



USAID | **HAITI**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TRIP REPORT:

Rebecca Bennett

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Sante pur le Developpement et la Sabilite d' Haiti
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Trip Report -- DRAFT

To: Paul Auxila, COP, SDSH/Pwojè Djanm
Cc: John Pollock, Senior Fellow/PSL, SDSH/Pwojè Djanm
Christèle Joseph-Pressat, PSO, SDSH/Pwojè Djanm
From: Rebecca Bennett, Sr. Communications Associate, CKE
Date: November 21, 2007

Project: SDSH/Pwojè Djanm
Travel: October 14–25, 2007; Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Goals (from SOW)

- Help document HS-2007 results and successes
- Help launch SDSH: assess communications needs that CKE can support, bolster basic communications capacity among key project staff

N.B. I met with Paul Auxila, Florence Guillaume, and Cossy Roosevelt upon arrival and we modified the trip goals, prioritizing the need for a complete communications strategy and planning for the new SDSH project over work for the closed-down HS-2007 project.

Revised Goals

- Assess SDSH and USAID/Haiti communications and branding needs and priorities
- Develop complete communications plan/strategy for submission to USAID
- Assess ways CKE can support Cossy Roosevelt (Communications & PR Specialist) moving forward

Background & Summary

Awarded in summer 2007, SDSH is a high-priority and high-profile project for USAID. While HS-2007 (SDSH's predecessor) was widely regarded as technically excellent, the project didn't disseminate its results as widely or as effectively as the mission needs and likes. Communications is so important to USAID/Haiti that a key personnel position (the communications and PR specialist) was required in the project's RFTOP. (There is not another comparable position among any other USAID/Haiti health projects.)

Additionally, there are several new staff members at USAID—including CTO Rebecca Rohrer—with expectations that are different from or more expansive than those held by the mission staff during the HS-2004 and HS-2007 projects. Given this situation, upon my arrival, Paul Auxila and Florence Guillaume (DCOP, Technical Director) modified my SOW to focus on the communications strategy and work for SDSH, determining that time would be better spent moving forward with SDSH communications than on limited HS-2007 activities. (HS-2007's budget closed on September 30, 2007.)

Exceeding USAID's initial expectations, Cossy and I collaborated to revise his draft "Communications, Marking, Impact" (CMI) plan; before leaving, I presented the resulting draft plan to Rebecca Rohrer and Alternate CTO Reginalde (Reggie) Masse (Cossy was covering a project event). Rebecca and Reggie were both pleased and excited to move forward.

CKE drafted branding templates prior to my departure and while additional work was required, based on conversations with USAID contacts Lloyd Jackson, Shirley Jean Baptiste, and Karine Roy, there were no surprises. The mission very much wants to co-brand (including PEPFAR) to further express the partnerships that are a cornerstone of this project.

Determining how CKE can best support SDSH in general and Cossy in particular will be an ongoing activity. Cossy is a very experienced communications professional with excellent connections throughout Haiti's mass media. He also possesses a solid knowledge of health and development issues in the country, but seems less familiar with USAID (though he is comfortable with branding regulations) and strategic communications planning (as opposed to the tactics with which he is very familiar and apparently skilled). Lastly, Cossy's is a big, difficult job; I recommend consistent and ongoing CKE support for the first project year (to reassess in summer 2008) and very much look forward to continuing to work with Cossy and the rest of the project team.

Activities & Results

October 15

Reconnection/discovery meeting with Paul, Florence, and Cossy to bring me up to speed on SDSH happenings (technical and communications).

October 16

Introductory/discovery meeting with Rebecca, Reggie, Lloyd, Shirley, and Karine at USAID.

Lloyd reviewed **branding regulations** and answered my and Cossy's questions about partner logos and languages. The mission is eager to highlight its partnership with the Haitian government and the spirit of cooperation which marks USAID work in Haiti, so SDSH and MSPP logos are acceptable on all templates (in accordance with co-branding regulations); furthermore, partners who are relevant to a particular event or topic can also have co-branding. (The templates have been designed with placeholders for as many as five additional partner logos.) PEPFAR should be treated as any other co-branding (per Lloyd). Most templates should be available in English, French, and Creole. Visibility of the USAID brand and efforts is extremely important to the mission.

