 1967 to 1970 U.S. Peace Corps, Dominican Republic.
Peace Corp Volunteer. Served as a teacher trainer for rural school teachers. Later Directed the Department of Student Teaching at the Catholic University.

Honors and Awards

USAID Distinguished Career Service Award, 1998
Presidential Award for Distinguished Service, 1992 and 1988

Honorary doctorate degrees: American University, the Monterey Institute of International Studies, North Central College, St. Mary's College

UCLA Medal recipient, awarded for exceptionally distinguished academic and professional achievement
Commencement speaker, University of North Carolina, Gillings School of Global Public Health

Languages

Spanish (fluent), French (conversational)

Country Experience

Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean island region, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Swaziland, Thailand, Viet Nam.

Related Information

Mr. Williams is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves on the board of directors of the Ron Brown Scholar Program, Seed Global Health, ChildFund International, George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs' Advisory Board, the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign (USGLC), and the National Peace Corps Association.

Mr. Williams served on the Obama-Biden transition team. In 2015, President Barack Obama appointed him as the U.S. Alternative Representative to the executive board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Mr. Williams has served on the USAID Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. He has also served on the board of directors of CARE, the Cisco Learning Institute (Cisco Systems Corporation), the Intel Corporation's Clubhouse Advisory Panel, the Institute for Sustainable Communities, and the Society for International Development—Washington, DC.

Selected Speeches, Presentations and Policy Briefings

Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) Bipartisan Taskforce on the Reform and Reorganization of U.S. Development, June 2017

Commencement Speaker, University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health, May 2017

RTI Fellows Program's Distinguished Lecture Series: "U.S. Peace Corps in the 21st Century – The Role of Volunteerism and Service in Our Society," December 2, 2015, Research Triangle Foundation, Durham, NC

U.S. Investments in Africa: The Next Great Economic Success Story, (Panel Moderator), the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC) Summit, June 2015, Washington, DC

Answering the next great challenges in international development. (DEVEX Newswire– Global Views – the Post 2015 Development Agenda), March 9, 2015, Washington, DC

Panelist; Discussed how public and private sectors are innovating policy, programs, and partnerships to prepare today's youth for the global workforce. January 2014, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC

A Case Study: Youth councils in Morocco. Giving youth a real voice in development. Presented at *A Case Study: Youth councils in Morocco. Giving youth a real voice in development*, April 2013, Duke University, Durham, NC

Building Peaceful Partnerships in the 21st Century: The Importance of the Peace Corps, December 1, 2011, NC Museum of History, Raleigh, NC

Peace Corps in the 21st Century, November 17, 2011, St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, MD

Celebrating 50 Years of Peace Corps Service in the Philippines, November 8, 2011, Manila, Philippines

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary Tribute to Fallen Volunteers, September 25, 2011, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA

The Promise of the Peace Corps, National Peace Corps Association's Gala, September 24, 2011, Ronald Reagan Building, Washington, DC

Smithsonian Folklife Festival – Speakers' Panel for Launch, June 30–July 11, 2011, National Mall, Washington, DC

Director's Visit to Tanzania – 50th Anniversary Celebration, June 19–24, 2011, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

UCLA College 2011 Commencement, June 10, 2011, University of California, Los Angeles, CA

Monterey Institute of International Studies 2011 Commencement, May 21, 2011, Middlebury College, Monterey, CA

Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 11, 2011, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

- Peace Corps 50th Anniversary at Newseum**, May 10, 2011, Washington, DC
- American University School of International Studies Commencement Address**, May 8, 2011, American University, Washington, DC
- Bringing Service Home**, April 1, 2011, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY
- Peace Corps and Africa, Honoring 50 Years**, March 24–26, 2011, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
- The Early Years of the Peace Corps** (*moderator*), March 17, 2011, National Archives, Washington, DC
- Diplomatic Community Event and Lifetime Achievement Awards Ceremony**, March 15, 2011, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC
- Howard University Event with Corporation for National Community Service**, March 9, 2011, Howard University, Washington, DC
- Kennedy Service Awards Ceremony and Commemoration**, March 5, 2011, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, MA
- UCLA Commemorates Peace Corps’ 50th Anniversary**, March 2–4, 2011, University of California, Los Angeles, CA
- Keynote Speaker/Awardee –Leadership in International Development**, Society for International Development Gala, December 8, 2010, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC
- The Future of International Service**, November 21, 2010, University of California Santa Barbara, CA
- Peace Corps 50th Anniversary**, World Affairs Council, November 18–19, 2010, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- National Symposium: The Future of International Service**, October 13–16, 2010, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
- Williams, Aaron (October 2011). “Charting the Future of International Service”, presented by the Gerald Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan University, *The Future of the Peace Corps* (pp. 61–67), Ann Arbor, MI**
- 50 Years of the Peace Corps: Answering President Kennedy’s Call to Service, Panel Discussion with Former Peace Corps Directors**, October 12, 2010, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Institute of Politics, Boston, MA
- Hobart and Williams Smith Colleges – Convocation speaker**, September 2010, Geneva, NY
- Cornell Institute for Public Affairs Colloquium Event – Cornell & Peace Corps Partnership**, September 2010, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- Council of 1890s Universities Annual Conference – Peace Corps 50th Anniversary**, June 2010, Little Rock, AR
- National Conference on Volunteering**, June 2010, New York City, NY
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Special Olympics World Congress, Panelist – Community Development Strategies, June 2010, Marrakesh, Morocco

Durham Tech Commencement, May 2010, Durham Technical Community College, Durham, NC

Walsh Lecture Series on Ethics in the Workplace, April 2010, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA

Testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, March 18, 2010, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary, Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law, March 2010, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary, UNC-Chapel Hill, February 18, 2010, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

Duke University Event panel discussion with Congressman David Price, February 2010, Duke University, Durham, NC

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary, North Carolina Central University, February 2010, North Carolina Central University, Raleigh, NC

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary, North Carolina A&T University, February 2010, North Carolina A&T, Greensboro, NC

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary, North Carolina State University, February 2010, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Prior Selected Recent Presentations and Policy Briefings

“USAID Iraq Local Governance Program.” Briefing for U.S. Army, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Washington, DC, October 2005.

“The Role of Local Government in Conflict Stabilization: Iraq.” Fourth Rebuilding Iraq Conference, Washington DC, July 2005.

“USAID Local Governance Project.” Briefing for U.S. Army, 3rd Infantry Division, Washington, DC, December 2004.

“USAID Local Governance Project.” World Bank, Iraq Reconstruction Working Group, Washington, DC, July 2004.

“USAID Local Governance Project.” *New York Times*, Iraq Bureau Chief Briefing, May 2004.

“Iraq USAID Local Governance Project.” Government Accountability Office, Washington, DC, May 2004.