Rebecca and Lloyd went on to explain in detail the fairly complex process for **inviting either the mission director or the ambassador to events**; Rebecca reiterated these protocols in her October 18 email (Annex 1) to attendees and Paul. Given the complexities involved in requesting the ambassador's attendance, and the competing demands on the ambassador's schedule, Rebecca recommends planning about three events per year which the project would like the ambassador to attend. Refer to the email for specifics, but note that if the ambassador is involved, USG (the US Embassy's Office of Public Diplomacy, via

Rebecca) will handle all media outreach and coverage. Also note, the ambassador does not seem to have any “pet” interests of which we should be aware.

Lloyd excused himself for the remainder of the meeting and Rebecca went on to discuss **top communications priorities** for the mission and SDSH:

- Visibility (primarily via branding and Haitian mass media)
- Dissemination of results (primarily via Success Stories and local Haitian media coverage)
- Expression that SDSH is a *new* project, not a follow-on to HS-2004/2007.
- SDSH’s mandate certainly includes strengthening the executive function of the MSPP, but the real results are in the people of Haiti; communications should emphasize the impact on *individuals* rather than the project’s design or activities.

The SDSH **communications strategy** may later need to be tweaked to feed into the overall communications strategy for the mission (in rough draft with Lloyd). Rebecca also agreed on priority deliverables (see Annex 2: Communications Strategy) for the coming months and requested a calendar of events (including those to which the ambassador will be invited).

Rebecca also reiterated that the **mission must approve all project materials**. She seemed eager to ensure a prompt turnaround (e.g., 24 to 48 hours for a press release) and assured us that once something (e.g., a Success Story) is approved, MSH and SDSH can share it widely (e.g., with OGAC in Washington, at conferences, etc.). Materials should be copyedited before they go to the mission, but will likely benefit from an additional proofread after the mission has returned its comments to Cossy. USAID is considering hiring a media contractor; no decisions have been made, but Rebecca will keep Cossy, Paul, and Florence informed.

October 17

Haitian holiday; I worked in the hotel.

October 18

Conference call with MSH Director of Communications Diane Fusilli, Cossy, and Florence to discuss the revised CMI/communications strategy.

Cossy and I had taken turns incorporating information gathered from USAID into the revised plan, which the team discussed during the conference call. It was a very effective working meeting that led to the very comprehensive draft presented to Rebecca and Reggie on October 24.

October 20-22

Ongoing revisions to the plan and the branded templates, and collaboration with Cossy.

October 23

Debrief (me and Cossy) with Paul and Florence prior to Paul’s weekly CTO meeting with Rebecca on October 24. We brought Paul and Florence up to speed on the work of the past several days and discussed what/how we would be presenting to Rebecca in our scheduled meeting on the following day (after Paul and Rebecca’s meeting). Paul also provided

additional insights on Rebecca, the mission, and the project's larger context that we used to further enhance the communications plan.

October 24

PowerPoint presentation of communications plan to USAID. I informally presented the plan to Rebecca and Reggie (Cossy had to attend another event) for further discussion. They were very pleased with the progress and the results (initially this meeting was scheduled as an opportunity to ask clarifying questions); their minimal suggestions and comments were incorporated into the draft of the plan submitted to the mission for approval on November 05, 2007.

Further Recommendations/Way Forward

In spite of our constant efforts to keep this communications plan realistic, Cossy's job remains big and complicated. I agree with Rebecca, Florence, and John Pollock that ongoing, regularly scheduled STTA and long-distance support from CKE will help ensure that the communication plan is successful and Cossy's responsibilities remain manageable.

The current priorities are the completion of identified priority fact sheets (see communications plan), the project's official launch event (date TBD), and planning for the journalists' workshop (a cornerstone of the longer-term SDSH communications efforts). Rebecca and Reggie agreed that communications and PR activities should continue even without USAID's formal approval of the plan. I've proposed in the communications plan that I make another TDY in late January or early February (timed to coincide with preparations for the journalists' workshop or another labor-intensive activity).

I expect regular give and take with Cossy as we figure out the best ways that CKE can help him do his job, but am confident that we have a very good plan to work from and are starting off well.

Annexes

Annex 1: Email from Rebecca Rohrer, USAID (October 18, 2007)

Annex 2: Communications Plan (submitted for USAID approval on November 05, 2007)